

Food and Nutrition Services Fairfax County Public Schools

FCPS Food Sharing Procedures

Food sharing is another great way to reduce waste in the cafeteria. Many of the items students purchase as part of their lunch remain untouched and are often put in the trash. Food sharing puts some of these foods to good use through donation to local homeless shelters and food banks. Unopened items collected include string cheese, juice boxes, milk cartons, individual snack containers (e.g., hummus), yogurt, oranges, and bananas. The procedure below provides a good starting point for organizing a food sharing effort in your school. The reduction in solid waste can be measured by FCPS plant operations and will generally result in reduced waste removal charges.

Step 1: Identify a Local Food Bank / Shelter

The first step to donating your unopened food items is finding a recipient. This could include a local church with a poverty outreach program, a local homeless shelter, a local food bank, or other charitable entity. Make sure it is not too far from your school, as sometimes you will have to find volunteers (parents, faculty, or staff) to drive the food to the location (some locations will not provide pick-up service).

Once you have communicated with the charity and agreed to partner, you will need to submit the Letter of [Understanding for Donation of Student School Meal Leftovers to Local Food Banks](#) to the FCPS Office of Food and Nutrition Services. Send completed forms to Fatima Yazdi at Fatima.Yazdi@fcps.edu.

Step 2: Procure a Refrigerator

There are many ways to do this. Often it is as simple as sending out a note to parents asking if anyone has an old fridge they'd be willing to donate. You could also try going through your principal and/or PTA to see if they have any extra funds they'd be willing to donate to the cause. THE REFRIGERATOR MUST BE LOCKED AT ALL TIMES WHEN NOT IN USE.



Step 3: Advertise the Process to Your Students and Establish a Procedure

At Churchill Road students know to put their unopened perishable items (e.g., milk, yogurt, string cheese, and hummus) in the refrigerator, which is located next to the general food waste disposal area. If you would rather keep the refrigerator in an area that is off-limits to students you could have your dining room hostess or other school staff member take the food to the refrigerator during the lunch period. Unopened non-perishable items can be kept in storage bins outside the refrigerator. These include such items as: fruit juice boxes; prepackaged applesauce or peaches; whole fruit (e.g., tangerines, oranges and bananas); and bottled water. The key is to ensure that students place **ONLY UNOPENED / UNTAMPERED PRODUCTS IN YOUR COLLECTION AREAS**. Anything that has been opened, ripped, or otherwise modified will not be accepted by local food banks.

Food items that **CANNOT** be accepted include: sliced or quartered fruit such as oranges, kiwi, grapefruit, cups of salads and raw vegetables; hot or cold meat sandwiches; hot meat items such as chicken tenders, burritos and cheese sticks; hot vegetables; whole apples; and hot casserole items such as spaghetti with meat sauce and macaroni and cheese.

Step 4: Maintain a Weekly Log for data collection.

As explained in the Letter of Understanding (link provided above), a weekly log must be maintained of the food items taken to local food banks. This tabulated data should be retained on site for Food and Nutrition Services review and for school data collection purposes. This data can be used to publish results with your community or for FNS to publish on behalf of FCPS administrators.

The chart to be used for this purpose can be found on the last page of the Letter of Understanding. The easiest way to keep track of outgoing food items is to print out this chart and keep it in a clipboard by the food collection area. Schools can either assign students to maintain the record or have a parent / staff volunteer do it. The process can be tailored to your specific situation as long as it is filled out daily.

