

School Food Safety Checklist

Instructions

This comprehensive food safety checklist is designed to help schools maintain the highest standards of food safety across all stages of food handling, from sourcing to serving. Staff responsible for food safety should review each section daily and document completion to ensure compliance and readiness for inspections.

Date: _____

Reviewed by: _____

1. Food Sourcing and Purchasing

Approved Suppliers:

- Verify suppliers are certified, licensed and compliant with local food safety regulations.
- Request and file copies of supplier inspection records and certifications.

Inspection of Deliveries:

- Check temperatures of perishable goods upon delivery using a calibrated thermometer.
- Ensure packaging is intact, with no signs of leaks, dents, rust or tampering.
- Inspect produce for visible freshness, discoloration or spoilage.

Documentation:

- Record each delivery's date, time, items received and the condition of all items.
- Log the person responsible for receiving and inspecting each delivery.

2. Food Storage (continued)

Temperature Control:

- Ensure cold storage areas maintain consistent temperatures (refrigerators at or below 40°F, freezers at or below 0°F).
- Use thermometers in each storage area, check daily and log temperatures for record-keeping and compliance.

Storage Practices:

- Store raw meats, poultry and seafood below other foods to prevent cross-contamination.
- Label and date all items upon arrival and use the First In, First Out (FIFO) method.
- Ensure proper storage for dry goods; keep items off the floor and in cool, dry areas.

Expiration and Disposal:

- Conduct regular checks of expiration dates; discard any expired or spoiled items immediately.
- Designate disposal bins for expired items and ensure bins are emptied promptly.

3. Food Preparation

Hand Hygiene:

- Ensure all staff wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water, especially after using the restroom, touching face or handling raw foods.
- Display handwashing signs near all sinks as reminders for staff and students.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- Require hairnets or caps for all food preparation staff.
- All wounds should be covered with a clean, waterproof bandage and, if on hands, covered with gloves.
- Ensure gloves are worn when handling ready-to-eat foods and changed frequently, especially after handling different types of food.

Sanitizing Work Surfaces:

- Clean and sanitize countertops, cutting boards and utensils after each task.
- Use color-coded cutting boards and utensils to prevent cross-contamination (e.g., separate boards for raw meats, vegetables and ready-to-eat foods).

Temperature and Cooking Protocols:

- Use thermometers to ensure internal temperatures meet safety standards (e.g., 165°F for poultry, 145°F for seafood).
- Allow for temperature stabilization by resting cooked meats as required for safe serving.

4. Food Serving

Temperature Control for Serving:

- Use insulated containers or chafing dishes to maintain hot foods at or above 140°F and cold foods at or below 40°F.

- Use a food thermometer at regular intervals to check temperatures during serving.

Serving Utensils and Methods:

- Use separate serving utensils for each food item to prevent cross-contamination.
- Avoid bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods; encourage the use of tongs, scoops and gloves.

Safe Buffet Practices:

- Regularly replace utensils and ensure that serving containers are refilled with fresh food, never adding new food to old batches.
- Keep children from touching food directly and supervise self-serve options to prevent contamination.

Allergen Awareness at Serving:

- Label all food items clearly, including potential allergens, and provide alternative serving options.
- Train staff to be aware of common allergens and to avoid cross-contact between allergen-containing and allergen-free foods.

5. Cleaning and Sanitation

Daily Cleaning Routine:

- Clean and sanitize all food prep surfaces, kitchen equipment and floors after each meal service.
- Ensure that high-touch areas such as doorknobs, refrigerator handles and faucet taps are cleaned frequently.

Dishwashing Protocols:

- Use high-temperature dishwashers or follow the three-sink method (wash, rinse, sanitize).
- Verify that all dishwashing equipment meets local health department standards and has been properly cleaned.

Waste Disposal and Pest Control:

- Empty trash cans regularly and clean bins daily to prevent odors and pests.
- Seal food storage areas and ensure pest prevention protocols, such as traps and regular inspections, are in place.

Weekly and Monthly Cleaning:

- Schedule deeper cleaning weekly for hard-to-reach areas and monthly checks for any equipment requiring professional servicing or replacement.

6. Staff Training and Safety Compliance

- Food Safety and Allergen Training:**
- Provide comprehensive training for staff on food safety basics, allergen management and hygiene best practices.
- Conduct refresher courses quarterly and maintain records of training completion.

Routine Compliance Audits:

- Conduct internal inspections regularly, reviewing compliance with food safety practices.
- Keep detailed logs of each audit, noting areas of improvement and any corrective actions taken.

Emergency Procedures and Incident Reporting:

- Establish protocols for handling foodborne illness reports or food safety incidents.
- Document incidents and report to local health authorities when necessary.

7. Allergy Management

Allergen-Free Designation:

- Designate a specific area in the kitchen and prep zones as allergen-free zones to prevent cross-contact.

Labeling and Cross-Contact Prevention:

- Clearly label all allergen-containing foods with standard icons or signs.
- Use dedicated equipment and utensils for allergen-free foods to avoid cross-contact.

Allergy Training and Education:

- Train all staff on the risks associated with food allergens, emphasizing common allergens such as nuts, gluten, dairy, soy and shellfish.
- Educate staff on recognizing and responding to allergic reactions, including the use of epinephrine auto-injectors.

Communication and Allergy Alerts:

- Implement a system for tracking and alerting staff about student allergies.
- Ensure parents are notified of any potential allergen exposure and provide ingredient lists when requested.

8. Documentation and Recordkeeping

Daily Logs and Records:

- Log temperatures of storage areas, food items and equipment throughout the day to ensure consistent compliance.
- Document cleaning schedules, signing off upon completion.

Incident Reports and Corrective Actions:

- Maintain a detailed record of all foodborne illness complaints, safety breaches and the corrective actions taken.
- Keep records for at least 90 days for auditing purposes and to support regulatory inspections.

Inspection Records:

- File health inspection records, audit reports and compliance certificates in an accessible location for reference.
- Address any corrective actions noted in inspection reports immediately and document the resolution.