

Standard Operating Procedures: Equipment & Facility Request

EQUIPMENT USE

Use of kitchen and associated equipment by others who are not employed by Child Nutrition Services Department is strictly prohibited. Equipments/facilities contain food and supplies used primarily for serving federally-subsidized school meals to children and are designed primarily for such purposes. Use of equipment/facility can not infringe on the original and necessary purpose of the facilities.

CNS equipment *may be used only if* facility has been approved and reserved (via Request for Use of Facility), and CNS staff member is hired to work that event. CNS equipment *may not* be “borrowed” and/or removed from the school.

Equipment used for the Food and Nutrition Programs shall be used by the School Food Authority (Mercedes Child Nutrition Services) in the program(s) that it was acquired for as long as needed.

When equipment is no longer needed for the program, the equipment may be used in other USDA programs, provided the use will not interfere with the work/program for which the equipment was originally acquired.

First preference shall be given to other USDA programs for use. If acquiring replacement equipment, the SFA may use the equipment to be replaced as a trade-in or sell the property and use the proceeds to offset the cost of the replacement property.

In the event a Kitchen/Cafeteria or associated equipment must be used, such as ovens, serving counter, dishwasher, etc. the campus must submit a Use of Facility Request Form and provide a budget account number to reimburse Child Nutrition Services the labor cost incurred by having a trained and certified food service employee present during the event. No employee will be asked or required to work without compensation.

Refrigeration and freezer units shall be used only for the storage and preservation of foods to be used on school premises in connection with School Board-approved activities (*Use of Facility Request needs to have been submitted and approved by School Board*).

These food items will only be stored for up to 48 hours prior to the scheduled/approved event.

PROCUREMENT

Because of potential liability resulting from cross contamination, all foods/beverages shall be purchased through the established procurement methods. Mercedes Child Nutrition Services belongs to the South Texas Cooperative and purchases all foods/beverages through this cooperative. The vendors/manufacturers that participate in this cooperative follow strict safety and sanitations procedures that ensure the safety of all products delivered to our district. Foods brought into kitchen from a commercial licensed facility in

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which is inspected by the Health Department and would generally pose no serious health problems.

***Best Practice:** Organization shall make arrangements with CNS personnel to purchase food items with 3-4 weeks lead time.*

***Reminder:** Use of equipment/facility can not infringe on the original and necessary purpose of the facilities. Food items are not to interfere with the everyday operation of the CNS department or create food safety concerns.*

POT LUCK & COVERED DISHES

Cafeteria staff **may not prepare** special meals in place of, or in addition to the published meal **during CNS scheduled work hours**. When an organization or persons bring prepared foods in serving dishes ready for the guests to serve themselves, CNS assumes no responsibility for preparation, quality, sanitation, and/or wholesomeness of items provided by outside sources. Serving utensils and containers is the total responsibility of the individual(s) providing the food.

If CNS equipment is needed by the organization, a member from CNS staff must be on duty and will be paid at the established rate. No employee will be asked or required to work without compensation.

REQUEST FOR USE OF FACILITY

REQUEST FORMS

Forms requesting for the use of facilities can be obtained on the Mercedes ISD website. All requests must be submitted to the Construction & Facilities Department (Maintenance) at least 30 days prior to the event to allow for processing.

NOTIFICATION

CNS Director must be notified 3 weeks prior to the scheduled event to allow time to schedule an employee to work and order any necessary food items.

USE LIMITATIONS

Use of facilities/equipment is prohibited during school hours when such use will interfere with school meals. At no time will kitchen/equipment be used by groups or other activities during the regular school meal preparation and serving time.

FOOD SAFETY & SANITATION

Federal and state regulations require the district to maintain food and nutrition facilities in conformance with strict sanitation and health standards. These standards must be met at all times, including when CNS facilities/equipment is being used for functions other than school meal preparation.

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KEYS

Only CNS Director, Field Supervisor, and manager will have access to keys to the storage room, freezer, refrigerators, and office spaces.

SUPERVISION OF USE

One or more CNS employee must be present and onsite when CNS facility or equipment is in use. This employee will be responsible for supervising the use of equipment and supplies, protecting CNS property, and ensuring compliance with food safety regulations.

LABOR FEES

When CNS facilities are being used a CNS employee is required to be present and compensated at an hourly rate approved by the district. The employee hourly rate will not end until the CNS facility and serving area are cleaned, sanitized, and secured. CNS staff will be available to offer direction and guidance only. Preparation, service, and cleaning are the responsibility of the event coordinator.

***Note:** If a catering request was submitted and approved along with the request for use of facilities then CNS employee will be responsible for preparation, service, and clean up.*

STORING FOOD ITEMS

- No home prepared food items or personal food storage is allowed in kitchen.
- Foods brought into kitchen must be from an approved vendor or from a commercial licensed facilities in which are inspected by the Local Health Department and would generally pose no serious health problems (i.e., party trays from HEB deli).
- All food items must be in the original container/package.
- Temperatures of potentially hazardous food items must have been properly maintained prior to entering CNS kitchen. If manager suspects that time and temperature regulations have been compromised, food items will be refused.
- Cafeteria Manager will store perishable foods purchased from a commercial licensed facility for no more than 48 hours prior to the scheduled/approved event.
- Cafeteria Manager may request receipt of purchased food items as proof that food item was indeed bought at a commercial licensed facility.
- Donated potentially hazardous food items i.e., ground beef, eggs, etc. **will not be accepted** for the use in fund-raising activities. Organization must make arrangements with CNS to purchase such items with 3-4 weeks lead time.

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EXPECATIONS FOR USE OF FACILITY

Organizations/groups shall agree to the following expectations prior to using CNS facilities/equipment:

- Provide responsible adult supervision during the event.
- Do not use CNS Department cleaning supplies, condiments, and other disposable paper products (plastic ware, plates, foil, film, etc.)
- The cost of replacing or repairing any equipment of supplies damaged or removed from the facility during an event will be charged back to the responsible group.
- The group is responsible for leaving the facility completely clean and in order.
- Obtain approval from CNS supervisor in advance to store food products in refrigerator and/or freezer. All food items must be acquired from approved sources and meet state food regulation guidelines.
- For safety reasons, students and small children are not allowed in the food preparation area.