

DON'T WASTE FOOD SC

PREVENT • DONATE • COMPOST

FOOD RECOVERY GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), S.C. Department of Education and the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) encourage schools to prevent food waste through menu planning and “offer versus serve.”

Schools are encouraged to manage any unwanted items from students on **share tables or donation** of any unexpected excess prepared food to nonprofits.

SHARE TABLES

Share tables are defined by the USDA as carts and/or tables where a child can place unwanted food and beverage items. These tables provide an opportunity for other children to take additional helpings of food or beverages at no cost to them.

THE BASICS

- Carefully plan, promote and train staff.
- **Follow federal and state food safety requirements.**
- Establish clear guidelines with students and staff for items that may or may not be shared.
- Include a sign with clear instructions on the table or cart.
- It is recommended faculty or staff monitor this process.



WHAT FOODS ARE ALLOWED ON SHARE TABLES?

- Non-temperature controlled, pre-packaged products such as cereal packs, crackers, drinks and food bars are allowed.
- Wrapped fruit and vegetables as well as fruit with a thick skin such as bananas and oranges are allowed.
- Temperature-controlled, pre-packaged products such as cheese and milk are allowed but must be placed in a refrigerator, cooler or ice bath.

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- Students are allowed to place their unwanted food on the share table or in the designated refrigerator or cooler during lunch.
- The monitor should inspect any food or beverage to make sure it has not been contaminated (e.g., opened, partially consumed) and the original packaging is in sound condition.

FOOD DONATION

THE BASICS

- Carefully plan this new initiative. Develop a system to recover, label and store food for donation. Promote the plan and train appropriate staff.
- Meet with local nonprofit organizations to clarify the best methods for food recovery.
- Determine how the food will arrive at the charitable organization. Will volunteers pick it up once a week? Set up the best time and day that works best for cafeteria staff.
- Follow federal and state food safety requirements.
- Schools are protected from liability under the federal **Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act** as well as South Carolina legislation.



WHAT FOOD CAN BE DONATED?

- According to the USDA, if prepared food exceeds the amount needed for the reimbursable meal service, schools may donate it to nonprofit organizations as long as state and local health standards are met.
- All potentially donated food should be stored separately in a container labeled "Food for Donation" and dated.



Visit www.scdhec.gov/dontwastefoodsc for more information on share tables and school donation.

