



Guidance for School Food Service Volunteers

INTRODUCTION:

Food service workers serve a high volume of food during the fast-paced school lunch food service. Teachers, school staff, or other volunteers may want to assist the lunch program staff.

Per State food safety regulations (Chapter 246-217 "WAC FOOD WORKER CARDS), a food service worker is defined as an individual who works (or intends to work) with or without pay in a food service establishment and handles unwrapped or unpackaged food or who may contribute to the transmission of infectious diseases through the nature of his/her contact with food products and/or equipment and facilities. **This does not include students in K-12 schools who periodically assist with school meal service.**



Based on this definition, teachers, school staff or other volunteers who are adults and would like to help with food service during school lunches are considered food workers and must obtain the proper training and possess a current Washington State issued food worker card.

This document outlines tasks that can be completed by individuals who do not hold current food worker cards. All other tasks not specifically stated on this form will require the individual to obtain a food worker card.

PERSON IN CHARGE (PIC):

The person in charge (PIC) is responsible for ensuring proper food handling in the permitted kitchen. This responsibility also applies to student volunteers, teachers, school staff or other volunteers.

PERMITTED TASKS WITHOUT A FOOD WORKER CARD:

- Enter the kitchen to wash hands. Handwashing must be completed as outlined in Chapter WAC 246-215 prior to participating in any of the tasks listed here.
- Use cafeteria supplied utensils that have been properly washed/rinsed/sanitized to serve students.
- Handle pre-packaged foods such as yogurts, pre-portioned fruit cups, chips, granola bars.
- Monitor a share table to ensure only allowed foods are available for sharing. May remove fruit with edible peels and return to kitchen to be washed by a kitchen staff member.
- Monitor the waste sorting table to prevent bin contamination.



- Wipe the lunch tables. Only adult volunteers who have been trained in chemical safety should use sanitizers. Students should avoid contact with chemical cleaners and use towels with soapy water instead.
- Monitor the self-serve areas to ensure proper handling of food by students.

TASKS THAT REQUIRE A FOOD WORKER CARD:

All tasks excluding those outlined above are considered to be “food handling” and require the volunteer to obtain a Washington State issued food worker card. The food worker test is \$10 and takes about 30 minutes to complete online at <https://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/food-worker-testing>. You can also get one in person at the Center for Community Health, located at 1601 E Fourth Plain Blvd., Building 17, Vancouver, WA 98666.

STUDENT HELPERS

K-12 students who volunteer on an occasional basis are exempt from this requirement and do not need to obtain a food worker card. The PIC shall closely monitor student volunteers to ensure they are observing the following practices:

- Always wash hands immediately when entering the kitchen.
- Have hair pulled back.
- Remove necklaces, jewelry, or any other item that could come into contact with food.
- Do not wear loose clothing that could get caught or come into contact with food.
- Wear closed toe shoes.
- Students should use only soapy water for cleaning. Do not use any sanitizers or chemicals.



Note: High school kitchen employees are considered food workers and are required to have a food worker card.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

If you have questions about this guidance or food worker card requirements, please email Clark County Public Health at DLCntyHealthSchools@clark.wa.gov.

Always check with your school’s internal policies before allowing food service volunteers as they may be stricter than the guidelines outlined here.