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## On Sept. 7, Dept. of Education's 'No V.I. Child Goes Hungry' Feeding Initiative Will Resume Territory-Wide Operation

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The V.I. Dept. of Education announced Saturday that the feeding initiative, “No V.I. Child Goes Hungry”, will operate in both districts beginning Sept. 7 following the suspension of the program in the St. Thomas-St. John District on Aug. 23, due to the rise in Covid-19 cases among the district's food service workers.

Workers in the St. Thomas-St. John and St. Croix districts have undergone Covid-19 testing and/or been vaccinated, and provided additional training to ensure the feeding program can operate safely, D.O.E. said.

The department said parents and/or guardians are invited to pick up packaged breakfast and lunch meals at designated sites in or near their neighborhoods, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 9-11:30 a.m., while supplies last. Meals are not served on weekends or holidays. Students attending in-person classes beginning Sept. 7 will receive their meals at school. The Ricardo Richards distribution site on St. Croix has closed due to low participation at that location.

The initiative has served more than 1,071,897 meals to students attending the territory's public, private, and parochial schools since campuses closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, said D.O.E. The program is now in its third year.

“While our kitchen workers have undergone COVID-19 training this summer and multiple times last school year, with the emergence of the more-contagious and deadlier Delta variant, we are making every effort to further prepare workers to safely handle food and navigate the kitchen environment,” said Assistant Commissioner Victor Somme III, whose office spearheads the feeding initiative. “Many Virgin Islands’ families depend on us to provide nutritious meals for their children, and we want to ensure our employees feel confident in practicing the required safety protocols while preparing those meals.”

ID is not required when picking up meals; however, masks are required to be worn and recipients are asked to remain in their vehicles for drive-through service.