

MEAL MODIFICATIONS FOR SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

Students

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I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assist in identifying the responsibilities of the school district in serving special meals to students who have special dietary needs.

II. General Statement of Policy

The United States Department of Agriculture regulations require that substitutions and modifications in school meals be made for children whose disabilities restrict their diets. Substitutions to the meal pattern, or modifications to a food item, are required for those students with disabilities who are unable to consume the regular program meals.

III. Parent or Guardian Responsibilities

A parent or legal guardian who has a child with a possible special dietary need that may require special dietary accommodations shall do the following:

1. Notify the school of any food allergy, disability or special dietary need.
2. Provide medical certification approved by a recognized medical authority.
3. Participate in any meetings or discussions regarding the student's meal plan.
4. Notify the school of any changes relating to the food allergy or special dietary need.

IV. School Site Responsibilities

1. Identify children requiring diet modifications. This will be accomplished primarily through registration materials and parental contact.
2. The school nurse or nurse assistant will be notified and begin the process for the implementation of a special dietary plan.
3. Request medical certification from parent or guardian.
4. Send the medical certification to the head cook.
5. Additional responsibilities may include educational awareness for staff and students related to field trips, classroom parties, allergy alert identification and intervention.
6. Communicate plan requirements to all potential participants.
7. Monitor and update the plan as needed.

V. School Lunch Program Responsibilities

1. Provide food item substitutions for students based on medical need supported by a medical certification by a recognized medical authority. Menus will not be modified based on religious or personal preference.
2. Provide training to staff on how to react to allergies and how to modify menus.
3. Communicate with parents, staff and medical authorities regarding diet modifications.
4. Maintain special diet information on each student and update annually.

VI. Special Diet Statement for a Participant with a Disability

The determination of whether a participant has a disability, and whether the disability restricts the participant's diet, is to be made by a recognized medical authority. Recognized medical authorities are the following: medical doctors; physician assistants; and certified nurse practitioners.

The Special Meal Plan must identify:

1. The participant's disability and an explanation of why the disability restricts the participant's diet.
2. Which of the major life activities is affected by the disability.
3. The food or foods to be omitted from the participant's diet and the food OR choice of foods that **must** be substituted.

If a participant with a disability only requires a modification in food texture (such as chopped, ground or pureed foods), written instructions indicating the appropriate food texture is recommended, but not required. Unless otherwise specified by the medical authority, meals will consist only of food items and quantities that are normally provided in the regular menus.

VII. Food Allergies and Intolerances

Generally, a participant with a food allergy or a food intolerance is not considered to be a person with a disability. However, when in the medical assessment, the allergy to the food could result in a life-threatening reaction, the student is considered to have a disability and food substitutions prescribed by the medical authority **must** be provided.

VIII. Milk / Lactose Intolerance Guidelines

State Law on Lactose Intolerance for School Nutrition Programs

The responsibility of a school food authority to provide substitutions for any child with lactose intolerance is specified in state law (Minnesota Statutes section 124D. 114). Under this law, a school district that participates in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program and receives a written request from a parent/guardian shall make available:

- Lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk; or,
- Milk fortified with lactase in liquid, tablet, granular or other form; or,
- Milk to which lactobacillus acidophilus has been added.

The school is **not allowed** to substitute juice (fruit or vegetable) or any soy- or rice-based beverage that is not nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk for a participant who is lactose intolerant.