

## **Accommodating Children With Special Dietary Needs**

The School Nutrition Program Manager and staff along with the Central Office staff, all have the same goal – to ensure that the food served in the cafeteria is nutritious and safe for all of our students. If your child has special food and/or nutrition needs or allergies, please notify your local school nurse to begin the process of developing a Health Care Plan that is specific to his or her needs.

### **Accommodating Students with Disabling & Non-Disabling Special Dietary Needs**

USDA Regulation 7CFR Part 15, requires that we maintain a Physician's order for all special dietary needs.

#### **Physician's Statement for Children with Disabilities \***

USDA Regulations 7 CFR Part 15b require that schools participating in a federal Child Nutrition Program (School Lunch, School Breakfast, or After School Snack) make substitutions or modifications in school meals for children who are unable to eat school meals because of a disability\* that restricts their diet. A child with a disability must be provided substitutions in foods when that need is supported by a statement signed by a licensed physician or other State licensed health care professional authorized to write medical prescriptions under State law. The statement must identify:

- The child's disability;
- An explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet;
- The major life activity affected by the disability;
- The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet; and
- The food or choice of foods that must be provided as the substitute

Examples of a disability include, but are not limited to: Cerebral Palsy, Prader-Willi Syndrome, Cystic Fibrosis (CF), Spina Bifida, etc.

**\*Only a physician can declare if a student has a disability.**

#### **Medical Statement for Children with Special Dietary Needs**

In order to make modifications or substitutions to the school meal, schools must have a written medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority identifying the following:

The medical statement must include:

- An identification of the medical or other special dietary condition which restricts the child's diet;
- The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet; and
- The food or foods to be substituted.

In Georgia, a recognized medical authority includes a physician, physician assistant, and nurse practitioner.

Please submit the most recent physician's order or medical statement to your school nurse and café manager so that we may update your child's record. Thank you for your assistance in helping us to keep your child safe at school.

Please click [here](#) for access to the Health Care Plan to be completed by a physician.

## **Student Allergies**

Medical documentation from the attending physician must be provided to the School Nutrition Program Manager and should state at a minimum: the diagnosis and the extent of exposure that prompts an allergic reaction; recommended measures for prevention; and treatment/response in the school environment. Written permission from the parent to contact the attending physician may be requested.

### **Procedures for Prevention of Allergic Reaction in Children Sensitive to Peanuts**

- Generally, children with food allergies or intolerances do not have a disability as defined under either Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or Part B of IDEA.
- Supporting medical documentation from the attending physician outlining the student's diagnosis and extent of exposure resulting in an allergic reaction is provided to the School Nutrition Program Manager and the Central Office Nutrition Department.
- School Nutrition Program personnel are trained in cross contamination prevention through the National Restaurant Association's ServSAFE program. Work surfaces, hands, and cooking utensils are thoroughly washed and sanitized in between preparation of different foods/recipes. Clean gloves are to be used when preparing different foods that might be contaminated by the offending allergen.
- Elementary Schools do not serve products that contain nuts. However, as with any commercially manufactured foods, some products may be produced on equipment used for (or in a facility used to) produce other allergen containing products such as milk, soy, wheat, and nuts. These items are **not** identified on the serving line.
- A student's meal account can be flagged in the POS to identify the nut allergy so the cashier can assist in monitoring the student's selections. The School Nutrition Program Manager may opt to substitute items for students with a physician's statement on file.
- Schools may opt to offer a peanut free table or alternate location in the building (i.e. the student's classroom) for the student to eat lunch if the sensitivity level necessitates such action.
- The allergic student should not trade food with classmates. The safest policy is to have the allergic student eat only the snacks and goodies brought in from their own home.
- An ingredient label notebook is located in the School Nutrition Department Office located at 205 LaFayette Avenue in Fayetteville. Parents are welcome to schedule a time to come in to look through the notebook to assist their child with making safe selections from the menu.
- Fayette County Public School System does not claim to be completely Peanut Free and the School Nutrition Program cannot control the manufacturing or shipping environment of the products we serve.
- Manufacturer formulations are subject to change without notice. Substitutions may be made for products depending on product availability.

For severe cases requiring a 504 plan, a meeting should be scheduled with the parent. Recommended attendees should include the parent, school administrator, school nurse, school nutrition manager, and teacher(s). Prior to the scheduled meeting medical documentation should be shared with the school team. A school nutrition program administrator and special education program administrator may also need to be involved in the initial meeting.

## **Milk Substitutions for Non-Disability Students**

For students with non-disabling special dietary needs which restrict their intake of milk, the following applies.

- Parents/guardians or a recognized medical authority (physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner) may request a fluid milk substitute for a student with a non-disabling medical dietary need, such as milk intolerance, or due to cultural, religious, or ethnic beliefs. The request must be made in writing.
- The written request from a parent/guardian or medical authority must identify the student's medical or special dietary need that prevents them from consuming cow's milk. Specifically referring to milk substitutions, a "special dietary need" can refer to cultural, ethnic, or religious needs, as well as medical needs.
- Nondairy beverages offered as a fluid milk substitute must meet the established nutrient standards, as indicated in Question 20 in USDA memo SP 07-2010, and the GaDOE SNP Criteria and Procedure MS-03-01: Fluid Milk Substitutions.
- **Juice and water cannot be substituted for fluid milk as part of the reimbursable meal even when requested by a physician.** Some schools may routinely offer fruit or vegetable juices on their menus as options for a fruit or vegetable choice. **Fruit and/or vegetable juices cannot be offered in place of milk, but only as a fruit or vegetable choice for all students.** All juice must be 100% strength.
- If the school is opting to make a milk substitute available for non-disabling dietary needs, products must meet the USDA nutrient standards for milk substitute as outlined below:

### **Milk Substitute Nutrition Standards - Nutrients Per Cup (8 Fl. Oz.)**

Calcium – 276 mg

Protein – 8 g

Vitamin A – 500 IU

Vitamin D – 100 IU

Magnesium – 24 mg

Phosphorus – 222 mg

Potassium – 349 mg

Riboflavin - .44 mg

Vitamin B-12 – 1.1 mcg

## **Responsibility of Parents**

- Notify the school of any food allergy, disability or special dietary need.
- Provide a Medical Statement completed by a physician (disability), a recognized medical authority (non-disabling special dietary need), or the parent (non-disabling special dietary needs for milk only).
- Participate in any meetings or discussions regarding the student's meal plan. Maintain a healthy line of communication with the school.
- Notify the school of any changes relating to the special dietary need (A new Medical Statement is required if the diet changes).
- Update student files each school year.

## **Responsibility of School Health Services Professional**

- Notify the School Nutrition Manager of any student with a food allergy, disability or special dietary need.
- Provide a Medical Statement to the School Nutrition Manager that is completed by a physician (disability), a recognized medical authority (non-disabling special dietary need), or the parent (non-disabling special dietary needs for milk only).
- Participate in any meetings or discussions regarding the student's meal plan. Maintain a healthy line of communication with the School Nutrition Program Manager.
- Notify the School Nutrition Program Manager of any changes relating to the special dietary need (A new Medical Statement is required if the diet changes).
- Update student files each school year and provide this information to the School Nutrition Program Manager so that he/she may update their files.

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