

Standard Operating Procedure

Special Diets

Purpose: To address food allergies and food intolerances among students and to accommodate to the dietary needs prescribed to them by a licensed physician advanced practice nurse with prescriptive authority or physician assistant.

Scope: This procedure applies to participating students, parents, physician, nutrition services, and designated school nurse.

Issue: Food allergies and food intolerances have become more common among children. A food allergy is an immune subsystem reaction that a student may experience after eating or being in contact with a certain food. A food intolerance has a similar affect as a food allergy but with a delayed reaction. Food allergies/intolerance can range from being mild to severe or even life threatening. For this reason, it is important to be aware of the food allergies/intolerances that exist among students and know how to prevent a reaction. To help prevent an incident it is important for the parent to communicate the student's dietary needs to the school through a *Medical Statement for Disability- School Meal Modification* form or a *Medical Statement to Request Site Meal Modification* form.

Instructions:

1. Educate parents and students about the importance of communicating the student's dietary needs to the school and checking the school monthly menu to identify allergens in the food provided in the School Café.
2. Educate lunch servers, nutrition service staff on the importance of identify students with special diets to serve them as indicated in their medical forms.
3. Distribute letters or emails requesting parents to complete a new or update their child's meal modification form if their child has a food allergy or food intolerance.
 - a. If the student has a food allergy/intolerance or other medical condition that does no rise to the level of a disability the *Medical Statement to Request School Meal Modification* form should be filled out by the parent or guardian and signed by the student's licensed physician or medical authority.
 - b. If the student has a food allergy/intolerance or other medical condition that raises to the level of disability the *Medical Statement for Dietary Disability – School Meal Modification* form should be filled out by the parent or guardian and signed by the student's licensed physician or medical authority.
 - a. The definition of a disability is “any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activity, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.”

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- b. Examples of a dietary disability include orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, metabolic diseases, food anaphylaxis, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction or alcoholism.
4. The school nurse should collect these forms and send them to nutrition services.
5. Appoint a staff member to document meal modification forms and keep the *Students with Special Diets* spreadsheet updated.
6. The kitchen manager should monitor the kitchen staff while preparing meals for students with special meals and while serving them.
7. Meals for students with special diets should be prepared and stored separately to prevent cross contamination.
 - a. Cross contamination is the process of which an ingredient or microorganism unintentionally transfer from one food item to another with a potential harmful effect.
 - b. Cross contamination can occur if food products are cooked with the same equipment or utensils. Cross contamination can also occur if food is stored in the same space.
 - c. To prevent cross contamination food should be handled with care by changing gloves, cleaning surfaces, and changing equipment while handling allergens.
8. The student will communicate with the servers if they have any meal modifications, so they are able to serve them the appropriate meal.
9. Students will clean up their eating area as usual and throw away their trash.
10. Appoint someone to collect data on which students with special diets had lunch during the week.
 - a. If any problems occur throughout the week, the school nurse and nutrition services should be notified immediately.
11. If a student no longer needs a meal modification, the parents will need to have the *Discontinuation of School Meal Modification* form for their student signed by the prescribed licensed physician or medical authority.
 - a. This form should be given to the school nurse who will inform nutrition services.
 - b. The person appointed will remove the student from the *Students with Special Diets* spreadsheet.

Cross-contamination

Cross contamination of foods can pose a potential danger when handling foods of students with special dietary needs. Cross contamination must be considered while serving students with a dietary restriction. It is important, that kitchen staff members are aware of the importance of preventing cross contamination and how to handle food properly. Kitchen staff should be able to identify students with

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special dietary needs and serve them the appropriate food items to prevent an allergic reaction.

Monitor:

1. The kitchen manger will monitor kitchen staff as they prepare special meals to prevent cross contamination.
2. The kitchen manger will also monitor kitchen staff as they serve students with special diets to assure they are getting meals that meet their dietary needs.
3. The school nurse will maintain records of the of students will specials needs and will keep nutrition services updated if any changes occur.

Expectations:

1. Continue to encourage parents to complete meal modifications forms and keep them updated.
2. Also encourage parents to check the school menu and select foods their child can eat and help substitute foods they can't eat.
3. Continue to encourage nutritional staff to practice safe food handling techniques and prevent cross contamination.
4. Meet students' dietary needs by replacing certain foods while still meeting their nutritional needs.
5. A system will be in place to better communicate about students with food allergies and food intolerance.
6. Prevent allergic reactions and food intolerances by providing students that have special diets, meals tailored to meet their needs.

Impact:

1. The School Café will keep students with a food allergy/intolerance safe and prevent any health complications.
2. Nutrition services, kitchen staff, and the school nurse will develop a strong system that will keep students safe while eating school meals.
3. The School Café will be able to meet the student's dietary needs while also meeting their nutritional needs.
4. The Café will be able to assist students to communicate their dietary needs while receiving meals.

Maintenance:

1. Parents will need to complete a new meal modification form every school year to keep the *Students with Special Diets* spreadsheet updated.
2. The school nurse will communicate with nutrition services if any changes occur and monitor any incidents that occur.
3. Kitchen manger will provide training on special diets among students and cross contamination to new staff and existing staff as needed.

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Parent/Guardian

Date

School Nurse

Date

Nutrition Services Manager

Date

Nutrition Service Director

Date