

Swain County Schools

School Nutrition Department

Procedures

Special Meal Accommodations: Meal Substitutions for Medical or Special Dietary Reasons

USDA Regulation 7 CFR Part 15b requires substitutions or modifications in school meals for children whose disabilities restrict their diets. A child with a disability must be provided food substitutions when that need is supported by a signed statement from a licensed physician.

In Cases of Food Allergy

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. The school food service may, but is not required to, make food substitutions for them. However, when in the licensed physician's assessment, food allergies may result in severe, life-threatening (anaphylactic) reactions, the child's condition would meet the definition of "disability", and the substitutions prescribed by the licensed physician must be made.

School food service may make food substitutions, at their discretion, for individual children who do not have a disability, but who are medically certified as having a special medical or dietary need. Such determinations are only made on a case-by-case basis. This provision covers those children who have food intolerances or allergies, but do not have life-threatening reactions (anaphylactic) when exposed to the food(s) to which they have problems.

Medical Statement for Children with Special Dietary Needs

Each special dietary request must be supported by a statement explaining the requested food substitution and must be signed by a recognized medical authority. 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 choice of foods to be substituted.

If we do not receive a medical statement from a recognized medical authority, your child will receive a regular lunch tray. Medical statements completed by parents or guardians will not be accepted.

Date Effective: July 1, 2016

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The following steps must be followed in order to be considered for special meal accommodations.

1. The parent or guardian must obtain a form entitled “Medical Statement for Students with Special Nutritional Needs for School Meals”. This form can be found on the Swain County Schools website <http://www.swain.k12.nc.us/administrativeDepartment.aspx?aid=16>. The form is also available from the school nurse, cafeteria manager or school nutrition office in the central office annex.
2. Following the instructions on the Medical Statement for Students with Special Nutritional Needs for School Meals, the parent or guardian completes Part A of the form, next supplies the form to the student’s medical provider to complete Part B and then returns the completed form to the school nurse.
3. Once the forms are turned in, the School Nutrition Director will review the form. The School Nutrition Director may contact the parent or guardian for clarifications or to request a meeting to discuss the information provided on the form. With parental consent, other professionals knowledgeable about the student’s dietary needs may be contacted to help school staff design a school mealtime plan for the student, such as the student’s pediatrician, nurse, speech–language pathologist, occupational therapist, registered dietitian or personal care aide.
4. The School Nutrition Director along with other school administrators will make the final determination as to whether the special meal accommodation will be made. If special meal accommodations are to be made, the School Nutrition Director will contact the school cafeteria manager about what special meal accommodations are to be made. CAFETERIA MANAGERS/STAFF WILL MAKE NO SPECIAL MEAL ACCOMODATIONS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN APPROVED BY THE SCHOOL NUTRITION DIRECTOR. All communication concerning special meal accommodations including changes or updates on a student’s condition must be communicated to the School Nutrition Director and **NOT** directly to cafeteria staff.

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Nutritional Preferences

Swain County Schools Nutrition Program provides healthy, balanced meals that are aligned/in accordance with the latest nutrition science and the real world circumstances of America's schools. The School Nutrition Department understands that children can be “picky” eaters and also for various reasons, parents and children prefer that certain foods be omitted or added to the diet. The following is our policy and procedure for nutritional preferences:

1. Students are offered a minimum of two main entrée choices daily at breakfast and lunch. Additionally, our cafeterias operate under a provision called “Offer vs. Serve”. This means children can choose which items they want and are not required to take all items offered on the serving line (Note: $\frac{1}{2}$ c. serving of fruit or vegetable is required to be selected at both breakfast and lunch). Children that are served in the classroom are given all food items that comprise a full meal and are not offered a choice due to the logistics of serving meals in the classroom. Parents are encouraged to go over the menu with their children and encourage them to try new foods.
2. If a student is lactose intolerant, there are several options; 1) They can opt not to select milk with their meal, as long as they choose the minimum number of items from the other choices (see Offer vs Serve above). If they are being served in the classroom the meal is served as a unit including the milk, but parents may instruct their children to not drink the milk that comes with the meal. 2) In the case of parents who would like their child(ren) to receive lactose free milk, a medical statement is **not** required. Parents will still be required to fill out the “Parent Request for Fluid Milk Substitution Form” that can be found on the school website or from the school nurse and return it to the school.
3. Any special requests, such as a vegetarian diet, can be requested by filling out the “Parental Request for Special Diet” form. These requests will be evaluated on a case by case basis by the School Nutrition Director who will notify the parent if the request is approved or denied.
4. Parents of children with severe life threatening allergies, for example peanut allergies that are thought to be triggered by cross contact, may request that the school take steps to reduce the risk of allergic reaction to the child by limiting the use of certain food products in the school including the cafeteria. These requests will be reviewed and decided on a case by case basis by school administrators.

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