

SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS PROCEDURE

Accommodating Students with Special Dietary Needs

Warsaw Community Schools participates in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) school nutrition programs and must comply with the federal requirements for accommodating children with special dietary needs. Under the American with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA), a disability is defined as a medical condition and/or impairment that affects any major life function. Therefore, this means that possible modifications could include food restrictions or substitutions, texture changes (pureed, ground, chopped foods or thickened or thinned liquids), carbohydrate counts, increased or decreased calories, and tube feedings. Modifications to the meal service may also involve ensuring facilities and personnel are adequate to provide necessary services.

Medical Statement Forms and Other Required Documentation

All students needing meal modifications should submit a request for an accommodation using this form [Special Dietary Needs Request Form](#). Some cases will require a medical statement form that is signed by a medical authority with prescriptive authority, such as a Physician (MD or DO), Nurse Practitioner, or Physician Assistant. The completed medical statement must include the following information:

- Information about the student's physical or mental condition and/or impairment that requires the meal accommodation
- How the medical condition and/or impairment affects the student
- An explanation of what must be done to accommodate the student's condition and/or impairment
- The food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives (if applicable)

Medical statements should provide sufficient information to allow the school to provide meals that are appropriate and safe for each student. Schools have the right to contact a student's parents or guardians for clarification or necessary additional information. With a HIPAA and/or FERPA release signed by the student's parents or guardians, schools may contact the medical authorities specified on the form for more information or clarification.

While the school cannot discontinue an accommodation due to a lack of a medical statement, the school should continue to contact the family to obtain any necessary information. This is done to secure the safety of the student and ensure they are receiving meals that adequately meet their needs.

Religious or Lifestyle Accommodations

Warsaw Community Schools is not able to accommodate requests due to religious or lifestyle choices. Warsaw Community Schools also has the right to deny requests deemed "unreasonable" or that would change the scope of the school nutrition program. Schools are encouraged to work closely with families to provide appropriate accommodations.

Standard Operating Procedures

Warsaw Community Schools has specific food safety standard operating policies (SOPs) in place to protect those students that may have a food intolerance or allergy. This includes hand washing along with table, utensils, and other kitchen item washing procedures. Please contact the Director of Food Services at 574-371-5086 for additional information.

Working with Other School Staff

Food service will work with the 504 coordinator, school nurse and other staff as deemed appropriate, to make sure the accommodation is handled safely and correctly. The school nurse will work to create an Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHP) for appropriate students based on their medical needs.

504 Plans and IEPs

Based upon Federal laws that prohibit discrimination and ensure equal access to education, some students may have instructions for dietary accommodations written into a 504 Plan or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). If the 504 Plan or IEP involves special dietary needs, food service will be informed and will work with the student, family, and other staff to make the accommodation.

Procedural Safeguards

Parents of students that are requesting a meal accommodation have the right to:

- File a grievance if they believe a violation has occurred regarding the request for a reasonable modification;
- Receive a prompt and unbiased resolution of the grievance;
- Request and participate in an impartial hearing to resolve their grievances;
- Be represented by counsel at the hearing;
- Examine the record; and
- Receive notice of the final decision and a procedure for review, i.e., right to appeal the hearing's decision.

How to Discontinue Special Dietary Accommodations

If you wish to discontinue your child's special dietary accommodation or your child no longer requires a special dietary accommodation, please fill out the Discontinue Special Dietary Accommodations Form [here](#).

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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