

Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Program:

State Schools

Georgia Academy for the Blind*Atlanta Area School for the Deaf*Georgia School for the Deaf

FOOD ALLERGY POLICY

Revised 2/14/17

GENERAL GUIDANCE:

Is the school required to make accommodations for all students with food allergies?

Any food allergy may be a disability depending on an assessment by a licensed physician. Life-threatening food allergies, which may cause a severe reaction called anaphylaxis, are considered a disability. School nutrition programs are required to make reasonable accommodations for disabilities. Non-life-threatening allergies and a medical or other special dietary need may also be considered a disability. This too depends on the medical assessment of a licensed physician. School nutrition programs are encouraged, but not required to make food substitutions for students with special dietary needs that are not considered disabilities. **Most physical and mental impairments constitute a disability.*

What documentation is needed to make accommodations for a student with food allergies?

Students with food allergies must have a medical statement from a licensed physician that includes the following: the child's disability, in this situation a life threatening food allergy; 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 substituted.

To what length must school nutrition operations go to accommodate a child with a food allergy?

If a child's food allergy is considered a disability, a school must make a reasonable accommodation to provide an allergy-safe meal to the student and a safe environment in which to consume the meal. The school nutrition staff must work closely with parents and the school community to determine how best to meet the dietary needs of the child.

If making substitutions for students with food allergies costs extra money, where can I get funding?

A school cannot charge a student with allergies more than it charges other students. Extra expenses can be minimized by choosing an allergen-safe menu from the items already being offered. Additional funds could come from the school's general fund, or from resources listed in USDA's *Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs: Guidance for School Food Service Staff*. The Managing Food Allergies in School Nutrition Programs training is for school nutrition professionals to learn how to accommodate students with food allergies. It includes an overview of food allergies, reading and managing food labels, accommodating students with food-related disabilities, avoiding cross contact, and promoting food allergy management in schools.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Accommodating Students with Disabling Special Dietary Needs

Schools participating in a federal Child Nutrition Program (School Lunch, School Breakfast or After School Snack Program) are required to make accommodations for children who are unable to eat the school meals because of a **disability*** that restricts their diet. In order to make modifications or substitutions to the school meal, schools **must** have a written Medical Statement on file that is signed by a **licensed physician**. The statement must identify:

- The child's disability
- An explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet
- The food(s) to be omitted from the child's diet
- The food or choice of foods that must be provided as the substitute

***Only a physician can declare if a student has a disability.** *A state licensed healthcare professional who is authorized to write medical prescriptions.*

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Medical documentation from the attending physician **must be provided** to the 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.

- **Medical and Eating feeding** evaluation information is collected on Registration Day and during ongoing registration.

This information is then provided to the School Nurse, who develops and list of student with Allergies/Disabilities to be emailed/communicated to School Nutrition Manger. In addition, allergy information is also documented during initial IEP evaluation. 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 Student Services Coordinator.

Registration: The Student Services Coordinator enters all pertinent information Infinite Campus, our Student Information system. Under the Medical Tab of Infinite Campus, this information entered will generate a red flag on the Point of Sale terminal (POS) in the cafeteria. The student's meal account is flagged in Infinite campus to identify allergies/disabilities so the cashier can assist in monitoring the student's selections as the students pass through the breakfast/lunch line.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility of Parents

- Notify the school of any food allergy, disability or special dietary need.
- Provide 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). Be sure that lactose intolerance as defined by the medical statement is considered a disability as explained in section 1, paragraph 3 on page 5 of the policy.
- 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).

School Nurse Responsibility

- Collaborate with School Nutrition Program Director, school staff, parents, and physician to appropriately share pertinent information, obtain a copy of Medical Statement, and accommodate students with special dietary needs.
- Develop medical plan of care as appropriate (Individualized Healthcare Plan).

School Nutrition Program Responsibility

- Provide food substitutions for students according to Medical Statement. The school food service staff may not revise or change a diet prescription or medical order.
- Provide training to cafeteria personnel on how to properly accommodate students with special dietary needs. Maintain documentation of this training.
- Communicate with parents, staff, and medical authorities regarding diet modifications.
- Maintain Medical Statement on each student with a special dietary need. Diet orders are not required to be renewed on a yearly basis, however, the Georgia Department of Education recommends that you confirm, on a yearly basis, the diet order has not changed. If there are any changes to the diet, a new Medical Statement is required.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

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.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

1. Each state school has an Emergency Medical Team (EMT), consisting of trained staff professionals who in the event of an emergency have access, knowledge and training on procedures.
2. If "Medical Emergency" is announced via intercom or text message someone from the team will arrive to the designated reported area. Any person may call the clinic directly to notify a nurse. The person making the Emergency announcement will then call the clinic in addition.
3. All area workrooms in the building have a fully stocked First Aid Kit. Epi-pens are kept in the school clinic at all times. The nurses and Residential Services Director have access.
4. Annually staff members are trained or re-trained on CPR procedures during pre-planning activities. A nurse is a certified trainer and a team of day and evening staff is trained and prepared with CPR procedures.
5. Students suspected of having a severe food allergy or anaphylaxis will never be sent to the Nurse/Clinic office alone, if the available injectable medication is not within vicinity school personnel are directed to call the emergency medical system. (911) immediately.
6. The emergency plan is then activated with the delegated and trained staff member.
7. The School Level Superintendent and School Nurse is immediately contacted letting them know that it is an emergency allergy situation.

FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES

1. Teachers are to let the school nurse know ahead of time when going on a field trip along with the method of eating. (school lunch or purchased lunch off campus).
2. Teachers are responsible to take student emergency care plans, emergency contact information, and emergency medication with you on the field trip.
3. Teachers should know where the nearest emergency medical facilities are located when at the field trip site.
4. Teachers will work with the school nurse or school administrator to ensure a staff member is trained to administer emergency epinephrine attends the field trip. Only a trained staff member or parent of an individual student should carry and administer emergency medication on field trips. In some circumstances, a student may also be authorized to carry their own epinephrine. Two people (administrator, teacher, paraprofessional, residential adviser, parent, nurse) will verify and witness that medications are administered to the student for whom the medication is prescribed.
5. If a food allergy emergency occurs, follow the student's emergency care plan and notify parents, school administrator, and school nurse.
6. Make sure your phone is charged so you can respond quickly during an emergency.
7. Return medication immediately after the field trip to the school nurse or staff member responsible for student medication management.

FOOD ALLERGY SYMPTOMS

- Food allergy symptoms can include swollen lips, tongue, or eyes;
- itchiness, rash, or hives;
- nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea;
- congestion, hoarse voice, or trouble swallowing;
- wheezing or difficulty breathing; dizziness, fainting, or loss of consciousness;
- and mood change or confusion.

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Other Federal regulations

Based upon Federal laws that prohibit discrimination and ensure equal access to education, some students may have instructions for accommodating their special need written into a 504 Plan or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Typically, a team consisting of the school professionals and the parents collaborate to develop these plans. If the 504 Plan or IEP involves special dietary needs, the school nutrition program director should be involved.

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