

SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS POLICY

Special Dietary Needs for Students WITH Disabilities

- Student Nutrition Services is required to offer special meals, at no additional cost, to students whose disability restricts their diet as defined in USDA's nondiscrimination regulations, 7 CFR, Part 15b.
- A child with a disability must be provided substitutions of special foods, including special supplements, when a statement signed by a "state licensed healthcare professional" supports that need. CDE only permits the following state licensed healthcare professionals to complete and sign a written medical statement for a disability: licensed physicians, physician assistants, or nurse practitioners.
- The completion of the Medical Statement is required to ensure that the modified meal is reimbursable, and to ensure that any meal modifications meet nutrition standards that are medically appropriate for the child.
- Medical Statements are in effect until the condition changes or the student leaves the district. If the condition changes, a revised Medical Statement form signed by a state licensed healthcare professional must be submitted.
- For children with disabilities who only require modifications in texture (such as chopped, ground, or pureed foods), a recognized medical authority's written instruction, indicating the appropriate food texture is required.
- Schools are not required to provide a specific brand name food item that may be requested or identified on the written medical statement. Instead, the child affected by an allergy must be offered the appropriate food substitution which does not contain the allergen that adversely affects the child.

Special Dietary Needs of Students WITHOUT Disabilities

- Student Nutrition Services may make reasonable accommodations for students who are not disabled, but who are unable to consume a food item because of medical or other special dietary needs. Such determinations will be made on a case by case basis when supported by a statement (using the Medical Statement form), signed by a state licensed healthcare professional (licensed physicians, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner). This provision covers those students who have allergies or food intolerance's but do not have life-threatening or anaphylactic reactions.

B.S.D. does not make meal accommodations based on personal preferences or religious convictions.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians must provide a completed Medical Statement form that includes the following:

- Describe the physical or mental impairment sufficiently in order to understand how it should restrict a child's diet.
- Explain what must be done to accommodate a child's disability.
- Identify food or foods to be omitted from a child's diet.
- Recommend food or choice of foods that must be substituted in a child's meals.
- Signature of a "state licensed healthcare professional" and date.

To ensure accurate meal service, parents are requested to:

- Help to ensure students identify themselves during meals. Students can say "Aloha" to staff at the beginning of the serve line to help confirm that their special meal is needed and received.
- Communicate the student's special dietary need to school staff when the student transfers or promotes to a different school or district.
- Communicate any dietary change as prescribed by medical authority.
- Notify teachers, principals or after school activities/programs, regarding your child's allergy/disability.

Our policy, special meal request forms and Q & A's are also available at Beardsleyschool.org

Please contact us at (661) 392-8758 if you have any questions or concerns regarding this information.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: *My child has a dairy allergy. How do I arrange for milk-free foods?*

A: Please provide a signed Medical Statement from a “state licensed healthcare professional”. Food items that contain dairy such as milk, cheese or yogurt can be omitted or appropriate substitutions made if the specific foods are identified on the medical statement. There is no beverage substitution available for milk unless the student has a disability. Parents are encouraged to provide students with an appropriate beverage alternative from home. Water fountains are available at every school.

Q: *My child is lactose intolerant. What can Nutrition Services provide for my child?*

A: Please provide a signed Medical Statement with suggested substitutions from a “state licensed healthcare professional”. There is no beverage substitution available for milk unless the student has a disability. Parents are encouraged to provide students with an appropriate beverage alternative from home. Water fountains are available at every school.

Q: *Our family is vegetarian. Are vegetarian lunches provided?*

A: Sun-butter sandwiches are available if requested ahead of time. Vegetarian options are also available during the week and on the Junior High salad bar. Families following strict vegan regimes may need to provide lunch items from home.

Q: *My child is trying to lose weight. What options are available in the school cafeteria?*

A: Portion sizes are standardized and don’t permit “super sizing.” Menus are planned to provide the proper calorie and nutrient content for children within each grade range.

Q: *What if I disagree with the schools decision?*

A: You should talk to school officials. You may also ask for a hearing by calling or writing to:

Anne Lerma, Director Student Nutrition: 1001 Roberts Lane Bakersfield, CA 93308

Q: *My child has special dietary needs. How does Student Nutrition Services provide for them?*

A: See details above on this page. For additional and more specific information, contact the Student Nutrition office at (661) 392-8758.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), 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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