Summary Charts of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

The charts in this document summarize the meal modification requirements for public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs. The school nutrition programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Special Milk Program (SMP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools.

Contents

Overview of Requirements for Meal Modifications 2
Chart 1: Meal Modification Requests for Disability Reasons 3
Chart 2: Meal Modification Requests for Non-disability Reasons 7
Resources 9



Summary Charts of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

Overview of Requirements for Meal Modifications

The requirements for meal modifications for children participating in the school nutrition programs are defined by the USDA's nondiscrimination regulations (7 CFR 15b) and school nutrition program regulations (7 CFR 210.10(m) and 7 CFR 220.8(m)). These regulations outline the required modifications for children whose disability restricts their diet (disability reasons) and the optional modifications for children who do not have a disability but have other special dietary needs (non-disability reasons).

- **Disability reasons:** The USDA requires reasonable meal modifications on a case-by-case basis for children whose disability restricts their diet, based on written documentation from a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian. Meal modifications must be related to the disability or limitations caused by the disability. Chart 1 summarizes the requirements for meal modification requests for disability reasons.

- **Non-disability reasons:** Meal modifications for non-disability reasons are optional. Chart 2 summarizes the requirements for meal modification requests for disability reasons.

For detailed guidance on meal modifications for disability and non-disability reasons, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Overview of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Program* and *Guide to Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Summary Charts of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

Chart 1: Meal Modification Requests for Disability Reasons

The examples of medical conditions in chart 1 are not all-inclusive and might not require meal modifications for all children. The determination of whether a child has a physical or mental impairment that restricts their diet must be made on a case-by-case basis based on a medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian.

- "Case-by-case basis" means specific to the individual medical condition and dietary needs of each child, based on the specific information provided by the state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian in the child's medical statement or, if applicable, the child's Section 504 plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP).

- A state licensed healthcare professional is an individual who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law. The Connecticut State Department of Public Health (DPH) defines these individuals as physicians (MD), physician assistants (PA) and certified physician assistants (PAC), doctors of osteopathy (DO), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN).

Summary Charts of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

Type of request	How disability determined	Plan on file	Examples of medical conditions	Required documentation
Child determined to have disability (physical or mental impairment) under Section 504; disability restricts child's diet; and required meal modification is outside USDA meal patterns	Section 504 meeting	504 plan and Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) May also have Emergency Care Plan (ECP) depending on child's medical condition.	Medical conditions that substantially limit a major life activity and affect child's diet **Examples:** Metabolic diseases, (e.g., diabetes or phenylketonuria (PKU)) and food anaphylaxis (life-threatening food allergy)	Medical statement signed by state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian (or 504 plan, if applicable) Medical statement must include: 1) information about how child's physical or mental impairment restricts child's diet; 2) explanation of what must be done to accommodate child; and 3) food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, if appropriate

Summary Charts of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

Type of request	How disability determined	Plan on file	Examples of medical conditions	Required documentation
Child determined to have disability (physical or mental impairment) under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); disability restricts child's diet; and required meal modification is outside the USDA meal patterns	Planning and Placement Team (PPT) Meeting	Individualized Education Program (IEP) and IHCP May also have ECP depending on child's medical condition	Medical conditions that meet IDEA recognized disability categories, require related services under IDEA, and affect child's diet **Examples:** Autism, traumatic brain injury and other health impairment, e.g., heart condition and diabetes	Medical statement signed by state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian (or 504 plan, if applicable) Medical statement must include: 1) information about how child's physical or mental impairment restricts child's diet; 2) explanation of what must be done to accommodate child; and 3) food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, if appropriate

Summary Charts of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

Type of request	How disability determined	Plan on file	Examples of medical conditions	Required documentation
Child not determined to have disability (physical or mental impairment) under Section 504 or IDEA, but child's medical condition meets definition of disability under ADA Amendments Act; disability restricts child's diet; and required meal modification is outside USDA meal patterns	State licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian	IHCP May also have ECP depending on child's medical condition	Medical conditions that do not qualify for disability under Section 504 or IDEA but may meet definition of disability under ADA Amendments Act (i.e., any condition that substantially limits child's major life activity) **Examples:** Celiac disease, gluten intolerance, lactose intolerance, non-life-threatening food allergies, obesity, and certain temporary disabilities	Medical statement signed by state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian (or 504 plan, if applicable) Medical statement must include: 1) information about how child's physical or mental impairment restricts child's diet; 2) explanation of what must be done to accommodate child; and 3) food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, if appropriate

Summary Charts of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

Chart 2: Meal Modification Requests for Non-disability Reasons

The requirements for optional meal modifications for non-disability reasons depend on whether the modifications are within or outside the USDA meal patterns.

- **Modifications within the USDA meal patterns:** Meal modifications are within the meal patterns if they are only modified for texture (such as chopped, ground, or pureed foods) or they only include substitutions within the same meal component, such as a banana for strawberries (fruits component), lactose-free milk for regular milk (milk component), and chicken for pork (meats/meat alternates component). These modifications do not require a medical statement. However, the CSDE recommends obtaining a medical statement to ensure clear communication between parents/guardians and the SFA regarding the appropriate meal modifications for the child. Chart 1 summarizes the requirements for meal modification requests for disability reasons.

- **Modifications outside the USDA meal patterns:** Meal modifications are outside the meal patterns if they include noncreditable foods. Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that do not meet the meal pattern requirements for reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Noncreditable Foods in the Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs*). Examples include entrees that do not meet the crediting requirements for the meats/meat alternates component and milk substitutes that do not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. Meal modifications for non-disability reasons that are outside the meal patterns require a medical statement signed by a state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian.

Type of request	Required documentation for meals outside the meal pattern	Required documentation for meals within the meal pattern
Personal food preferences, e.g., gluten-free foods, organic foods	Medical statement signed by state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian that indicates: 1) information about how child's personal food preferences restrict child's diet; 2) explanation of what must be done to accommodate child; and 3) food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, if appropriate	None

Summary Charts of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

Type of request	Required documentation for meals outside the meal pattern	Required documentation for meals within the meal pattern
Nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes, e.g., almond milk and rice milk	Medical statement signed by state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian that indicates: 1) information about how child's personal food preferences restrict child's diet; 2) explanation of what must be done to accommodate child; and 3) type of milk to be omitted and recommended alternatives, if appropriate	Not applicable: Nondairy milk substitutes for non-disability reasons must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. CSDE resource: Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs
Vegetarian diets, e.g., flexitarian, pescatarian, lacto-ovo-vegetarian, and vegan	Medical statement signed by state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian that indicates: 1) information about how child's personal food preferences restrict child's diet; 2) explanation of what must be done to accommodate child; and 3) food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, if appropriate	None
Religious or moral convictions	Medical statement signed by state licensed healthcare professional or registered dietitian that indicates: 1) information about how child's religious or moral convictions restrict child's diet; 2) explanation of what must be done to accommodate child; and 3) food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, if appropriate	None

Summary Charts of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

Resources

Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs: Guidance for School Food Service Professionals (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/2017-edition-accommodating-children-disabilities-school-meal-programs

Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/milk_substitutes_snp.pdf

Guide to Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/guide_meal_modifications_snp.pdf

Identifying Products that Meet the USDA's Nutrition Standards for Fluid Milk Substitutes in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/identify_allowable_nondairy_milk_substitutes_snp.pdf

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs

Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs

Medical Statements (CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/special-diets-in-school-nutrition-programs/medical-statements

NSLP regulations 7 CFR 210.10(d)(2): Fluid milk substitutes for non-disability reasons (USDA):
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/part-210#p-210.10(d)(2)

NSLP regulations 7 CFR 210.10(m)(1): Modifications for disability reasons (USDA):
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/part-210#p-210.10(m)(1)

NSLP regulations 7 CFR 210.10(m)(2): Variations for non-disability reason (USDA):
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/part-210#p-210.10(m)(2)

Overview of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/overview_meal_modifications_snp.pdf

Summary Charts of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

Requirements for Procedural Safeguards for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/procedural_safeguards_snp.pdf

Sample Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/sample_sop_meal_ modifications_snp.docx

SBP regulations 7 CFR 220.8(m): Modifications and variations in reimbursable meals:
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/part-220#p-220.8(m)

Self-assessment of Local Practices for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/assessment_meal_ modifications_snp.pdf

USDA Memo SP 26-2017: Accommodating Disabilities in the School Meal Programs: Guidance and Questions and Answers (Q&As):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/accommodating-disabilities-school-meal-programs-guidance-qas

USDA Memo SP 59-2016: Policy Memorandum on Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the School Meal Programs:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/policy-memorandum-modifications-accommodate-disabilities-school-meal-programs

USDA Nondiscrimination Regulations (7 CFR B):
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-A/part-15b

Summary Charts of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

For more information, visit the CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage or contact the school nutrition programs staff at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/ nutrition/nslp/ specdiet/summary_chart_meal_ modifications_snp.pdf.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems, gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email louis.todisco@ct.gov.

CONNECTICUT
Education

Summary Charts of the Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.