

# CONEWAGO VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Conewago Valley School District offers both a nutritional breakfast and lunch program. We do understand that some children have specific medical disabilities that may require attention in selections we may offer with lunch or breakfast.

Under the United States Department of Agriculture regulations 7 CFR Part 15b require substitutions or modifications for school meals for those children whose disabilities restrict their diets. A child with a disability must be provided substitutions in foods when that need is supported by a statement signed by a licensed physician. The physician's statement must identify:

- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> the child's disability
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> the major life activity affected by the disability
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> the food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet, and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted (Under no circumstances is any school employee allowed to interpret, change, or make modifications for a child with disabilities.)

Generally, children with food allergies or intolerances do not have a disability as defined under the Rehabilitation Act. The school food service may, but is not required to, make food substitutions for them. Each special dietary request will be determined by the school food service on a case-by-case basis. Allergies or intolerances also require a supported statement from a licensed physician. The form attached is the approved form from the USDA. This form only needs to be filled out once unless changes in medical condition arise and will follow your child throughout their educational years in the Conewago Valley School District.

## **Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs**

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 these dietary modifications, schools must have a written Medical Statement on file that is signed by a licensed physician. The statement must identify:

- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> The child's disability
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> An explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> The major life activity affected by the disability
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> The food(s) to be omitted from the child's diet
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> The food or choice of foods that must be substituted

Schools may, at their discretion, make substitutions for students who have a special dietary need, but do not meet the definition of disability. Examples include food intolerances or allergies that do not have life-threatening reactions, such as a milk intolerance. The decision to accommodate a student's special dietary need can be determined on a case-by-case basis, however, the school should remain consistent with accommodating a special dietary need. The school must have a written Medical Statement signed by a recognized medical authority identifying the following:

- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> An identification of the medical or other special dietary condition which restricts the child's diet
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> The food or choice of foods to be substituted

In Pennsylvania, a recognized medical authority includes a Physician, Physician's Assistant, and Nurse Practitioner.

**\*Only a physician can declare if a student has a disability.**

### **Responsibility of Parents**

- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> Notify the school of any food allergy, disability or special dietary need.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> Provide Medical Statement completed by a physician (disability) or recognized medical authority (special dietary need).
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> Participate in any meetings or discussions regarding the student's meal plan. Maintain a healthy line of communication with the school.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> Notify the school of any changes relating to the special dietary need (a new Medical Statement is required if the diet changes).

### **School Food Service Responsibility**

- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> 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.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> Provide training to cafeteria personnel on how to properly accommodate students with special dietary needs. Maintain documentation of this training.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> Communicate with parents, staff, and medical authorities regarding diet modifications.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> Maintain Medical Statement on each student with a special dietary need. Diet orders are not required to be renewed on a yearly basis, however, PDE recommends that you confirm current diet orders on a yearly basis. This can be confirmed by the parent. If there are any changes to the diet, a new Medical Statement is required.

### **Additional Resources:**

**USDA's *Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs*:** [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/guidance/special\\_dietary\\_needs.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/guidance/special_dietary_needs.pdf)

**National Food Service Management Institute's *Meeting Children's Special Food and Nutrition Needs in Child Nutrition Programs*:**  
[http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/nfsmi/Information/special\\_food\\_and\\_nutrition\\_needs/index.html](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/nfsmi/Information/special_food_and_nutrition_needs/index.html)

**Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network:** <http://www.foodallergy.org/>

**Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network** handouts on how to read food labels:

<http://www.foodallergy.org/downloads/HTRLSheet.pdf>

**School Nutrition Association's** allergy information resources website:

<http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Content.aspx?id=634>

### **Additional Contact Information:**

Contact the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Food and Nutrition, with questions regarding accommodating students with special dietary needs in the School Meals Programs at 1-800-331-0129, Extension 62374657.

For questions about developing a 504 plan for a student with special needs, please contact Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education at (717) 783-6913.

For questions regarding the roles and responsibilities of the school nurse in providing services for a student with special needs outside of the School Meals Programs, please contact the local PA School Health Consultant in your area. Contact information is available at <http://www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/lib/health/SHConsultantList.pdf> or by calling 877-PAHEALTH.