DVUSD Special Diet Accommodations FAQ

1. **Who is eligible to receive a special diet accommodation?**

   The Deer Valley Food & Nutrition Department is dedicated to meeting the nutritional needs of its students, including students with documented medical disabilities. Under section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of* 1973 and the *Americans with Disabilities Act* of 1990 a "person with a disability" means any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a records of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment". The term "physical or mental impairment" includes many conditions including but not limited to: Cerebral Palsy, Cancer, Diabetes, PKU, Food anaphylaxis, and Emotional illness. It is up to the licensed physician who completes the "Special Diet Accommodations Request Form" to indicate if a child's medical condition is considered a disability.

2. **How long does it take for a special diet to get started?**

   Once the Food & Nutrition Department has a complete special diet accommodation request form on file, it can take up to 10 days for a diet to become ready at the school site. This gives our office time to write a new menu that meets the child's needs and to ensure the child's school has the appropriate food available.
   NOTE: New or modified special accommodations requests received after May 1 of each school year will not be put into place until the following school year. This is due to time it takes to process the request and order product.

3. **How do I advise the cafeteria when my child plans to bring his/her lunch or is not going to be at school?**

   It is important for parents to communicate with the café. Parents can call and/or email the café manager directly to let them know when a student is NOT planning to eat at school. Calling in an absence to the front office is not sufficient, as the office does not advise the cafeteria of absences. It is a requirement of the accommodation that you notify the kitchen if your student will not be eating a meal prepared by the cafeteria for any reason.

4. **How will I know what is on my child's menu?**

   Menus are created in the district office and are shared with the café manager at your school. The café manager then works with each parent to determine how often the menu items will be reviewed (some parents review the menu weekly with the café manager while others might review it one month at a time). It is important that you provide a working email address and phone number to facilitate communication with the café manager and district office.

5. **Can I bring special diet food items to school and store them in the school cafeteria?**

   Unfortunately, we cannot store outside food in the cafeteria. There are several factors that play a role in this including food safety, food storage space and cross contact issues.

6. **What steps do I need to take if a change is needed to my child's current special diet accommodation request?**

   A new special diet request form is required to make any changes to a student's current diet order. Diets can be canceled by parents in writing (email is fine) but modifications to the diet order must come from a licensed physician. Once a special diet order is canceled by a parent a new special diet accommodations request form will be required before the diet can be reinstated.

7. **What types of milk substitutions are provided for students?**

   While we can accommodate medical disabilities that require the avoidance of dairy, we do not automatically provide specific milk substitutes. Acceptable beverage alternatives (lactose free milk and/or fortified soy "milk") must be specified by the physician on the special diet request form USDA regulations do not allow us to substitute juice, almond "milk" or oat "milk" for milk. Students are not required to take milk as part of their meal. Therefore, those students who need to avoid dairy can simply decline the milk portion of their meal while still choosing three items from the fruit, vegetable, grain, and meat/meat alternate groups. Additionally, students have access to free water every day in the cafeteria to drink with their meals.

8. **What if my child wants to purchase items a la carte?**

   We have pre-approved lists of a la carte items that are gluten and/or dairy free. Students with medical notes on file that state that gluten and dairy must be avoided will only be able to purchase items off of the preapproved list. Approved lists will be created on a case by case basis for students with other medical conditions that require avoidance of other foods.

If you have any further questions about the special diet accommodations request form for special diets in general, please contact us at nutrition@dvusd.org or 623.445.5165.