DASD Food Service Department
445 Manor Ave. Downingtown, PA 19335

August 2025

Dear Parent/Guardian of a student with food allergies or special dietary needs,

First, we're just excited that you would have your student choose to dine with us during the school day! At the end of the day, we want you to feel confident that your student will receive a delicious, nourishing, and safe meal when they choose to eat with us.

If you have a question about a particular food item, first check our digital menu! Aramark has implemented menu software to create an easy way for you to access our menu, nutritional information, and the common allergens in our recipes. The website is: https://dasd.nutrislice.com/. You can also find this link if you go to: DASD.org → Departments → Food Services → School Menus. If after viewing this website you have additional questions, feel free to reach out to us at the email address below and we'll be happy to work with you individually.

Below, you'll see a few more details of how we manage student allergies and dietary needs in DASD:

- First, make sure the school nurse is aware of any dietary need that your student may have.
- For privacy reasons, our cafeteria staff does not have access to students' allergy information, so they are not able to make a decision concerning the consumption of a particular food or beverage item on behalf of a student.
- To ensure each student's safety, please encourage your student not to share food, whether brought in from home or purchased at school.
- Aramark is dedicated to a high standard of food safety. While we prevent any cross-contamination from harmful bacteria entering our food, students with severe allergies should still be aware of the possibility of cross-contact between food items that can occur while preparing the day's menu.
- While the makers of Nutrition Facts and Ingredient Labels are required to disclose common allergens listed in the actual product, allergens in the manufacturer's facility that are not a part of the food item itself may or may not be disclosed.
- At this time, our K-5 schools do not serve any products containing peanuts. At our 6-12 schools, all products containing peanuts are pre-packaged to prevent cross-contact and are clearly labeled with that information.
- If you would like us to make accommodations for your student's allergy, please follow the procedures attached to this letter.

If you have a specific question or don't see the information you're looking for on our website, please reach out to our Food Service team at FoodServiceInformation@dasd.org. We are happy to answer any questions you may have to ensure that you have confidence in your decision to participate in our Student Meal program at DASD.

Sincerely,

Patrick O'Connor

General Manager, Aramark @ Downingtown Area School District

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Downingtown Area School District
Food Service Procedures and Meal Selection Instructions for Students with Allergies SY 25- 26 *(Updated August 2025)*

All Students will be eligible to receive free breakfast and will have the ability to purchase lunch this year if they would like. To ensure that all students can take advantage of these meal benefits, we are taking additional steps to accommodate students who have allergies or special dietary needs.

Here are some of the measures we will be taking to prevent any instance of an allergic reaction.

- No food containing peanuts/tree nuts will be brought into the kitchen or served in the cafeteria at the Elementary level.
- We will provide families a list of meal substitutions or alternatives to the food items we normally serve that contain common allergens like Gluten/Wheat, Dairy, Eggs. Students requiring an alternate meal will pre-order meals ahead of time and email their school's kitchen manager. Each school will have a supply of allergy friendly foods and be able to prepare meals for any student that pre-orders. Ex. Sandwiches with Gluten free bread, lactaid milk, etc.
- Students will fill out the substitution calendar (a separate document) to order their alternate meal. The kitchen staff will make the meal, label it and have it ready for student's lunch period.

We will use only products that claim to be gluten free (or dairy free, etc) and do our best to prevent cross contact during food prep and handling. We cannot make any guarantee the meal is 100% completely free of any allergens.*

Meal Selection / Placing Pre-Order

Most accommodations can be communicated to the cafeteria staff at your school by using the Blank Substitution calendar. If you need a substitution that cannot be communicated this way, please reach out to food service office for assistance.

Please note- it normally takes 3 days to one week, depending on deliveries, to obtain food to fulfill your requests. Please verify with the kitchen manager when the meals will start BEFORE you depend on your student eating the alternate meal.

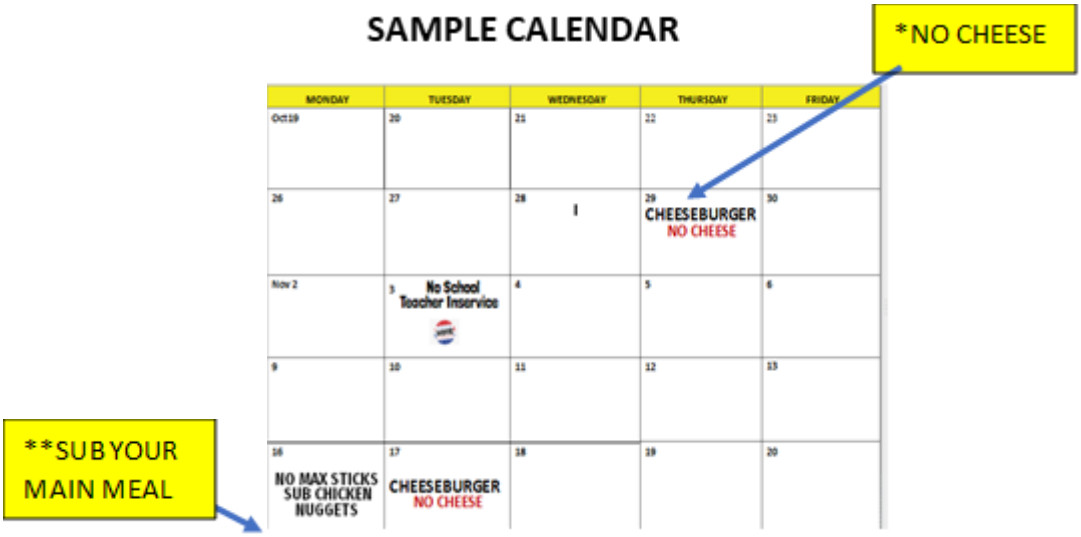
GLUTEN ALLERGIES/INTOLERANCE or Celiac Disease:

- This is the most prevalent condition that we normally are asked to make accommodations for because
    1. it can be easily substituted
    2. there is a wide variety of gluten free products available
- *Breakfast Substitutions Available*:
    - Gluten Free Brand Cold Cereal: Cheerios, Rice Chex, Lucky Charms with Cheese Stick or HB Egg
    - GF Bagel with Cream Cheese
    - Gluten free Blueberry Muffin
    - Non-fat Yogurt with a Hardboiled Egg or a Cheesestick
- *Lunch Substitutions Available* - Selections are also listed on the Menu
    - Hamburger/Cheeseburger on a Gluten Free Bun
    - Gluten Free Chicken Tenders
    - Grilled Cheese on Gluten Free Bread
    - Hot Dog on a Gluten Free Bun

- Turkey or Ham and Cheese Sandwich on Gluten Free Bread

LACTOSE INTOLERANT / MAKING ITEMS "WITHOUT" CHEESE, PORK , ETC

- If you would like an alternate meal Ex. Hotdog or Chicken Nuggets, other than what is being served b/c cheese or pork is the main ingredient (ex. Max sticks, Pulled Pork) please put your choice on the Blank calendar on the days you would like. Any meal selection that is ALREADY ON THE MENU on one of the days can be selected as an alternate selection (see example **)
- For students who may need items without cheese, pork or any other item you could not eat due to an allergy write the name of the item and w/out cheese or pork (see example*) or whatever item you want to leave off



- Once you fill the calendar out – please send to Connor Cooke at ccooke@dasd.org
  - **Connor will coordinate with the School Lead and they both will be your main contacts moving forward.**
  - We will be sure that the correct school gets the form, clear up any confusion or questions, then we will send to the Kitchen Managers.

Please reach out to the Food Service Office with ANY QUESTIONS- 610-269-4400 ext. 11756. If your child's allergy or requests do not fall into these examples or if you have questions about filling in the calendar- please reach out.

******When making decisions on whether a student should eat at our schools, our policy is for the parents or student to read the ingredients or nutritional label, then make the decision whether to eat at DASD schools. Our staff can provide the nutritional label for an item but cannot make a decision about whether or not the food is 100% safe or free of a certain allergen.***

NutriSlice Link/Platform on Food Service Page

We will also have on our website- a link to the platform we use to display our menu's nutritional information- fat, calories, carbs,etc. You can click on your school and see our monthly menu loaded into it. It is extremely user friendly and allows you to select your meal choices and can give you nutritional info for the different foods you select that make up your meal.

******In addition, NutriSlice also identifies the 9 most common allergens found in the food on the menu and provides alerts when they are present in any food in the menu***

Food Nutrition Information

We have on hand the ingredient lists for any food items that are on our menus including the meals we selected as the Gluten free options. Please let us know if you would like that information and we can send to you.