

Gainesville City School Nutrition Procedure for Accommodating Disabilities in School Meals Programs

1. Public Notification

- Families will be notified that accommodations are available for students with disabilities that impact their dietary needs.
- Information will be included in:
 - <https://www.gcssk12.net/departments/school-nutrition>
 - Application packet in the cafeteria or nurse's office
- Gainesville City School Nutrition will ensure information is provided in multiple languages and accessible formats as needed.
- Contact for questions: Emily House, Coordinator, Emily.house@gcssk12.net 770-536-5275 x 5152

2. Receiving Requests for Accommodations

- Requests may be made in writing and/or verbally. Written confirmation will be documented by Gainesville City School System.
- Accessible Forms: Gainesville City School System will utilize Medical Statement Form found on the website and in the application packet.
- Medical Statement Forms:
 - Available on <https://www.gcssk12.net/departments/school-nutrition>
 - Provided in multiple languages, if necessary
- Submission Options:
 - In person at the student's school (see the Cafeteria Manager or Nurse's office)
 - By email to Emily.house@gcssk12.net or the school Nurse
 - By mail to Emily House, 715 Woodsmill Road, Gainesville, GA 30501
 - By phone 770-536-5275 x 5152
- A medical statement is not required if the accommodation can be made within USDA meal pattern requirements.

3. Coordination with IEP/504 Plans

- When a student's disability is addressed through an IEP or 504 Plan, the School Nutrition Coordinator and/or School Nurse will collaborate with the IEP/504 team to ensure that dietary accommodations are implemented as required.
- The School Nutrition Director will maintain documentation of communication with the special education department and verify accommodations are reflected in meal service practices.

4. Processing Requests

- Requests will be reviewed by the School Nutrition Coordinator within 5 business days.
- Each request will be evaluated individually to determine if accommodations can be made within the meal pattern.
- OVS (Offer vs. Serve) will not be used to make an accommodation.
- If specialty items are required, ordering will begin immediately after documentation is reviewed.
- The School Nutrition Director or designee will notify staff with a need-to-know (nurse, cafeteria manager, teachers) to ensure proper implementation.
- Parents/guardians will receive written notification of the decision, including the hearing procedure for appeals.

5. Implementation in the Cafeteria

- The School Nutrition Program will accommodate disabilities by:
 - Training cafeteria staff on specific dietary needs
 - Modifying recipes, menus, or food preparation processes
 - Documenting accommodations in production records or POS systems
 - Using software or manual alerts to flag special dietary needs
 - Locating allergens on a food label
- Daily Implementation Responsibility: Cafeteria Manager and Food Assistants
- Parent Communication:
 - Parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the accommodation plan.
 - Parents will be contacted annually to confirm that the accommodation remains valid.
 - Written documentation from the parent or medical authority will be required to discontinue a special diet.

6. Procedural Safeguards for Disputes

- Written Notice of Denial: Parents/guardians will receive written notice including the reason for denial and appeal information.
- Hearing Process:
 - Conducted by an impartial official
 - Parents may present evidence and bring representation
 - Disputes will be resolved promptly
- Contact for appeals: School Principal

7. Confidentiality and “Need-to-Know” Communication

- Information about a student’s dietary needs will only be shared with staff who need to know (e.g., nurse, cafeteria manager, teachers).
- Confidentiality will be maintained in accordance with district policy and FERPA regulations.

8. Training and Oversight

- Annual Training: All food service staff will receive training on:
 - Recognizing and accommodating dietary disabilities
 - Cross-contamination prevention
 - Allergen awareness
- Training will also include procedures for collaboration with school nurses, teachers, and special education staff.
- Oversight: The Gainesville City School Nutrition Coordinator will monitor compliance and maintain documentation (medical statements, training logs, and accommodation records).

9. Recordkeeping

- Records will be maintained for five years plus the current year, including:
 - Accommodation requests and medical statements
 - Documentation of implemented accommodations
 - Written communication with parents/guardians
- Location of records: Paper files are stored at the Satellite Office and in the Manager’s office in a secure location. Digital records are stored securely on the Coordinator’s Google drive.

10. Continuous Review

- Each accommodation will be reviewed annually and when students move from elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, or when a student’s condition changes.
- Updated documentation will be obtained if changes are requested.
- Responsible Staff: Coordinator, Cafeteria Manager, and/or Nurse.