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:
  - Chattooga County Schools Parent/Student Handbook
  - Chattooga County Schools District Website—School Nutrition Page located at https://www.chattooga.k12.ga.us/departments/chattooga-county-school-nutrition/special-diets
  - Application packet and front office/common area for parents
  - Cafeteria posters (e.g., displayed near the "And Justice for All" poster)
- Chattooga County Schools will ensure information is provided in multiple languages and accessible formats as needed.
- Contact for questions: Brandie Wooten, School Nutrition Director, at bwooten@chattooga.k12.ga.us or 706-859-3054

2. Receiving Requests for Accommodations

- Requests may be made in writing or verbally. Written confirmation will be documented by Chattooga School Nutrition.
- Accessible Forms: Chattooga County Schools will utilize the GaDOE Sample Medical Statement Form.
- Medical Statement Forms:
  - Available at https://www.chattooga.k12.ga.us/departments/chattooga-county-school-nutrition/special-diets
  - Provided in multiple languages, if necessary
- Submission Options:
  - ☐ In person at Chattooga County Schools District Office, 33 Middle School Rd., OR any school location.
  - ☐ By email to Brandie Wooten, School Nutrition Director, bwooten@chattooga.k12.ga.us
  - ☐ By mail to 33 Middle School Rd., Summerville, GA 30747
  - ☐ By phone at 706-859-3054
- 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 Director and/or 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 Director 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.

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- 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
- Daily Implementation Responsibility: Cafeteria Managers, Assistant Managers and Cashiers
- 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: Brandie Wooten, School Nutrition Director, bwooten@chattooga.k12.ga.us, or 706-859-3054

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 School Nutrition district office 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 copies maintained at the School Nutrition district office, located at 33 Middle School Rd., Summerville, GA 30747

10. Continuous Review

- Each accommodation will be reviewed annually or when a student's condition changes.
- Updated documentation will be obtained if changes are requested.
- Responsible Staff: Brandie Wooten, School Nutrition Director

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