

## Pomptonian's Food Allergy Practices

The safety and well-being of the students we serve is our highest priority. As an allergy-aware kitchen, no meal is knowingly prepared on our equipment with any food that includes peanut/tree nut in the manufacturer's list of ingredients, with the exception of coconut at middle and high schools. Pre-order allergy-aware menus are available for students with food allergies, other than or in addition to peanut/tree nut. The mechanism in place to protect students with food allergies is pre-ordering off the appropriate menu.

Please be advised, Pomptonian staff prepares and cooks a wide variety of meals in the kitchens. To minimize the chance of cross-contact, pre-ordered meals are prepared for students with documented allergies using ingredients that do not contain their known allergen in the manufacturer's label. **Please ensure there is a note on file in the nurse's office from either a physician. (MD or DO)**

The staff who prepares the meals for students with special dietary needs receives ongoing training on food label reading, cross-contact procedures, and food allergies. Food Service Directors and Operations Managers receive monthly allergy training from our Director of Nutrition Services, Toni Bowman, MBA, RDN, SNS. Additionally, our Operations Managers, Food Service Directors, and Registered Dietitians are ServSafe Allergy Certified.

Parents/guardians, fill out the monthly allergy menu order form each month and return it to the cafeteria by the due date indicated.

<https://manalapanenglishtown.fdmealplanner.com/FOOD-ALLERGIES>

For students with multiple food allergies, please fill out [Unique Allergy Menu Form](#) to request that a unique allergy menu be developed to meet the specific dietary needs of your student. You may also contact your Food Service Director with any other questions. For your convenience, you may place funds on your child's lunch account or provide payment with the order form. Pre-ordered allergy meals will be prepared and packaged separately and labeled accordingly. Please let your child know to tell the food service worker they have a pre-ordered meal and your child will receive their meal with their name on it.

For more information on why our best practices for managing food allergies include pre-ordering lunch, please read, "Why Pre-Order?" If you need further assistance or require nutrition fact labels for menu items, we can put you in touch with our Director of Nutrition Services, Toni Bowman, MBA, RDN, SNS.

## Why Pre-Order?

In a restaurant there is a typical method for managing food allergies.

1. A patron with a food allergy notifies the server.
2. The server then notifies the chef. At that point the chef lets the server know what the patron can safely consume from the menu.
3. When the chef prepares the meal, cross-contact procedures are put in place and ingredient labels are checked.

In this example, the restaurant is able to notify the patron what is safe to eat and has the ability to put cross-contact procedures in place before the meal is prepared.

“Cross-contact happens when one food comes into contact with another food and their proteins mix. As a result, each food then contains trace amounts of the other food. These amounts are so small they usually can’t be seen. Even this small amount of food protein can cause reactions in people with food allergies.” (Food Allergy Research & Education)

Pre-ordering is important because manufacturers may change the formulation of their products and substitute ingredients at any time, with or without notice. For more information on food allergens and product labels please visit:

<https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/how-read-food-label>.

Our best practices for managing food allergies have been developed to be in line with the organization Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE), the Center for Disease Control Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies In Schools and Early Care and Education Programs, the Institute of Child Nutrition, and the USDA Accommodating Children with Disabilities in School Meal Programs.

A cafeteria is not set up in the same way as a restaurant. By establishing a pre-order system our staff is aware of the allergy, checks all product labels, and uses cross-contact procedures to provide a safe environment for students with known food allergies.

We look forward to working with you. Please contact your Food Service Director if you have any questions.

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