7/1/2026

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, Assistant Director, School Nutrition Program, 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 Assistant Director and/or School Nurse will collaborate with the IEP/504 team to ensure that dietary accommodations are implemented as required.
- The School Nutrition Department 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 Assistant 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 Assistant 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 Assistant Director 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.

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: Assistant Director, Cafeteria Manager, and/or School Nurse.

7/1/2026

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