Darien Public Schools

Department of Health Services and Dining Services

August 2026

Dear Darien High School Families,

Warm greetings from the Darien Public School Nursing Services and Dining Services Departments! At Darien Public Schools, we are dedicated to supporting the health and safety of every student in our district. To ensure that students can enjoy meals safely in our dining facilities, we would like to share the following food safety measures:

Food choices: Darien Public Schools partners with Chartwells, our contracted food service provider. All Chartwells staff receive training in food allergen management through the Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE) program. *All prepared food items served in the DHS cafeteria are nut-free. However, some packaged products, particularly baked goods, may contain nuts or be produced in facilities that also process nuts and seeds. These products are clearly labeled to help students and staff make informed choices.*

Please note that DHS students are permitted to bring lunch items from home that may contain nuts or seeds. Therefore, it is essential that we continue to *enforce our "no sharing of food" policy* to protect students with food allergies.

Alerts: Information about a student's known food allergies or sensitivities is entered into Mosaic, the point-of-sale system used at DPS. If a student attempts to purchase a food item that contains a known allergen or sensitivity, dining service staff will receive an alert message on their cash registers. The student is informed and encouraged to find a safe alternative.

Medication and Care Plans: Students with a known life-threatening food allergy should have an emergency care plan, medication order, and rescue medication(s) kept in the health office. Students are permitted to self-carry their rescue medication if indicated on the medication authorization form. Self-carry medication is in addition to the rescue medication that the student has in the health office, and must be on the student at all times, along with the corresponding orders. Please contact the DHS school nurses for additional information. Click here

Visits and Communication: Parents and students are invited to visit the DHS dining facility and DPS Dining Services website for nutrition and allergen information specific to school menus Click here. If a student intends to purchase a meal, it is recommended that parents email the school kitchen manager copying foodservices@darienps.org either daily or weekly to ensure meals are created without the risk of cross-contact. Contact Meghan Bendish, Director of Dining Services mbendish@darienps.org, and/or your student's school-based kitchen manager with questions or concerns related to food items offered.

Every effort is made to provide the safest environment possible. Your cooperation and support are greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school nurse at your child's school.

Sincerely,
Emily Merritt, Director of Health Services
Meghan Bendish, Director of Dining Services