

# Dietary, Cultural or Religious Food Restrictions Policy

The Charlotte Public Schools Food Service Department believes it is our responsibility to serve students with respect and dignity. CPS is aware there are cultures and religions that observe customs related to diet. We also are aware that some students may have sensitivities to certain food products. To help us meet their needs, we ask that you proceed as described below.

## **Medical Food Restrictions**

Prior to the first day of school, a parent should work with their Physician to complete the Allergy Form/Special Dietary Needs Medical Form. A Physician's statement and signature is required by the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition. This form should be submitted to the Food Service Supervisor in the CPS' Food Services Department.

USDA regulations require reasonable dietary accommodations in school meals for children whose disabilities restricts their diet.. A child with a disability must be provided with a reasonable dietary accommodation when that need is supported by the statements of the Physician in the Allergy Form/Special Dietary Needs Medical Form. The Physician must identify on the form:

- ✓ The child's disability and why the disability restricts the child's diet;
- ✓ The major life activity affected by the disability; AND
- ✓ The food(s) to be omitted from the child's diet, and the food(s) that must be substituted.

The FSS in the CPS' Food Services Department will work with the parents, the affected child, and the lunchroom staff providing them with menus, recipes, and ingredients for all food prepared and served in our lunchrooms. Depending on the severity of the restriction, Food Services will make reasonable alternative food items available for a child, whenever possible. It is also recommended that parents contact school nurses with any special medical needs regarding their child's condition.

### **• Managing Anaphylactic Food Allergies**

A child who suffers from Anaphylactic Food Allergies may receive dietary accommodations. For the child to receive an accommodation, a Physician must complete the Allergy Form/Special Dietary Needs Medical Form. In such cases, the prescribed substitutions by the Physician may be made by the school if the substitution is reasonable.

### **• Managing Non-Severe Food Allergies and/or Food Intolerance**

*The school food authority is not required to make food substitutions for children with non-severe food allergies or food intolerances, who do not have a disability as defined under either Section 504 or the Rehabilitation Act or Part B of IDEA.*

Food Services Department may choose to make reasonable food substitutions, at their discretion, for individual children who do not have a disability, but who are medically certified as having a special medical or dietary need. Determinations are made on a case-by-case basis.

In accordance with USDA regulation, for students with lactose intolerance or a nonlife threatening milk allergy, no other beverage can be substitute for milk except a lactose-free beverage that meets the nutritional requirements of milk.

### **Religious and/or Cultural Food Restrictions**

If there is no known allergy, food intolerance or disability, but the parent requests that a specific food be eliminated for religious reasons the parent may notify the FSS in the CPS' Food Service Department in writing of the food restrictions. It is also recommended that parents contact the school principal with their request.

The school lunch meal pattern allows for flexibility and menu management if personal preferences are given in advance.

Each lunchroom will keep an up-to-date list of all children whose parents have advised the Food Service Department of dietary, cultural, or religious food restrictions. We will make every effort to comply with the restrictions once we are made aware of them. We are not with any child 100 percent of the time; we cannot guarantee that a child will not eat a restricted item.

We cannot anticipate the needs of all students. Unless we are aware in advance of a child's dietary, cultural or religious restriction, we may not be able to provide a complete meal.

- **Parent Responsibilities**

It is our expectation that parents will exercise their responsibilities to educate their child with respect to food restrictions. Parents should teach their children to ask lunchroom staff to identify any food items that the children cannot identify.

**Parents are encouraged to file with the Registered Dietician in the CPS' Food Service Department the Allergy Form/Special Dietary Needs Medical Form or Religious and/or Cultural Food Restriction letter prior to their child's first day of attendance at school.**