

CHITTENANGO CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MEAL MODIFICATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

National School Lunch Program & School Breakfast Program

Statement of Policy

Chittenango Central School District, as a sponsor of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), shall ensure that students with disabilities are provided an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from school meal programs, consistent with the requirements of **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**, the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**, the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**, and **USDA and NYSED Child Nutrition Program regulations**.

The District shall make **reasonable meal modifications** at no additional cost for students whose disabilities restrict their diets and require modifications in order to safely consume school meals.

Definition of Disability

For purposes of school meal accommodations, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including but not limited to eating, digestion, breathing, or immune function.

Required Medical Documentation

Meal modifications for students with disabilities **must be supported by a written medical statement** signed by a **New York State-licensed healthcare professional**, including but not limited to a physician, nurse practitioner, licensed dietitian or physician assistant.

The medical statement must include:

- Identification of the student's impairment (a specific diagnosis is not required)
- An explanation of how the disability restricts the student's diet
- Foods to be omitted or restricted
- Foods or meal components to be substituted
- A brief explanation of how exposure to restricted foods affects the student

If the medical documentation is incomplete or unclear, the District shall request additional information to ensure that meals are provided safely and appropriately. Reasonable meal modifications may begin while clarification is pending, when feasible.

Students Without Disabilities

In accordance with NYSED and USDA guidance, the District **may**, but is not required to, provide meal substitutions for students who do not have a disability but have a medical or special dietary need that restricts their ability to consume the regular school meal. Such requests must be supported by a statement from a recognized medical authority.

Individualized Education Programs and Section 504 Plans

The District is not required to provide meal services that are not otherwise offered to the general student population unless such services are specifically required as part of a student's **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** or **Section 504 Accommodation Plan**, and are supported by medical documentation.

Review and Approval Process

All requests for meal modifications shall be reviewed by the **District Medical Director** and the **Food Service Director** to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and student safety. Written notification of approval or denial will be provided to the parent/guardian.

Approved medical statements shall remain in effect until the District receives written notice from the parent/guardian or healthcare provider indicating that the modification is no longer required.

Implementation Procedures

Upon approval:

- Food service staff, including servers and cashiers, shall be notified of the required meal modifications.
- The student's meal account shall be flagged in the point-of-sale system to alert staff.
- Specialized food items (e.g., gluten-free or dairy-free products) shall be ordered within ten (10) business days when necessary. Interim substitutions will be provided when feasible.

Reasonable Modifications and Program Limitations

In determining appropriate accommodations, the District shall consider effectiveness, practicality, and cost, consistent with NYSED and USDA guidance. The District shall provide reasonable modifications that ensure equal access to school meals, which may include comparable or generic food products.

The District shall not provide individualized meals outside of the standard menu to accommodate personal preferences, religious practices, or non-medical dietary choices.

Grievance Procedure

Parents/guardians who disagree with a meal modification determination may file a grievance with the **Office of the Superintendent of Schools**. The District shall schedule a hearing within ten (10) business days of receipt of a written grievance and shall provide written notice of hearing procedures, representation rights, and appeal options, consistent with District policy and NYSED guidance.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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