

May 1, 2008

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to provide communication to you regarding the National School Lunch/Breakfast program and the responsibilities of the Wadsworth City Schools' Food Service department, in reference to special dietary accommodations for students. I would like to clear up any misconceptions that exist regarding the role food services is expected when making special dietary accommodations for students.

The United States Department of Agriculture's regulations require substitutions or modifications in school meals for children whose disabilities restrict their diets. A child with a disability must be provided substitutions in foods when that need is supported by a statement signed by a licensed medical physician. The physician's statement must include the following for us to honor it: 1) The child's disability and an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet 2) The major life activity affect by the disability 3) The food or foods that must be omitted from the child's diet, and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted.

Generally, children with food allergies or intolerances do not have a disability as defined under 7 CFR 15b.3 of USDA's nondiscrimination regulations, and school food authorities may, but are not required to, make substitutions for them. However, when in the licensed medical physician's assessment, food allergies may result in severe, life-threatening (anaphylactic) reactions, the child's condition would meet the definition of "disability", and the substitutions prescribed by the physician must be made.

However, schools may make 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. Such determinations are made on a case-by-case basis and must be supported by a statement which specifies the needed food substitution and is signed by licensed medical authority, i.e. physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, registered dietitian or other health professional specified by the State Agency. This provision covers those children who have food intolerances or allergies but do not have life threatening (anaphylactic) reactions when exposed to the food(s) to which they are allergic. This medical statement must include the following for us to honor it: 1) An identification of the medical or other special dietary need which restricts the child's diet; and 2) The food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet, and the food or choice of foods to be substituted.

Enclosed you will find an "Eating & Feeding Evaluation: Children with Special Needs" form. For your convenience this form is also located on the Food Service web site. If your child requires special dietary accommodations please have your licensed medical physician or medical authority complete and sign the form. Please turn in completed forms to the Food Service department, attention of Jennifer Knapp, Food Service Director. Once these forms are completed and turned in, the Food Services Department will be happy to assist your child in making any necessary accommodations. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Jennifer Knapp, Food Service Director at 330.335.1374.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Knapp, RD, LD

