

MEAL PROGRAMS-SPECIAL DIETS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This administrative regulation covers the provision of meal programs and special diets for students with disabilities who are receiving meals through the Food and Nutrition Department.

1. **Student Identification.** Prior to the start of each new school year, school sites notify the Food and Nutrition Services Department of those students with disabilities who require a special menu or food texture modification. During the school year, sites receiving students requiring special menus or food texture modification should notify the Food and Nutrition Services Department prior to the students' first day of attendance. This notification only applies to students who have elected to receive meals from the Food and Nutrition Services Department, not those who choose to bring their meals from home.
2. **Food and Nutrition Services Notification.** Once a student is identified as needing modified menu service, the school site should notify the Food and Nutrition Department's menu systems development dietitian. The menu systems development dietitian will create the modified menu and the food services area supervisor will ensure that the menu is provided to the student.
3. **Meal Guidelines**
 - a. Students with disabilities will be provided the meals prepared for the general student population whenever possible. For students who require modified meal service with alteration of texture, the Medical Statement to Request Special Meals and/or Accommodations form should be completed and signed by the student's physician. A soft or pureed meal can be provided to students by the Food and Nutrition Services Department based on the information provided in this form. A pureed meal can only be provided to students whose condition meets the level of a disability (as defined by A.D.A., 504, or I.D.E.A.) because by nature, these meals cannot meet all the nutritional requirements of the National School Breakfast or National School Lunch Program. All completed meal accommodation forms should be returned to the menu systems development dietitian. Special diets will be completed in the order that they are submitted to the Food and Nutrition Services Department and may take up to two weeks from receipt to implementation. Diets that contain specialty foods may take longer to fulfill, as vendors may need time to special order products.
 - b. Special sack lunches for field trips are available to students who need special diets. Arrangements for these lunches can be made by contacting a Food and Nutrition Services area supervisor at least two weeks prior to the date of the field trip.

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Special Education Division staff are responsible for providing adequate equipment to maintain food temperatures below 41 degrees Fahrenheit.

4. **Food Handling Personnel.** All district personnel who prepare and/or alter or modify food must have a food handler's card which can be obtained by attending a food safety and sanitation training. (San Diego County Department of Health Services maintains a list of current locations offering this training). Food and Nutrition Service supervisors, area supervisors and site leaders must complete an approved food service safety certification program.
5. **Food Handling Practices.** Proper food handling practices will be followed at all times.
 - a. Meals taken to the classroom for consumption by students should be picked up from the cafeteria no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled meal time, to ensure appropriate temperatures are maintained. Meals must be consumed within an hour of leaving the cafeteria and appropriate procedures for counting/claiming meals leaving the cafeteria must be followed. Leftover prepackaged shelf stable items may be kept, but all other items must be discarded after meal service.
 - b. Personnel who prepare and/or alter or modify food must practice safe and sanitary food handling procedures and obtain a food handler's card.
6. **Equipment/Utensil Sanitation.** California Health and Safety Code requires that facilities used for food service utensil washing must be separate from facilities used for restroom and hand washing. All food handling and food service equipment must be properly washed and sanitized.
 - a. At sites where students require special adapted eating utensils, Food and Nutrition Services will wash and sanitize the equipment. Special education staff will coordinate with the Food and Nutrition Services Department for washing and sanitizing this equipment at the end of the normal dishwashing activity. Two sets of equipment will be required to ensure one set can be available in the classroom, while the other is being cleaned.