



**Wilson County Schools
School Nutrition Department**

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STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

Meal Substitutions for Medical or Other Special Dietary Reasons

This instruction outlines the policy for food substitutions and other modifications in the meals for students with handicaps and other special dietary needs. There are two categories for meal substitutions:

1. HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

A “handicapped person” is defined in 7 CFR 15b.3(i) as any person who has “a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.” Major life activities are defined in 7 CFR 15b.3(k) as “functions such as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.” Determination of whether or not a student has a handicap which restricts his or her diet is to be made on an individual basis by a licensed physician. The physician’s medical statement of the student’s handicap must be based on the regulatory criteria for “handicapped person” defined in 7 CFR and contain a finding that the handicap restricts the student’s diet. A student whose handicap restricts his or her diet shall be provided substitutions in foods only when supported by a statement signed by a licensed physician and shall identify:

- A. The students’ handicap and an explanation of why the handicap restricts the diet.
- B. The major life activity affected by the handicap.
- C. The food to be omitted from the diet and the food that must be substituted.

2. STUDENTS WITH OTHER SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

School Food authorities are not required by law to make substitutions for students who are not “handicapped”. Wilson County Schools Food Service will make every effort to make substitutions for a student with dietary needs on a case by case basis when supported by a statement signed by a physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner. For these non-handicapped students, the supporting statement shall include:

- A. An identification of the medical or other special dietary need which restricts the participants' diet.
- B. The food to be omitted, and the food that may be substituted.

Generally students with food allergies, students who are obese, and those with elevated cholesterol do not meet the definition of a "handicapped person" set forth in 7 CFR 15b.(i). However, when in the physician's assessment food allergies may result in severe, life-threatening reactions (anaphylactic reactions) or the obesity is severe enough to substantially limit a major life activity, the student then meets the definition of a "handicapped person", and the food service personnel must make the substitutions prescribed by the physician.

The attached Feeding Evaluation will need to be fully completed and signed by the physician and returned to the Food Service office or the Cafeteria manager to be kept on file before any special diet modification will be made. If there are any changes in the diet modification, a new form will need to be completed by the physician.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

Melody Turner
Food Service Director
Wilson County Schools