

Hawthorn Academy
Child Nutrition Program Procedures
Documentation for Students with Special Dietary Needs

Hawthorn Academy (the “School”) participates in USDA Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. These procedures set forth the documentation requirements and recommendations when the School accommodates students with special dietary needs by serving them modified meals.

Modifications within the Meal Pattern

When a student has a special dietary need that can be met by providing a meal modification within the Program meal pattern, the School is not required to obtain a medical statement signed by a State licensed healthcare professional. An example of providing a meal modification within the Program meal pattern is if a student has an allergy to one fruit or vegetable, the School can simply substitute another fruit or vegetable in the student’s meal. Even though the School is not required to obtain a medical statement in such situations, School food service staff are encouraged to document the actions they took to accommodate the student’s special dietary need (i.e., document the specific meal modification within the Program meal pattern that was provided to the student). Doing so may help to protect students with special dietary needs in situations where substitute food service staff members who may be unfamiliar with their needs are working in the cafeteria.

Modifications Outside of the Meal Pattern

When a student has a certain physical or mental impairment that requires a meal modification that does not follow the Program meal pattern, the School shall obtain and store in a secure location a medical statement signed by a State licensed healthcare professional (that is, an individual who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under Utah law, including a doctor, a nurse practitioner, or a physician’s assistant). The medical statement must include the following: (a) information about the student’s physical or mental impairment that is sufficient to allow the School to understand how it restricts the student’s diet; (b) an explanation of what must be done to accommodate the student’s disability; and (c) the food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, in the case of a modified meal. In some circumstances more information may be required. For example, if the student requires caloric modifications or the substitution of a liquid nutritive formula to accommodate a disability, this information must be included in the medical statement.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the student’s IEP or 504 Plan includes the information required in the medical statement, or if the School obtains written medical verification of the impairment during the IEP/504 Plan process, that documentation is sufficient and the School is not required to also obtain a separate medical statement.

School personnel are encouraged to keep information about meal modifications in a secure and known location within the food preparation area, so that School food service staff can easily determine the type of modifications needed for each student on any given day.

Understanding the Medical Statement

When a new medical statement is submitted, School food service staff shall work closely with the School's Lead Director (who is the School's Section 504/ADA Coordinator) or other designated officials so that the medical statement is clear and includes the information necessary for the School to provide the student with safe and nutritious meals. Establishing contact with a parent or guardians may help to ensure all information needed to provide a safe meal is available.

If a medical statement provided to the School does not fully explain the modification needed, the School shall immediately contact the student's parent or guardian for guidance and ask the parent or guardian to provide an amended medical statement as soon as possible. However, clarification of the medical statement should not delay the School from providing a meal modification. The School shall follow the portion of the medical statement that is clear and unambiguous to the greatest extent possible, while obtaining the additional information.

In addition, in the event the School determines that a medical statement for a student is necessary but has not yet been obtained, or was once obtained but is now missing, the School shall immediately contact the student's parent or guardian and request a medical statement. The School shall convey to such parent or guardian the requirements related to the medical statement.