

# Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs



## Required Documentation

The Texas Department of Agriculture has set forth the following guidelines for accommodating children with special dietary needs.

### Physician's Statement for Children with Disabilities

- Signed by a licensed physician.
- Identifies the child's disability.
- Includes an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet.
- Identifies the major life activity affected by the disability.
- Lists the food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted.

### Medical Statement for Children with Special Dietary Needs

- Signed by a physician, physician assistant, or advanced practical nurse.
- Identifies the medical condition that restricts the child's diet.
- Lists the food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet and the food or choice of foods to be substituted.

All requests must be on the HISD Physician's Request for Special Dietary Accommodations form located on the HISD foodservice website.

**THIS DOCUMENTATION MUST FIRST BE GIVEN TO THE SCHOOL NURSE WHO WILL THEN FAX IT TO THE FOOD SERVICE OFFICE. DIETARY ACCOMMODATIONS WILL BE ARRANGED ONCE FOOD SERVICES RECEIVES AND PROCESSES THE REQUEST.**

**NOTE:** DIETARY ACCOMMODATIONS THAT REQUIRE THE PURCHASE OF SPECIFIC ITEMS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY. IT CAN TAKE UP TO 4 WEEKS TO RECEIVE THE FIRST DELIVERY OF SPECIAL ORDER ITEMS.

For more information contact:  
Mandie Oceguela  
Registered Dietitian  
HISD Food Services  
aoceguer@houstonisd.org  
Phone: 713-491-5713 Fax: 713-491-5720

## Distribution of Responsibility

### Parents

- Provide a physician's statement to the school nurse, making sure that it includes all required information as listed on page 1.

*NOTE: If the physician's order contains any statements requiring further clarification, special dietary accommodations will not begin until the physician provides further written clarification.*

- Provide updated physician's orders as necessary. Give the school nurse a written statement signed by the parent or physician when accommodations are no longer needed. Dietary accommodations cannot be changed prior to receiving updated documentation from the physician.
- Work with the school nurse and food service dietitian to review and return modified menus as soon as possible.

NOTE: Modified menus will not be implemented until approval is received.

- **Physician's diet orders must be renewed every school year. Please provide an updated physician's statement to the school nurse during the summer, prior to the beginning of school. Remember that there may be a delay of up to 4 weeks if special purchases are required.**

### School Nurse

- Fax the physician's orders to the Food Service Department, 713-491-5720, Attn: Special Diets.
- Serve as liaison between the Food Service Department and the parent to gather needed information and physician documentation.

### Food Service

- What we can do:
  - Provide meals which to the best of our knowledge meet the physician ordered dietary restrictions.
  - Work with the parent and school nurse to adjust the diet as updated physician's orders are received.
  - Non-disability students will be handled on a case by case basis.
- What we can not do:
  - Interpret, revise, or change a diet order for students with disabilities.
  - Provide dietary accommodations for students without a valid medical condition.
  - Provide dietary accommodations without the proper physician's documentation.
  - Provide fruit juice as a milk substitute for non-disability students.