

# Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs

HISD only provides dietary accommodations for students with disabilities, life-threatening food allergies, and physician-certified medical needs.

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

The Texas Department of Agriculture has set forth the following guidelines for accommodating children with special dietary needs. For Nutrition Services to make a meal accommodation for a student with a medical disability, the household must provide a written medical statement. For a medical statement to be valid, it must be written by a medical authority licensed to write prescriptions by the State of Texas.

### Medical Statement for Students with Disabilities and Life-Threatening Food Allergies:

- Be signed by a licensed physician
- Identify the child's medical condition/disability
- Include an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet
- Identify the major life activity affected by the disability
- List 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 Students with Special Dietary Needs (non-disabled):

- Signed by a licensed physician or medical practitioner authorized to write prescriptions in the state of Texas
- 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

## HISD DIETARY ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

All dietary accommodation requests should be on the [HISD Physician's Request for Special Dietary Accommodations form](#) (special diets form) located on the HISD Nutrition Services website.

This documentation must be provided by the student's parent/guardian to the school nurse who will then email it to the Nutrition Services office. Dietary accommodations will be arranged once Nutrition Services receives and processes the request. Any information missing from the form will result in delays to putting dietary accommodations in place.

**NOTE:** Dietary accommodations that require the purchase of specific items may not be available immediately. Please allow up to 6 weeks to receive the first delivery of special order.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: [NSSPECIALDIETS@houstonisd.org](mailto:NSSPECIALDIETS@houstonisd.org)

## DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

### Parents/Guardians

- Provide a Physician's Request for Special Dietary Accommodations form (special diet form) 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 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 HISD Nutrition Services dietitian to review and return modified menus as soon as possible
  - NOTE: Modified menus will not be implemented until approval is received
- Please submit new Physician's Request for Special Dietary Accommodations form (special diet form) each 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 6 weeks if special purchases are required

### School Nurse

- Scan and email the Physician's Request for Special Dietary Accommodations form (special diet form) to HISD Nutrition Services at [NSSPECIALDIETS@houstonisd.org](mailto:NSSPECIALDIETS@houstonisd.org)
- Serve as liaison between the Nutrition Services Department and the parent to gather needed information, physician documentation, and parent approval of special diet menus

### Nutrition Services

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 CANNOT 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