

# Policy for the Provision of Special Diets

Department for Education & Children

Updated October 2022



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# Introduction

Carmarthenshire School Catering Service are committed to satisfying the needs of all pupils to include pupils who require special diets for medical conditions or religious or cultural reasons in accordance with legislation and the Food Information Regulations 2014. The purpose of this policy outlines the roles and responsibility of school staff, parents, the school catering management, and staff to ensure the safeguarding of any pupils with special dietary requirements are met to ensure a consistent approach so that the needs of children can be met safely.

All special meals are prepared with due care and attention by trained staff; There is always a risk that traces of allergens may be transferred to items from our menu during processing, storage or preparation in our kitchens. For these reasons we cannot guarantee that any item on any of our menus is free from trace allergens.

The provision of special diets will be regularly monitored and if required corrective measures will be put in place.

Schools may also wish to adopt the key principles in this policy in relation to curriculum activities and/or where food is provided to pupils outside of the remit of the School Catering Team e.g., private run breakfast clubs, after school clubs etc.

## **Special Diets for Medical Conditions**

Special diets can be required for a wide variety of medical conditions to include food allergies, food intolerance, diabetes, coeliac disease, and many others. A medically prescribed diet is one which has been prescribed/diagnosed by a medical professional e.g., consultant, Doctor/GP, or registered dietician.

## **Religious, Cultural and Vegetarian/Vegan Diets**

We will also cater for pupils who follow special diets for religious or cultural reasons or because they are vegetarian/or vegan.

# Key Roles and Responsibilities

The provision of special diets requires a joint approach and communication between all parties; see additional information in Appendix 1 and 2.

**The School have overall responsibility for the health and wellbeing of children and play a vital role in coordinating information between all parties:**

- Provide all parents with a special diet form as part of the school's enrolment process to include maintaining accurate records and ensuring that School Catering Staff are provided with relevant information as soon as possible
- Regularly liaise with parents to determine any changes to dietary requirements ensuring that any changes to medically prescribed diets are accompanied by written confirmation of the change(s) from a registered medical practitioner or dietician. Immediately inform School Catering Staff of any changes to a pupil's dietary requirements as and when updates are received from Parent/Guardian
- Update Teacher Centre / SIMS with details of individual dietary requirements

- To facilitate a meeting with the parent/guardian and Cook in Charge / Cook Supervisor if required
- Provide information to any other staff members who will be supporting the pupils (in support of curriculum related activities, After School Club activities etc.)
- Inform School Catering Staff of school trips involving pupils who normally receive a special diet provision in advance of the trip

Primary Schools:

- Assist in establishing which pupils require a special meal during morning registration and informing School Catering Staff before 09:30 each day to allow sufficient time for the preparation of all required meals
- To provide a suitable level of supervision for pupils during lunchtime service to ensure wellbeing of pupils ensuring that identified pupils receive the correct meal
- Manage pupil requirements in accordance with the Free School Milk scheme so that alternative products can be made available to pupils

**The pupil's Parent/Guardian is responsible for informing The School of their child's requirements for a special diet, prior to starting at the school or during the academic year:**

- Obtain from the school at the earliest opportunity a special diet form; when completing the form, provide the supporting medical evidence that is required. This can be provided as a letter from a medical consultant, Doctor/GP, or dietician if you consider your child to have a medical condition that affects eating requirements. Return information to school promptly
- If necessary, meet with The School and Catering Staff to discuss a suitable menu
- Once all relevant information is received, arrangements will be made to devise a suitable menu for your child, a copy of which will be provided to you and our School Catering Staff. To protect your child please provide your child with a packed lunch from home until a start date of the menu can be confirmed.
- Update the school if your child's special dietary requirements change, providing written confirmation about the changes from a registered medical practitioner, dietician or appropriate healthcare professional.

**The Catering Service Management will be responsible for:**

- Providing planned menus in accordance with dietary requirements to include gluten intolerance, lactose intolerance, vegetarian etc. seeking specialist advice from dieticians if required
- Collating and providing allergen information relating to recipes making information available to all parties
- Providing nutritional information data if required
- Supporting Operational Catering Staff in attending meetings with School staff and parents/guardians to discuss suitable menus

- Monitoring working practices adopted by school catering staff to ensure that the risk of cross contamination is minimised whilst achieving good standards of food hygiene and ensuring that all staff are suitably trained
- Approve product specifications with suppliers prior to alternative products being supplied to kitchens
- Monitoring the provision of special diets, communication of allergens and compliance with this policy

**School Catering staff have a significant role in the day-to-day provision of special diets. For staff to be able to cater for special dietary requirements effectively and safely, our Cook in Charge / Cook Supervisor will work in partnership with the School and the Parent/Guardian to provide a nutritionally balanced meal that meets the special dietary requirements of the pupil.**

School Catering staff will:

- Ensure that meals are prepared and provided in line with the dietary requirements of all pupils
- Advise customers of the allergen information as and when requested
- Meet with Parent/Guardian and the School if required to discuss a suitable menu
- Undertake all required training that is required and ensure that specific working instructions are followed when preparing meals to minimise the risk of cross contamination
- Check that correct products have been received; undertake thorough checks of all ingredient labels prior to meal production to include checking ingredients for any substitute ingredients received to determine if they meet dietary requirements
- Keep accurate records with support from the school to ensure that special dietary requirements are maintained/ updated, in the event, it needs to be available for relief staff in case of staff absences
- Communication with lunchtime supervisory staff in the serving of the meals for special diets to include the use of colour coded crockery across all schools
- When transporting meals to another school, ensure that the name of the child/special diet is presented on the relevant food containers

## **Universal Primary Free School Meals**

With Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) being implemented across all year groups in the next two years, it is inevitable that special dietary requirements will increase. Parents will be asked to complete a registration form in advance of UPFSM being rolled out to additional year groups which will capture dietary requirements of pupils, especially those who wish to take up the offer, who may not currently have a school meal.

## **Natasha's Law**

From 1 October 2021, the legislative requirements for prepacked for direct sale (PPDS) food labelling changed. The School Catering Management Team have introduced measures to ensure compliance across the School Catering Service. Schools are responsible for ensuring that any requirements for packed lunches as an alternative meal provision to include school trips, are pre-ordered with School Catering Operational Staff in advance of them being supplied.

## **Management of Special Diets in Secondary Schools**

It is important to be aware that the provision of food in secondary schools is different to what your child will have been used to at Primary School:

- Our Secondary Schools offer a cafeteria style service which offers a wide variety of options. Prior to any purchases being made, your child will need to be registered on our till system, this will involve obtaining parental / guardian consent by completing a form which also contains information in relation to allergen and special dietary requirements.
- It is the Pupils responsibility to ask lunchtime staff what options are available to them, prior to any items being purchased. We appreciate that some pupils might not be confident or feel nervous about approaching staff so if you have any queries please contact our main office so that we can discuss how we can support your child further.

From 1 October 2021, the labelling requirements for prepacked products for direct sale will change in Wales. The new labelling will help protect pupils by providing allergen information on the packaging of items such as baguettes, sandwiches etc.

## **Severe Allergies**

The School should discuss requirements for severe allergies with School Catering staff so that a whole school approach can be adopted. If an allergen or ingredient is required to be removed from the school environment this must be discussed in detail as it may not be achievable to achieve this without impacting on the variety of dishes available on the school menu.

It is the responsibility of The School to ensure that identified staff (including breakfast staff) are trained in the use of EpiPen's and to liaise with parents when new pens need to be provided as and when they become out of date.

## **Menu Compliance**

Our menus must comply with Healthy Eating Legislation therefore unfortunately we are not able to accommodate requests from parents/guardians regarding dislikes for certain foods.

Due to the complexities in catering for medical prescribed diets we may need to offer a slightly different menu to our standard dishes. It is not our intention to single out pupils or to discriminate, our aim is to ensure that we provide a safe meal using the products that are available to us.

## **Data Protection**

To manage the provision of special diets safely, The School and School Catering staff will be required to maintain information on file in relation to medical information to include a photograph if permission is granted by the parent. All data will be conducted in line with GDPR requirements.

## **Contact Details**

Should you have any queries or wish to discuss your child's specific requirements in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact our main office:

Email: [schoolmeals@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:schoolmeals@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01267 246537

# Appendix 1

## Summary of managing special dietary requirements in Primary Schools



# Appendix 2

## Summary of managing special dietary requirements in Secondary Schools

