

Sabden Primary School

*Lancashire County Council
School & Residential Care Catering Service*

Policy for the Provision of Special Diets and Communication of Allergens

Lancashire County Catering Service is committed to satisfying the needs of our customers and stakeholders and shall endeavour to meet their expectations.

In order to meet our commitments it is our policy to provide a school meal for all pupils, including those with medical diets.

With the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meal in September 2014 and changes to the Food Information Regulations 2013 in December 2014, it is necessary to outline our procedures for handling the service of special diets and the communication of allergen information to our customers.

Allergens

Allergen information shall be available and easily accessible to customers, in accordance with the Food Information Regulations (FIR) 2013, for all foods, for the following list of allergens:

- Celery
- Cereals containing gluten
- Crustaceans
- Eggs
- Fish
- Lupin
- Milk
- Molluscs
- Mustard
- Nuts
- Peanuts
- Sesame seeds
- Soya
- Sulphur dioxide

Special Diets

Special diets are diets for pupils with a medically diagnosed requirement; not just a dislike of certain foods or food groups. It is our policy to provide a menu for those pupils with medically diagnosed food allergies, food intolerances or a medical condition which affects eating requirements. The Catering Service understands that some people have particular sensitivities to

certain foods that non – sufferers would find harmless. When someone has a food allergy, their immune system reacts to a particular food or food groups.

We recognise that severe allergies can cause life threatening reactions and that food intolerances do not involve the immune system and are not generally life threatening, but can make the customer feel poorly.

It is our policy to safely provide special diets by operating a rigorous food safety management system as part of our central HACCP system, which identifies the appropriate controls and working instructions required for the provision of special diets.

The organisation will provide all necessary training and instruction to Catering management and frontline staff and monitor its effectiveness. The provision of special diets will be regularly audited and if applicable corrective measures put in place.

Roles & Responsibilities

Catering Service Management

- To provide planned menus for:
- Gluten intolerance – a gluten free menu is available using specific gluten free products such as flour, pasta and bread mix.
- Lactose intolerance – a lactose free menu is available and soya milk available to drink if applicable.
- Vegetarian – Each day a vegetarian option will be made available as part of our standard menu.
- Nut allergies – Standard school menus do not contain nuts as an ingredient in the recipe.
- To collate and provide allergen information relating to recipes and planned menus and communicate to catering staff and schools.
- To agree any product substitutions made to kitchens prior to delivery.
- To provide nutritional data if requested.
- To provide appropriate signage to advise customers on where to access allergen information.
- To ensure ingredient specifications for all products included in our menus are checked to ensure they meet the dietary requirements of our customers.
- To monitor the provision of special diets, communication of allergens and compliance with this policy.

Parent/Guardian

- To inform school of their child's allergy or intolerance and provide supporting medical evidence relating to their child's condition. This can be provided as a letter from their GP or a consultant paediatrician, together with any information received from their dietician.
- To seek medical or dietetic advice if they consider their child to have a medical condition that affects eating requirements.
- To provide as much information as possible to their child's school to assist in the provision of a suitable menu.
- To discuss the menu with their child and/or dietician to assist in making suitable choices.

- If necessary to meet with the school and catering supervisor to discuss the menu provision.

The School

- Make the catering staff at the production kitchen aware of pupils who require a special diet or who have an allergy.
- To ensure Catering staff (kitchen and if applicable, the dining centre) are made aware of any relevant information that will assist in the provision of a suitable menu.
- To facilitate a meeting with the parent/guardian, dietician and catering supervisor when this is necessary.
- Provide information, regarding the pupil's dietary needs, to any staff members who will be supporting the pupil.
- Provide a suitable level of supervision for pupils when lunches are selected and served so that the welfare of the pupil is safeguarded.
- To communicate seasonal menu changes to the parent/guardian when these are published by the catering service.
- Inform the catering supervisor of any changes to a pupil's dietary requirements.
- Inform the catering supervisor of any absences so a meal is not prepared when not required.
- In respect of gluten and lactose free menus; where more than one choice is available, ask the child to choose one dish only and inform the catering supervisor before 9:30am.

Catering Service Kitchen Staff

- When required, provide a suitable meal using the standard menu recipes, allergen table and special diet checklist provided.
- To advise customers of the allergen information as and when requested.
- To follow a specific set of working instructions which ensures the meal is prepared to minimise the risk of cross contamination.
- Check that the products delivered are the correct brands.
- Prior to a meal being produced for a customer with a special diet or allergy ensure that the labelling of the products being used is checked to determine that it does not contain the allergen relevant to that customer.
- Display the appropriate signage and advise customers of where to access allergen information.
- To record all special dietary requirements in section 9 of the kitchen management portfolio so that in the event of staff absence the relevant information is available for temporary staff.
- Communicate with and supervise catering assistants in the serving of special diets and meals to those pupils with allergies.
- When transporting to another school, ensure the name of the child and the items that contain the allergen are recorded on the delivery sheet. The supply kitchen must identify the meal that is suitable on the delivery sheet and in the packing.

Frequently Asked Questions.....

What is the difference between an allergen and intolerance?

This is outlined in the Policy document which clarifies that allergens can cause life threatening reactions whereas intolerances are not generally life threatening.

Why is medical evidence of the allergy or intolerance required?

Children can be faddy eaters and their parent/guardian, with all best intentions, may wish to ensure that the child only receives the types of food which they prefer. Children should be encouraged to eat a balanced and healthy diet which contains all relevant food groups, not only the ones that they prefer. Medical evidence of an allergy or intolerance ensures that we focus on the needs of sufferers and consider this across the full academic day. Also, there can be additional advice, complications or medications brought about by allergens or intolerances which may be required to be recorded within the child's health care plan.

Why can't children with allergens or intolerances just have a packed lunch which is prepared by their parent?

It is the statutory responsibility of the school to ensure that any child who is eligible for a Free School Meal receives one. This responsibility includes those pupils with medically diagnosed conditions.

Are allergens and intolerances limited to the 14 listed?

No, any type of food can be considered as a potential allergen or can contribute towards an intolerance.

Why do you only provide planned menus for lactose and gluten free?

These are the two most common medically diagnosed allergens and intolerances which account for over 90% of dietary menu requests. Menus for other allergens and intolerances can be provided upon specific request.

Are the published lactose and gluten free menus guaranteed to be free from dairy and gluten?

No, ingredients and products are checked to ensure that ingredients and product labelling does not denote any of the allergens however, there is always the risk of cross contamination occurring somewhere within the food supply and production chain. Only products which are produced in an environment which is completely free from the allergen can be guaranteed to be "free from" School & Residential Care Catering

What is cross contamination and how does this happen?

People who are diagnosed with food allergies need to avoid eating the foods that trigger their symptoms. However, simply avoiding those allergenic foods often isn't enough to eliminate symptoms—that's where cross-contamination comes in. Cross contamination occurs when a food allergen contaminates a food that is naturally free of allergens. Cross contamination of allergens can occur either directly if the allergen is added to food or indirectly if it causes contamination

due to the use of the same utensils, inadequate hand or equipment washing etc. Schools who utilise their kitchen outside of the lunchtime period should ensure that the catering service are made aware of this so that appropriate controls can be put in place to protect both parties.

What controls do School & Residential Care Catering have in place?

School & Residential Care Catering provide published menus which contain ingredients and products which have been checked for the most common 14 allergens. The published menu is accompanied by corresponding menu leaflets for parents, a menu pack for kitchen use and is also posted on Schools Portal for schools to access. Dishes which contain allergens are denoted on the kitchen allergen matrix and staff are instructed to check that they receive the correct ingredients and product brands before providing a meal to an allergen sufferer and also to check the labelling of the products to ensure that they do not contain the allergen(s) which relate to the pupil. Your Unit Catering Supervisor is trained in the management of allergens and employs suitable segregation of goods during the receipt, storage and preparation of all dishes. Any local changes made by schools to the dishes on the published menu will not have been considered within these controls. Any school that wishes to make changes to the published menu should contact their Area Operations Manager prior to making changes.

Why is there so much concern about allergens and intolerances at the moment?

The number of sufferers continues to increase annually, as does the range of allergens which can cause reactions. It is estimated that between 8-10% of the UK population suffer with some form of allergen or intolerance. To place this into context there are approximately 115,000 primary and secondary aged children living within Lancashire and therefore, between 9,000 – 11,500 sufferers and this is one area of risk which is repeatedly introduced on a daily basis. There has also been a number of high profile incidents in the press and media in recent times, many of which resulted in the avoidable deaths of children and young people.

Where can I find further information?

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/consumer-advice/allergy/>

<https://www.allergyuk.org/>

<https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/food-allergy-and-intolerance>

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