Accommodating Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Program

Use this flowchart when special dietary requests are received. Document the process.

SFA/school received a request for a meal modification from a:

State Licensed Healthcare Professional

Parent/Guardian

Does the medical statement include the following?

- Description of the child’s physical or mental impairment,
- Explanation of what must be done to accommodate,
- Signature from a State licensed healthcare professional.

Can the accommodation be made within the meal pattern?

- Yes
  - Accommodate the request within the meal pattern. A medical statement is not required.
  - Accommodate the request within the meal pattern. A medical statement must be obtained to accommodate the request. Contact parent/guardian to request a medical statement signed by a State licensed healthcare professional.
- No
  - Obtain permission from parent/guardian to contact the State licensed healthcare professional to get a complete medical statement. While waiting for the updated statement, SFA should follow the portion of the medical statement that is clear.

Is the request for a medical condition?

- Yes
  - The request is for a medical condition. The request is for a food, health, ethical or religious preference, that is not a disability.
    - SFA is not required to accommodate preferences but may choose to make meal modifications.
    - If modifications are made, they must meet the USDA meal pattern requirements.
  - No
    - SFA is required to accommodate the request.
      - SFA should try to accommodate within the meal pattern if possible.
      - Student’s meal does not have to meet the meal pattern requirements to be reimbursable.
      - SFA may not use OVS to accommodate the request.

Citations and References:

1. 2017 Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs Guide.
2. SP 26-2017 Accommodating Disabilities in the School Meal Programs: Guidance and Q&As
3. SP 59-2016 Policy Memorandum on Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the School Meal Programs.