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.

Is the request for a medical condition?
- Yes
  - Can the accommodation be made within the meal pattern?
    - Yes
      - Accommodate the request within the meal pattern. A medical statement is not required. 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
      - 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.

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.

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.
4. Sample Medical Statement to Request Accommodations for Disabilities – Available in English and Spanish.

Georgia Department of Education School Nutrition Program
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.