



SPECIAL DIETS, CULTURAL OR RELIGIOUS FOOD RESTRICTIONS POLICY

Genuine Foods believes it is our responsibility to serve scholars with respect and dignity. We know that there are cultures and religions that observe customs related to diet. We also are aware that some scholars may have allergies, intolerances or sensitivities to certain food products and/or ingredients. To help us meet all students' needs, we ask that families proceed as described below.

Medical Food Restrictions

Genuine Foods will provide food substitutions to a child with a disability when the need for a substitution is supported by a written medical statement signed by a licensed physician, a physician assistant, or a nurse practitioner. Families should work with their physician or other medical professional as soon as possible to complete a special dietary needs medical form **as required by each state's School Nutrition office.** Please check with your school for a copy of the form and how often they should be completed. This form should be submitted to the Genuine Foods Nutrition & Compliance department in addition to the school.

USDA regulations require reasonable dietary accommodations in school meals for children whose disabilities restrict their diet. A child with a disability must be provided with a reasonable dietary accommodation when that need is supported by the statements of the Physician or other Medical Professional in a special dietary needs medical form. The State licensed healthcare professional must identify on the form:

- The child's disability and why the disability restricts the child's diet;
- The major life activity affected by the disability;
- Diet prescription or an explanation of what must be done to accommodate the child; AND
- The food(s) to be omitted from the child's diet, and the food(s) that must be substituted.

Genuine Foods Nutrition & Compliance department will work with the family, the affected child, and the Genuine Foods staff providing them with menus, recipes, and ingredients for all food prepared and served by Genuine Foods staff. Depending on the severity of the restriction, the Genuine Foods staff will make reasonable alternative food items available for the child, whenever possible. It is also recommended that families contact the school nurse with any special medical needs regarding their child's condition.

Managing Anaphylactic Life-Threatening Food Allergies

A child who suffers from anaphylactic life-threatening food allergies may receive dietary accommodations. For the child to receive an accommodation, a physician or other medical professional must complete a special dietary needs medical form. In such cases, the prescribed substitutions by the licensed healthcare professional may be made by the school if the substitution is reasonable.

While Genuine Foods will make reasonable substitutions and work to provide a safe environment for food production and consumption, meals from home provide the safest option.

Many of our menu items contain common allergens and substitution of food brands & ingredients, while not common, may occur. Please contact your child's cafeteria manager for specific information on products used in their specific cafeteria.

Managing Non-Severe Food Allergies and/or Food Intolerance

Genuine Foods is not required to make food substitutions for children with non-severe food allergies or food intolerances, who do not have a disability as defined under either Section 504 or the Rehabilitation Act or Part B of IDEA. However, Genuine Foods will make reasonable food substitutions for individual children who do not have a disability but who are medically certified as having a special medical or dietary need. General health concerns, such as a family's preference that a child eat a gluten-free diet because the family believes it is healthier for the child, are not disabilities and do not require a modification. Determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis.

In accordance with USDA regulation, for scholars with lactose intolerance or a non-life threatening milk allergy, no other beverage can be substituted for milk except a lactose-free beverage that meets the nutritional requirements of milk.

Religious and/or Cultural Food Restrictions

If there is no known allergy, food intolerance or disability, but the family requests that a specific food be eliminated for religious reasons the family may notify the Genuine Foods Nutrition & Compliance department in writing of the food restrictions. It is also recommended that families contact the school with their request.

The school meal pattern allows for flexibility and menu management if personal preferences are given in advance. Furthermore, the daily menu is constructed to offer a variety of choices every day appropriate for various personal preferences. Please note, there are currently menu limitations due to COVID-19.

Each Genuine Foods school team will keep an up-to-date list of all children whose families have advised the Genuine Foods Nutrition & Compliance department of dietary, cultural, or religious food restrictions. We will make every effort to comply with the restrictions once we are made aware of them. We are not with any child 100 percent of the time; we cannot guarantee that a child will not eat a restricted item. We cannot anticipate the needs of all scholars. Unless we are aware in advance of a child's dietary, cultural or religious restriction, we may not be able to provide a complete meal.

Family Responsibilities

It is the expectation of Genuine Foods that families will exercise their responsibilities to educate their child with respect to food restrictions. Families should teach their children to ask lunchroom staff to identify any food items that the children cannot identify. Families are encouraged to file any completed special dietary needs medical forms or religious and/or cultural food restriction letters with the school and the Genuine Foods Nutrition & Compliance department prior to their child's first day of attendance at school.