New Heights Charter School of Brockton

District Meal Modification Policy

Effective School Year: 2025

Purpose

New Heights Charter School of Brockton (NHCSB) is committed to ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, have equal access to nutritious school meals. In accordance with **USDA regulation 7 CFR 15b**, **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**, and **USDA Policy Memorandum SP 59-2016** ("Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the School Meal Programs"), the School Food Authority (SFA) shall make reasonable meal modifications for students whose disabilities restrict their diets.

Policy Statement

No qualified student shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP) based on disability.
The SFA will provide reasonable modifications to meal services to accommodate students whose disabilities prevent them from eating standard program meals, provided such modifications are supported by appropriate documentation from a licensed healthcare professional.

Definition of a Disability

A "disability" is any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including but not limited to eating, breathing, digestion, and metabolism. Examples include food allergies that cause anaphylaxis, metabolic disorders, digestive diseases, or other medical conditions requiring dietary restrictions.

Requesting a Meal Modification

1. **Initiating a Request**
    - Parents or guardians requesting a meal modification must complete a **Meal Modification Request Form**, available in the school office, nurse's office, or on the NHCSB website.

- Requests should include a **medical statement** signed by a licensed healthcare professional.

2. **Medical Statement Requirements**
   The statement must identify:
   - The student's disability or medical condition;
   - How the disability restricts the child's diet;
   - The major life activity affected;
   - The food(s) to be omitted and suggested substitutions.
3. **Submission and Review**
   - The completed request and medical statement should be submitted to the **School Nurse** or **Food Service Director**.
   - The Food Service Director, in collaboration with the nurse and parent/guardian, will review the request and determine necessary accommodations.

Implementation of Modifications

The SFA will make modifications that are reasonable and appropriate based on the child's disability-related needs.
Menu adjustments may include substitution of food items, texture modifications, or preparation changes.
All modifications are documented and communicated to food service staff, the nurse, and classroom staff (if applicable).
Students shall not be charged extra for meals that require modification due to disability.

Communication and Confidentiality

The SFA maintains confidentiality of all medical and disability-related information in accordance with **FERPA** and other applicable privacy laws.
Information about how to request a meal modification will be included in student handbooks, enrollment materials, and the annual public release.

Appeal Process

Parents or guardians who disagree with a decision regarding a meal modification request may request a review through the **Section 504 Grievance Procedure**.
The grievance should be submitted in writing to the **504 Coordinator** within **10 school days** of receiving the decision.
The Coordinator will investigate and respond in writing within **30 calendar days**.

Staff Training

The SFA provides annual training to food service personnel, nurses, and relevant staff on identifying and implementing meal modifications, food allergy management, and civil rights compliance.
Documentation of training is retained in the district's annual civil rights compliance records.

Recordkeeping

The SFA maintains all documentation for a minimum of **three years plus the current year**, including:

- Medical statements
- Accommodation records
- Training logs
- Family communications

Resources and References

- USDA Policy Memo SP 59-2016: *Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the School Meal Programs*
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Massachusetts DESE Child Nutrition Programs Guidance

Contacts

Director of Operations/Food Service Director: Dr. Delroy Dennis, PhD | ddennis@nhcsb.org
504 Coordinator: Dawn Cordeiro | 508-857-5721 ext.1324 | dcordeiro@nhcsb.org

Public Availability

This policy is publicly available on the New Heights Charter School of Brockton website and is included with other district-wide policies related to student health services and nutrition programs. The policy is accessible to families, staff, and the public through the school's website and food service information pages.