

**S.9.R Nutrition & Wellness-
SFA/Sponsor Name Meal Modification
Request Procedure**

Central Vermont Supervisory Union
Echo Valley Community School District
Paine Mountain School District

Meal Modification Request Procedure

Purpose

Central Vermont Supervisory Union (CVSU) will provide reasonable meal modifications, at no additional cost, when necessary to accommodate a participant's disability in any school nutrition program it operates. This procedure explains how households may request a modification, how CVSU will review and implement requests, and how a household may raise a concern or grievance if a requested modification is not provided.

CVSU will maintain confidentiality throughout the request, review, and implementation process and will accommodate participants in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.

Public Notice and Access

CVSU will make this procedure publicly available each school year through the district website and at least one direct communication to households, such as a handbook, newsletter, back-to-school information, or menu communication. The procedure will also be available from each school office, school nurse, and the School Nutrition Services office.

Upon request, CVSU will provide this information in an alternative format or in a language needed by a household. Interpretation and translation assistance will be provided without charge.

Disability-Related Meal Modifications

For purposes of this procedure, a disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities or major bodily functions, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. Meal modifications are not limited to food allergies or intolerances. They may include, for example, changes in food texture, equipment, seating, feeding support, portioning, timing, or additional food needed because of a disability.

Each request will be considered individually. CVSU will not require a participant to accept a modification that is inappropriate for the participant's disability and will not provide a separate or segregated meal service unless necessary to meet the participant's needs.

Documentation Requirements

Modifications that meet the applicable meal pattern

A household may submit a written request for a modification that continues to meet the applicable federal meal pattern. A medical statement is not required for the modified meal to be reimbursable, although CVSU may ask reasonable questions needed to understand and safely implement the request. A medical statement may be helpful for safety planning, but CVSU will not delay a meal-pattern-compliant modification solely because one has not been provided.

Modifications that do not meet applicable meal pattern

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A request that requires a meal outside the applicable federal meal pattern must be supported by a medical statement from a state-licensed health care professional authorized to write medical prescriptions or, when permitted under the applicable child nutrition program, a registered dietitian. A separate medical statement is not required when the information needed to implement the modification is already documented in the participant's current Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.

The medical statement must identify:

- The food, ingredient, texture, or other item to be omitted or avoided;
- A brief explanation of how exposure or the existing meal service affects the participant;
- The food, substitution, texture, equipment, or other modification recommended; and
- The signature of the authorized health care professional or registered dietitian.

If a medical statement is unclear or incomplete, CVSU will contact the household for clarification and will work with the household to provide an appropriate interim modification when reasonably possible. CVSU will not request a participant's complete medical record or chart. A new medical statement is not required each year unless the participant's needs change or the existing documentation no longer provides enough information to serve the participant safely and appropriately.

How to request a Meal Modification

A parent, guardian, adult participant, or other authorized household member may begin a request by contacting any of the following:

- The school nurse;
- The building principal or designee;
- The Director of School Nutrition Services or school kitchen manager; or
- The CVSU Section 504 Coordinator.

A request may be made orally to begin the process. CVSU will assist the household in documenting the request in writing and, when necessary, obtaining the Vermont Medical Statement Form. Lack of a particular form will not prevent CVSU from considering a request.

Primary district contact: Section 504 Coordinator, Abby Wiggins
Central Vermont Supervisory Union
111b Brush Hill Rd, Williamstown, VT 05679
802-433-5818
awiggins@cvsu.org

Review and Implementation Process

1. The receiving staff member will promptly notify the school nurse and the Director of School Nutrition Services or designee.
2. The school nurse or other designated coordinator will contact the household to confirm the participant's needs, review available documentation, and identify any immediate safety measures.

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3. A team will be assembled as needed. The team may include the household, participants when appropriate, school nurse, food-service representative, Section 504 case manager or special educator, classroom or program staff, principal, and other personnel necessary to implement the modification.
4. The team will create a written meal-modification plan when needed. The plan will identify substitutions or other modifications, preparation and service procedures, cross-contact precautions, staff responsibilities, emergency steps, communication with substitutes, and a review schedule.
5. CVSU will begin the approved modification as soon as reasonably possible. When clarification or additional documentation is needed, staff will work with the household to identify a safe interim approach rather than unnecessarily delaying access to meals.
6. The school nurse or designated coordinator will communicate the minimum necessary information to staff responsible for implementing the plan and will periodically check with the household and staff to confirm that the modification remains safe and effective.

Menus, Product Information, and Substitutions

Current menus will be posted or otherwise shared with households. School Nutrition Services will maintain available nutrition facts labels, ingredient lists, recipes, and product information used to implement meal modifications. Because manufacturers may change ingredients, households should communicate directly with the school nurse or School Nutrition Services rather than relying solely on a posted menu.

When a product or planned substitution affecting an approved modification changes, School Nutrition Services will notify the school nurse or other designated coordinator so that the household and responsible staff can be informed as appropriate.

Requests Unrelated to Disability

Households may request meal changes based on religious observance, cultural practice, vegetarian or vegan preference, or another personal preference. Federal disability law does not require CVSU to provide a modification unless the request is connected to an underlying disability. CVSU will nevertheless make reasonable efforts to accommodate religious, cultural, and personal preferences when the requested option is available within program, staffing, safety, procurement, and meal-pattern requirements. These requests should be directed to School Nutrition Services.

When a Requested Modification May Not Be Provided

CVSU may decline a particular requested modification only when, after an individualized review, it determines that the modification would fundamentally alter the nature of the meal program or when another lawful basis applies. A fundamental alteration is a change so significant that it would change the essential nature of the program. Cost or administrative inconvenience alone will not automatically establish a fundamental alteration.

Before reaching such a decision, CVSU will consult with the household, consider effective alternatives, and confer with the Vermont Agency of Education Child Nutrition Programs as appropriate. The Superintendent

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or designee, in consultation with the CVSU Section 504 Coordinator, must approve any decision not to provide a requested disability-related modification. The household will receive written notice explaining the decision, the alternatives considered or offered, and the available grievance and appeal procedures.

Grievance and Review Rights

A household that believes a disability-related meal modification has been improperly delayed, denied, or implemented may submit a grievance to the CVSU Section 504 Coordinator, Abby Wiggins, at Central Vermont Supervisory Union, 111b Brush Hill Rd, Williamstown, VT, 05679, 802-433-5818, awiggins@cvsu.org. A grievance may be submitted orally or in writing, and CVSU will assist a person who needs help putting the grievance in writing.

CVSU will provide a prompt and equitable review consistent with its Section 504 grievance procedure. The household has the right to:

- Receive timely notice of the process and decision;
- Present information and participate in an impartial hearing or review, as applicable;
- Be represented by counsel or another person at the household's own expense;
- Examine the record relevant to the request, subject to applicable student-record and privacy laws; and
- Receive written notice of the final decision and any available procedure for further review or appeal.

Using CVSU's grievance process does not prevent a household from pursuing any other remedy available under federal or state law, including filing a program discrimination complaint with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Confidentiality, Records, and Training

Information about a participant's disability and meal modification will be treated as confidential and shared only with personnel who need the information to implement the modification, protect the participant's health and safety, administer the program, or comply with law. Records will be maintained in accordance with applicable student-record, health-record, and child nutrition program requirements.

CVSU will train relevant administrators, nurses, Section 504 and special education staff, food-service employees, teachers, paraeducators, substitutes, and other responsible personnel on this procedure and on the specific plans they are assigned to implement. Training will include confidentiality, cross-contact prevention, emergency response, communication, and the prohibition against charging households for disability-related modifications.

Legal Authority and Guidance

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
- ADA Amendments Act of 2008;

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- Applicable USDA child nutrition program regulations and meal-pattern requirements;
- USDA guidance on modifications to accommodate disabilities in school meal programs; and
- Vermont Agency of Education Child Nutrition Programs guidance and forms.

USDA Non Discrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information, such as Braille, large print, audiotape, or American Sign Language, should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY), or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, available from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or online through USDA. A letter may also be submitted and must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action sufficient to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights about the nature and date of the alleged violation.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442

Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.