



## **SPECIAL DIET MENU POLICY**

### **THE PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements and best practice for providing safe meals for pupils with special dietary requirements at primary school sites that The Pantry cater for.

### **THE PANTRY SPECIAL DIET MENUS**

Special diet menus are developed for pupils that cannot safely eat from the main menu due to a medical condition, such as severe or complex allergies. Special diets menus may also involve pupils who have dietary conditions of which nutrients like fat, carbohydrates and protein need to be measured e.g., diabetes, PKU or cystic fibrosis.

### **MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR A SPECIAL DIET MENU**

For a special diet menu to be provided, medical documentation **MUST** be given. If medical documentation is not provided, the parent can use The Pantry online ordering system to order their child's meal.

For pupils who are on a milk or egg ladder, parents can "self-manage" their child's requirements with the online system.

If a child does have medical documentation for their medical condition, but the parent prefers to utilise The Pantry online ordering system, they must sign a waiver form to indicate their acceptance to "self-manage" their child's medical condition. For pupils who have allergies outside of the 14 Major Food Allergens, such as an allergy to apples, and do not have medical documentation, the parents must continue to order their child's lunch via The Pantry online system. The parent can request ingredient lists for the foods provided, however as there could be supplier changes, these are only valid from the date and time that the ingredient list is given to the parent.

### **MEAL CHOICE ON SPECIAL DIET MENUS**

Our nutritionists will develop a special diet menu using the exact details provided from the medical documentation and any other information that is recorded when the request is submitted. Any further requests for personalisation of special diet menus may be rejected.

The Pantry does not treat cultural or religious diets, veganism or vegetarianism as a special diet as our menus offer a diverse range of foods to cater for pupils to eat a healthy balanced meal daily.

### **OPERATIONAL SAFETY**

Management of special diets involves many factors, however ensuring that our pupils are given a safe lunch is our first priority. Due to the complex nature sometimes involved in ensuring this, it is not always possible to offer more than one choice of safe meal per day for pupils on special diet menus. This decision is solely based on what is operationally safe to provide. If we deem that the complexity of the special diet request is too high, this impacts the ability to provide a safe meal for the pupil, the request may be rejected.

Special Diet Menu Policy (SDMP21102022)



The Pantry will inform parents if there are ingredient changes that affect the 14 Major Food Allergens present in the menu, or if they affect special diet menus.

Special diet menus are exempt from government school food standards; however, we do make every possible effort to ensure special diet menus fit within this guidance.

## **SEVERE ALLERGIES AND MENUS**

Schools must discuss with The Pantry any requests for catering for severe allergies, if this should result in allergens or ingredients being removed/excluded from the standard school menu. Provision may be unrealistic and therefore have an impact on the variety of dishes available for the whole school. If this is the case, this must be included in the contract between the school and The Pantry.

The Pantry will not intentionally use nuts or any product containing nuts as an ingredient within our food offers.

## **THEME DAYS & SPECIAL DIETS**

Whilst The Pantry are passionate about inclusion for all pupils, safety is our first priority, and if there are complexities involved in developing a safe theme day special diet menu for a pupil, the pupil will be offered a safe alternative meal instead.

## **FUSSY EATERS & BEHAVIOURAL CONDITIONS AFFECTING DIET**

Diet related medical documentation must be provided for a special diet menu to be made e.g. food aversions or autism. On some occasions, managing a child's food preference at site level may be more applicable. On such occasions, this must be agreed with the parent, the nutritionist, the operation manager, the kitchen staff and the school.

## **HOW TO ARRANGE A SPECIAL DIET MENU**

The process below indicates how the special diet meal will be developed.

- 1) Make an account with The Pantry.
- 2) Upload medical documentation.
- 3) Nutritionists at The Pantry will be in contact to inform the parent that a new special dietary menu has been uploaded to The Pantry online account. This will become active from the Monday of the following week.
- 4) In order for the pupil to have lunches prepared for them, it is essential for the parent to book the "special diet meal" button on online account.
- 5) Once the pupil approaches the lunch servery, they will be identified by The Pantry team and given their special diet meal in a foil tray.