



## **Information on Special Dietary Needs for Parents**

### **What is a Special Dietary Need?**

Food substitutions and other reasonable modifications to a student's meal may be necessary to meet the medical and dietary needs of students who meet the definition of a disability, such as a food intolerance, allergy, or other medical condition.

### **What Does Not Count as a Special Dietary Need?**

Schools are not required to accommodate a dietary request that is requested due to a lifestyle choice or religious reason.

### **What are My Rights as a Parent?**

Parents have the right to:

- submit a dietary accommodation for their student to make sure their medical need is met;
- file a complaint if they believe a violation has occurred regarding the request for a reasonable modification;
- receive a prompt and unbiased resolution of the complaint;
- request and participate in an impartial hearing to resolve their complaints and;
- receive notice of the final decision and a procedure for review, i.e., right to appeal the hearing's decision.

### **Why Do Parents Need to Submit a Medical Note?**

The medical statement form is very important to ensure a student's special dietary need is accommodated safely and managed properly. The medical statement form must include:

- information about the child's physical or mental impairment that is sufficient to allow the school to understand how it restricts the student's diet;
- an explanation of what must be done to accommodate the student;
- the food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, when necessary; and
- a signature from a medical professional with prescriptive powers, this includes a Doctor (MD or DO), Nurse Practitioner, or Physician Assistant.