

MEAL MODIFICATION INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Saint Patrick School is committed to ensuring that all students have equal access to safe, nutritious school meals. Our school nutrition program participates in USDA Child Nutrition Programs administered by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and follows applicable federal and state requirements regarding meal modifications for students with disabilities and other special dietary needs.

MEAL MODIFICATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) are required to provide reasonable meal modifications for students whose disabilities restrict their diets.

A disability may include a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Depending on the individual student, this may include certain food allergies, food intolerances, metabolic conditions, swallowing or feeding disorders, or other conditions that affect the student's ability to safely eat or participate in the school meal program.

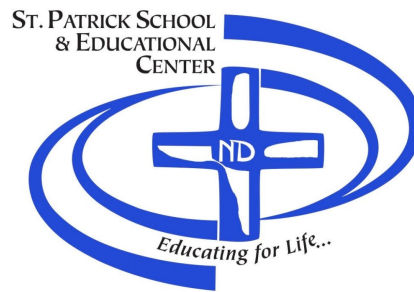
When a student's disability requires a meal modification outside of the applicable USDA meal pattern, the school may require a written medical statement from a State-Licensed Healthcare Professional.

Disability-related meal modifications will be provided at **no additional cost to the student**.

MEAL MODIFICATIONS WITHIN THE USDA MEAL PATTERN

When a student's dietary needs can be accommodated within the applicable USDA meal pattern, a medical statement may not be required.

Families are encouraged to contact the school as soon as possible to discuss their child's dietary needs so that school nutrition staff can determine the appropriate accommodation and documentation, if any, that is needed.



NON-DISABILITY SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

The school may consider requests for meal modifications related to dietary needs that do not meet the definition of a disability when the requested modification can be reasonably accommodated.

These requests are considered on an individual basis and are not subject to the same federal requirements as disability-related meal modifications.

Food preferences alone do not require the school to provide a meal modification.

HOW TO REQUEST A MEAL MODIFICATION

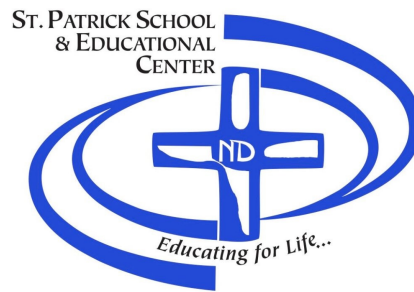
Parents and guardians should contact Saint Patrick School or the school nutrition program when their child requires a meal modification.

When medical documentation is required, families will be asked to complete and return the school's **Medical Statement for Meal Modifications – Students with Disabilities**.

The medical statement should provide sufficient information for the school to understand:

- The student's physical or mental impairment and how it restricts the student's diet;
- The meal modification or accommodation that is required;
- The food(s) or ingredient(s) that must be omitted;
- Recommended food(s) or ingredient(s) that may be substituted or used as alternatives;
- Any necessary texture, consistency, preparation, portion, feeding, or service modifications;
- The name, credentials, signature, and contact information of the State-Licensed Healthcare Professional completing the statement.

Families should provide as much information as possible to allow school nutrition staff to safely and appropriately accommodate the student's needs.



IMPLEMENTING THE MEAL MODIFICATION

Saint Patrick School will work collaboratively with the student's parent or guardian, school nutrition staff, and other appropriate school personnel to implement necessary meal modifications.

When appropriate, the school may contact the student's healthcare provider, with parent/guardian permission when required, to clarify information needed to safely implement the accommodation.

The school will make reasonable efforts to provide required disability-related meal modifications promptly and will not unnecessarily delay an appropriate accommodation while required documentation is being obtained.

Parents and guardians should notify the school whenever there is a change in their child's dietary or medical needs.

FOOD ALLERGIES AND STUDENT SAFETY

Families should notify the school of any known food allergy, intolerance, swallowing or feeding concern, or other medical condition that may affect a student's ability to safely participate in the school meal program.

School nutrition staff will follow applicable food safety, allergen awareness, sanitation, and cross-contact prevention procedures when preparing and serving meal modifications.

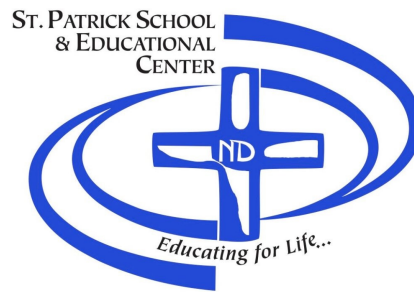
While reasonable precautions will be taken, families should communicate directly with the school regarding the specific needs and accommodations required for their child.

QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Families who have questions about meal modifications or need assistance completing the required documentation should contact Saint Patrick School.

Phone: 978-458-4232 ext. 8025 or ext. 8023

Email: GHoehn@saintpatricklowell.org or MKelly@saintpatricklowell.org



Families who need this information in another language or an alternative format should contact the school for assistance.

USDA NONDISCRIMINATION 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 (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, 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, which can be obtained online, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation.

The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

Mail:

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

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

Email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.