CODMAN ACADEMY CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Standard Operating Procedure

Special Meal Modifications

Joint Procedure: Health Services & Food and Nutrition Services

SOP	FNS-05 • Special Meal Modifications
Effective	School Year 2026–2027
Joint Owners	Jean-Donald Ismeus, School Nurse | Garth J. Petracca, Food Service Director
Audience	School nurse, FNS Director, kitchen staff, classroom teachers, main office

Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) establishes a clear, coordinated process between Codman Academy's Health Services and Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) departments for receiving, approving, communicating, and implementing meal modifications for students with food allergies, medical dietary needs, or disabilities affecting diet.

Following this procedure protects students with medical dietary needs, ensures Codman's compliance with federal civil rights and food program regulations, and establishes the chain of communication that allows safe, reimbursable meals to be served every day.

Scope

This SOP applies to all meal modification requests submitted on behalf of Codman students, regardless of grade level or meal setting (cafeteria, classroom-based, or fieldwork). It governs the responsibilities of:

- The school nurse and Health Services staff
- The Food Service Director and FNS staff (including the Head Cook / Lead Lunch Aide and cafeteria/POS staff)
- Classroom teachers and chaperones who serve meals
- Main office staff who receive submitted documentation

Regulatory Foundation

This SOP is grounded in the following federal and state requirements:

- USDA 7 CFR §210.10(m) — Modifications to meals for students with disabilities
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended
- USDA FNS Instruction 783-2, Rev. 5 — Accommodating children with disabilities in school meal programs

- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Office for Food and Nutrition Programs
- Massachusetts General Laws and 105 CMR 200.000 — Health and screening responsibilities of schools

Federal law requires that schools accommodate the dietary needs of students with disabilities at no additional cost to the family. Meals modified per a medical statement count as one complete reimbursable meal.

Key Principles

- Medical authority is required. Meal modifications must be supported by a signed medical statement from a licensed Massachusetts healthcare provider before they can be implemented.
- The school nurse is the gatekeeper. All medical documentation flows through Health Services before it reaches FNS. FNS does not implement modifications based on parent or teacher request alone.
- Communication is shared. Once approved, the modification must be communicated to every staff member with a role in serving that student, including teachers, kitchen staff, and POS staff.
- Confidentiality is protected. Student health information is handled in accordance with HIPAA / FERPA expectations and is shared only with staff who need it to safely serve the student.
- Modifications are at no cost to the family.

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Health Services SOP

School Nurse: Receiving, Reviewing, and Communicating Meal Modifications

Process for Notifying Nutrition Services of a Meal Modification

The following five-step process is the official chain of communication for any new meal modification at Codman Academy.

STEP 1

Parent / Guardian Obtains Medical Statement

The parent or guardian is responsible for obtaining a completed and signed medical statement from a licensed healthcare provider authorized under Massachusetts law (a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant).

The medical statement must identify: the food(s) to avoid, recommended substitutions, and a brief explanation of how exposure affects the student.

The standard Massachusetts DESE Meal Modification Request Form is preferred. A signed letter on provider letterhead containing the same information is also accepted.

Families may obtain the form from the school nurse, the main office, or the Codman family-facing meal modification guide.

STEP 2

Parent / Guardian Submits Documentation to the School Nurse

The completed medical statement must be submitted directly to the school nurse, Jean-Donald Ismeus.

Acceptable submission methods: in person at the Health Office, by email, or by fax through the main office.

Important: Nutrition Services CANNOT implement a meal modification without confirmation from the school health office. Families who submit forms directly to FNS will be redirected to Health Services.

STEP 3

School Nurse Reviews and Notifies All Interested Parties

The school nurse reviews the documentation for completeness, signature of the medical authority, and clinical clarity.

If anything is missing or unclear, the nurse contacts the family and/or provider to resolve before proceeding.

Once approved, the nurse notifies all interested parties, including but not limited to:

- The student's classroom teacher(s) and (for younger students) classroom assistant(s)
- Garth J. Petracca, Food Service Director
- The Head Cook / Lead Lunch Aide
- Any other staff who supervise meal service for the student (e.g., after-school program lead, fieldwork chaperones)

Notification is documented in the student's health record.

STEP 4

Nutrition Services Implements the Meal Modification

Once notified by the school nurse, FNS works with cafeteria staff to implement the approved modification as quickly as reasonably possible, in accordance with USDA regulations and food safety practices.

The school nurse remains available for clinical questions during implementation.

STEP 5

Ongoing Communication and Updates

Parents/guardians must update the school nurse:

- At the start of each school year (the modification does not automatically renew without confirmation)
- Immediately whenever there is a change to the student's allergy or medical status (new allergen, allergen removed, change in severity)
- When a student transfers grade levels and meal setting changes (e.g., K2 to Grade 1, or moves from cafeteria service to classroom service)

The school nurse re-circulates updated information to all interested parties whenever a change is made.

Critical: No Modification Without Health Services Approval

FNS staff must NEVER implement a meal modification based on a parent phone call, a teacher email, or a verbal request from a student. All modifications require formal documentation reviewed by the school nurse first.

Health Services Responsibilities (Detail)

- Maintain the master list of approved meal modifications in the student health record.
- Ensure each approved modification is supported by current, signed medical documentation.
- Re-verify each modification at the start of every school year and document any updates.
- Communicate all approved modifications, additions, and changes to FNS and to relevant teachers in writing (email is acceptable; phone follow-up for urgent changes).
- Provide annual training to staff on recognizing and responding to allergic reactions, including review of EpiPen use where applicable.
- Maintain confidentiality of student health information at all times.
- Be the point of contact for FNS or teachers when clinical questions arise during meal service.

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Food and Nutrition Services SOP

FNS Director and Kitchen Staff: Implementing Meal Modifications Safely

Nutrition Services Procedures to Minimize Allergy-Related Risk

Once Nutrition Services is notified of an approved meal modification or food allergy by the school nurse, the following processes are implemented to reduce the risk of allergen exposure and ensure student safety.

Entry of Allergies in the Point-of-Sale (POS) System

- Approved food allergies and dietary restrictions are entered into the student's profile within the School Nutrition POS system within 1 school day of receipt of approval from Health Services.
- When students enter their PIN at point of sale, allergy and dietary information is displayed automatically for the cashier.
- Cashiers visually review trays at point of sale to confirm that the meal does not contain identified allergens before completing the transaction.
- POS allergy information serves as a secondary safety check. It does not replace direct kitchen-staff awareness or the established kitchen protocols below.

Allergy Lists Maintained by Kitchen Leadership

- The Head Cook maintains a current, dated list of all students with approved food allergies.
- The list is organized by grade level for ease of reference during meal preparation and service.
- The list is stored in a secure, non-public location within the kitchen — never posted in public view.
- Allergy information is shared only with staff who require it for meal preparation and service, in accordance with student privacy expectations.
- The list is updated immediately when Health Services communicates any addition, removal, or change.

Kitchen Procedures to Prevent Cross-Contamination

- Use clean and sanitized equipment and surfaces before preparing allergen-safe meals.
- Avoid shared utensils, pans, and preparation areas unless they have been properly cleaned and sanitized between uses.
- Read ingredient labels for all items used. Do not assume an ingredient is safe based on a previous batch — formulations change.
- Wash hands and change gloves before handling allergen-safe meals.
- Ensure substitute meals are clearly identified prior to service (see labeling requirements in Section 8).
- Kitchen staff receive ongoing training related to food allergies and cross-contact prevention, reading and following medical meal modification instructions, and confidential handling of student health information.

Labeling Requirements for Modified Meals

To prevent meal mix-ups — particularly in classroom-based meal settings (currently K1 and K2) and on fieldwork bagged-lunch days — every modified meal must be clearly labeled before it leaves the kitchen.

Required Label Information

- Student's full name (first and last)
- Grade level (e.g., K1, K2, Grade 3)
- Allergen(s) or dietary restriction (e.g., "NO PEANUTS / TREE NUTS," "GLUTEN FREE," "DAIRY FREE")
- Date the meal was prepared
- Meal type — breakfast, lunch, or snack

Sample Label Format

MODIFIED MEAL — DO NOT SUBSTITUTE
Student Name: _____
Grade Level: _____
Allergen / Restriction: _____
Date Prepared: _____ Meal: ☐ Breakfast ☐ Lunch ☐ Snack

Additional Labeling Practices

- Use brightly colored labels or label tape that visually distinguish modified meals from standard meals.
- Affix labels firmly so they remain in place during transport from kitchen to classroom or from kitchen to fieldwork bag.
- For younger students (K1 / K2), match the label name with the student's name on the classroom roster before serving — never rely on the student to identify their own meal.
- If a label is missing, illegible, or damaged in transit, do NOT serve the meal. Contact the kitchen for a replacement.

Why Labeling Is Critical for Younger Students

K1 and K2 students cannot reliably advocate for their own dietary needs or recognize allergens by sight. Clear labeling — name, grade, allergen — is the safety net that prevents a serious or life-threatening reaction. Treat labeling as non-negotiable.

Roles and Responsibilities — Combined View

School Nurse (Jean-Donald Ismeus)

- Receives and reviews all medical statements from families.
- Confirms each modification is supported by current, valid medical documentation.
- Notifies all interested parties of approved modifications and updates.
- Provides annual training to staff on allergy response and EpiPen use.
- Serves as clinical point of contact for FNS and teachers.
- Re-verifies each modification at the start of each school year.

Food Service Director (Garth J. Petracca)

- Receives all approved modification notifications from the school nurse.
- Ensures POS system entries are made within 1 school day.
- Oversees kitchen implementation, labeling, and confidentiality compliance.
- Ensures kitchen staff complete annual food allergy and cross-contact prevention training.
- Coordinates fieldwork modified meals with classroom teachers and chaperones.
- Submits compliant claims to DESE for modified meals served.

Head Cook / Lead Lunch Aide

- Maintains the up-to-date kitchen allergy list, organized by grade level.
- Stores the list in a secure, non-public kitchen location.
- Ensures kitchen procedures to prevent cross-contamination are followed daily.
- Confirms all modified meals are correctly labeled before they leave the kitchen.
- Reports concerns or near-misses to the Food Service Director immediately.

POS / Cashier Staff

- Reviews the allergy alert displayed when a student enters their PIN.
- Visually checks each tray for allergens before completing the transaction.
- If a tray contains an allergen, redirects the student to a safe option and notifies the Head Cook.

Classroom Teachers (especially K1 / K2)

- Pick up labeled modified meals from the kitchen along with the standard meal cart.
- Match each labeled meal to the correct student on the class roster before serving — verify name and grade.
- Do not substitute, share, or reassign a labeled modified meal.
- Mark the roster at point of service per SOP FNS-04.
- Report any labeling, allergy, or accommodation concerns to the school nurse and Food Service Director.

Fieldwork Chaperones / Trip Leaders

- Verify labeled bags for students with modifications before leaving campus.
- Distribute labeled bags only to the named student. Do not allow bag swapping.
- Carry a copy of the trip's allergy roster on site, including emergency response instructions.

- Know how to respond to an allergic reaction; carry / know location of student EpiPens (with school nurse coordination).

Common Issues and How to Handle Them

A modified meal arrives unlabeled or with an unclear label

Do NOT serve the meal. Return it to the kitchen for proper labeling. Do not substitute another meal in its place without confirming with the kitchen and consulting the allergy list.

A teacher notices a student is consuming a food they appear to be allergic to

Stop the student from continuing to eat. Notify the school nurse (Jean-Donald Ismeus) immediately. If signs of an allergic reaction develop, follow the emergency action plan on file and call 911 if needed.

Family submits documentation directly to a teacher or to FNS

Politely redirect the documentation to the school nurse. Do not begin implementing the modification until Health Services has reviewed and approved it.

A student tells staff about an allergy that is not on file

Treat the information seriously: use caution at point of sale and contact the school nurse the same day. Encourage the family to submit formal medical documentation. Do not enter informal information into the POS system as an approved allergy.

A medical statement is incomplete (missing signature, missing component)

The school nurse contacts the family and/or provider to resolve. Until complete documentation is received, the modification is not implemented. The family is informed in writing of what is needed.

A student outgrows an allergy or no longer needs a modification

Family must submit updated documentation to the school nurse. The nurse notifies all interested parties and FNS removes the alert from the POS system within 1 school day of approval.

Training and Acknowledgment

All staff covered by this SOP must be trained at the start of each school year and again whenever there is a substantive change to procedure. Training is conducted jointly by the school nurse and Food Service Director and includes:

- Review of this SOP, including the five-step modification request process and labeling requirements.
- Allergy awareness, recognition of an allergic reaction, and emergency response (including EpiPen use).
- Cross-contact prevention and food safety practices for kitchen staff.
- Confidentiality requirements for student health information.
- Civil Rights training for all staff who serve and count meals (per SOP FNS-04, Section 10).

By participating in meal service for students with modifications, staff acknowledge they have read, understood, and will follow this SOP.

Regulatory References

- USDA 7 CFR §210.10(m) — Modifications to meals for students with disabilities
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended
- USDA FNS Instruction 783-2, Rev. 5 — Accommodating children with disabilities in school meal programs
- USDA FNS Instruction 113-1 — Civil Rights compliance and enforcement in nutrition programs
- Massachusetts DESE Office for Food and Nutrition Programs — Meal Modification Request Form
- Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, §57 and 105 CMR 200.000 — School Health
- Codman Academy Food Services Policy (FNS-01), Menu and Ingredient Guidelines (FNS-02), After-School Snack SOP (FNS-03), Classroom & Fieldwork Meal Service SOP (FNS-04), and the Meal Modification Family Guide

Questions or Concerns

Health Services questions:

Jean-Donald Ismeus, School Nurse — Codman Academy Charter Public School

Food and Nutrition Services questions:

Garth J. Petracca, Food Service Director — Codman Academy Charter Public School

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This Standard Operating Procedure is issued jointly by Health Services and the Food and Nutrition Services Department under the authority of the Chief of Staff, Codman Academy Charter Public School. Codman Academy is an equal opportunity provider.