

## Medical Diet Safeguarding Standard

### Medical Diets

The purpose of this document is to explain Derbyshire Catering Service's (DCS) medical diet safeguarding procedures.

The term 'medical diet' is used to refer to food allergies, intolerances and auto immune conditions which require a modified menu to make food safe for a person. This documentation does not cover non-food allergies, cultural and religious diets or lifestyle choices which may affect a person's diet.

DCS reserves the right to refuse a request for a medical diet menu if, on completion of the LACA Allergens Guidance and Risk Analysis Process\*, DCS deem the risk too great to safely cater for the person.

\*LACA Allergens Guidance and Risk Analysis Process is an industry-wide code of conduct for the management of allergens in school. <https://www.laca.co.uk/>

### Medical Diet Safeguarding Procedure

1. Applications for medical diets are to be made via the DCS Medical Diet in Schools Electronic Application Portal. Parents/carers are required to register an account for their child's medical diet application. Once registration for an account has been made, parents/carers will be able to log in to their account at any stage to check the progress of the application. As part of the application process, the following information is required:
  - Child's school details
  - Supporting medical evidence of the child's requirements
2. Confirmation of a submitted application will be sent to the registered applicants email address
3. When the approval process has been completed, an email notification will be sent to the registered applicants email address confirming that a menu has been created and the earliest start date that the menu will be available.
4. The completed application will be shared with the school specified in the application.
5. A menu change will only be made if a child develops additional allergies during the menu cycle. Supporting medical evidence will be required and all requests to update a child's menu must be made via the DCS Medical Diet in Schools Electronic Application Portal.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY MEDICAL DIET REQUESTS SUBMITTED WITHOUT SUPPORTING MEDICAL EVIDENCE WILL BE PROVIDED WITH A RESTRICTED MENU UNTIL APROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED AND REVIEWED.**

## Roles and Responsibilities

### School

The governing body must ensure that arrangements are in place to support children with medical conditions.<sup>1</sup>

*Further measures following 2026 guidance on supporting children and young people with medical conditions and allergies (Benedict's Law):*

- To have an allergy safety policy in compliance with Benedict's Law
- In line with Benedict's Law, at least two methods of identification are required to ensure that there is a robust method in place to identify children with a confirmed medical diet at the point of service. Examples can include:
  - medical diet lanyard
  - coloured wristband
  - being accompanied by a school representative
  - being admitted first in year group queue

A photograph of the child is also required to be kept on site, alongside these two methods of identification.

The school's responsibilities also include:

- To share the above methods of identification with the Caterer.
- To make parents/carers aware that they are required to provide DCS with the information and evidence of the child's medical dietary needs.
- To direct the parent/carer to the DCS Medical Diet in Schools Electronic Application Portal and to assist the parent/carer as required in completing the application.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/803956/supporting-children-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803956/supporting-children-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf)  
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- To safely store completed application forms received from DCS on the child's record.
- To inform the parent/carers that they must update the child's information on the DCS portal to reflect any changes to a child's medical dietary requirements.
- If the school requests an additional meal for a child who usually eats a packed lunch, the school must check for any dietary requirements and complete the above process if possible. If not possible, any dietary information must be provided to the kitchen as a matter of urgency, where confirmation will be sought as to whether a meal can be provided. (Emergency meal or theme day menu).

### **Parent/Carer**

- To request a medical diet through the DCS Medical Diet in Schools Electronic Application Portal with relevant medical evidence.
- To inform DCS of any changes to medical dietary requirements of the child through the DCS Medical Diet in Schools Electronic Application Portal
- If required, to meet with the school and a DCS representative to discuss the menu provision.

### **Caterer (DCS)**

- To ensure that schools are kept up to date with children requiring medical diet menus and the medical diet process.
- To ensure all catering team members are adequately trained in allergen awareness, and that this is updated annually.
- To provide medical diet menus where it is safe to do so following completion of the LACA Allergens Guidance and Risk Analysis Process. DCS reserve the right to refuse a request for a medical diet menu if the risk is deemed too high.
- To commit to providing a minimum of one hot meal and dessert option per day.
- To process medical diet requests in a timely manner. Whilst a request is in progress a child will be served an allergen free meal, such as a jacket potato with a suitable filling and fruit dessert, until a bespoke menu is in place.

- To ensure that medical diet menus are followed, and substitutes are not made except in the event of unforeseen circumstances e.g., product availability. All ingredient specifications will be thoroughly checked by DCS before being authorised for use, this includes any substituted foods.
- If required by school to attend school AAI training.
- To record any serious incident or “near miss” involving a child, young person, member of staff or visitor with a medical condition or allergy as soon as is feasible and share this information with the school.

DCS operates a robust and rigorous dietary safeguarding procedure. However, due to the nature of the food service within school kitchens, using multiple ingredients containing allergens, Derbyshire Catering Service do not state that any menus are free from allergens.

### **Energy and Nutritional Count Values**

DCS can provide energy and nutritional values for the standard school menu on offer. Parents/carers requiring nutritional information for their child who has a medical condition such as diabetes, should complete a medical diet request application on the DCS Medical Diet in Schools Electronic Application Portal.

Once the application has been processed, DCS will issue a full energy and nutritional breakdown report for the child’s school menu.

The information provided is obtained via our suppliers/manufacturers product specifications or using McCance and Widdowson Composition of Foods database. Although every care has been taken to ensure the nutritional values and allergens are accurate, several factors can affect the information, for example different cooking times, substitutions, production anomalies etc. Please be aware that menus may be changed by catering staff for operational reasons and consequently at very short notice. If this occurs DCS will be unable to communicate the changes to parents and schools.

The information provided has not been verified by a qualified dietician and therefore is not considered as nutritional advice.

### **Modified Textured Meals**

If a child requires soft mash or pureed meals because of chewing difficulties or any other medical reason, then DCS will consider the request based on the child’s needs. To request this type of diet, a medical diet request form should be submitted on the DCS Medical Diet in Schools Electronic Application Portal.

