

Allergies and Special Diets

Step by Step Guide for Parents / Guardians

Gateshead School Catering strive to ensure the pupils of Gateshead can enjoy the nutritious and delicious school lunch on offer, regardless of any allergies, intolerances or medical diet requirements. We recognise special diets as an extremely important aspect of our catering provision, aiming for all pupils to enjoy their lunchtime experience, without the worry of being singled out.

Gateshead School Catering work in collaboration with yourself, the pupil and the school, ensuring an open flow of communication throughout the whole process.

The below contains information on the procedure to follow upon a dietary request. **Unless the following procedure is carried out, Gateshead School Catering cannot take liability for any potential allergic cross contamination:**

1. If your child has an allergy, intolerance or medical diet, your child's school must be informed. The school will provide a 'special diets' form for completion.
2. Once completed, return the form to the school alongside supporting correspondence from a doctor / dietician and a recent photo of your child. Without the correspondence, the process cannot be completed for the safety of the child and Gateshead School Catering staff.
3. The special diet form, doctor's correspondence and photograph will be emailed over to the Gateshead School Catering Management Team by the school representative.
4. Gateshead School Catering will be in contact to arrange a meeting.
5. The current menu will be discussed in the meeting, offering alternatives where necessary. Main dishes will be tweaked where possible so your child can enjoy similar dishes to their friends. The finalised menu will consist of one hot meal or a suitable jacket potato/sandwich option.
6. Once the alternate menu has been agreed, it must be signed by all parties. The parent/guardian, the school representative and Unit Manager will be issued with the menu. The Unit Manager will display the menu in the kitchen, alongside the photograph of the pupil and the special diet form.
7. The next meeting date will be in line with the annual menu change, ready for the academic year ahead.

Please keep in mind:

Manufacturers use 'May Contain' warnings on their product labels to warn consumers of a risk of cross contamination during production stage of an unwanted allergen in the final product. It is Gateshead School Catering's policy to treat such warnings as 'Contain' to reduce the risk to our special diet pupils. Any special diet menu will remove products with the 'May Contain' declaration from the appropriate allergen.

Some gluten free, milk free and egg free equivalent ingredients or dish components are dependent on supplier availability.

Where every special diet request will be considered, there may be rare occasions where Gateshead School Catering may have to reject the request based on safety concerns for the pupil, such as, a high volume of allergies.

Please note, there is a maximum 3-week turnaround once the initial email has been received. Whilst waiting for the bespoke menu, the pupil can be provided with a suitable jacket potato or alternatively, a packed lunch is to be brought from home.

