



## **Child Nutrition Program Procedure for Handling Special Diet Requests for Religious Reasons**

When menu changes are requested due to religious reasons, the following procedure is to be used:

- 1.) The Parent or guardian is to send a signed written note to the Cafeteria Manager or complete the "Special Diet Request for Religious Reason" form stating that due to religious reasons the child cannot eat particular items, listing the items that the child cannot eat. Each request is dealt with on an individual basis.
- 2.) The day that the signed written note or completed form is received by the Cafeteria Manager, the Manager is to send or fax a copy to the CNP Purchasing Office for the CNP Staff Dietitian or Special Diets Manager to review. The original request must be kept on file in the school cafeteria office.
- 3.) The day that the written, signed note for menu changes, due to religious reasons, is received by the Cafeteria Manager, the manager is to call their Area Supervisor, the CNP Staff Dietitian, or the Special Diets Manager to work through what substitutions or changes can be made to the menus. EBR menus and products that are purchased on current CNP Award Sheets are used to determine substitutions. Special foods cannot be purchased for menu changes due to religious requests.
- 4.) The CNP Staff Dietitian or Special Diets Manager is to call and speak with the parent or guardian to discuss the substitutions that will be made due to religious reasons. The modified 3-week cycle menu should be e-mailed, faxed, or sent home to the parent or guardian even though verbal contact was made.
- 5.) The CNP Staff Dietitian or Special Diets Manager will fax the modified menus to the Cafeteria Manager. The Cafeteria Manager is to discuss the menu changes with school cafeteria staff to make sure that menu changes are implemented as discussed with the Area Supervisor, CNP Staff Dietitian, or the Special Diets Manager.

**Additional Notes:**

- In working with religious requests, in many cases, pork has been the item that the child cannot eat. In this case, we generally substitute another meat item for any pork item that is served; however, currently we do not purchase many items containing pork. The few items we serve that contain pork are ham for ham & cheese sandwiches, breakfast ham slices, and ham is used in red beans. Also, the link sausage used for jambalaya, Pastalaya, and gumbo is made with beef and pork. In any of these cases, another meat item would be substituted or in the case of the red beans, jambalaya, and pastalaya the school can make a small amount of these items without the pork and include enough beans or chicken to meet the full meat requirement for the meal. Some items that are generally made with pork are made with all turkey, such as the turkey sausage patty that we serve at breakfast is made with all turkey meat, and the pepperoni on the pizza is made with turkey, etc. Generally, there have not been problems in dealing with "no pork" requests, but a signed written note from the parent to the cafeteria manager is required.

- We have learned that most parents are very eager to teach their children what items they can and cannot eat. As children grow and become older, in about 2nd or 3rd grade, many children are very aware of what they can and cannot eat, which is helpful, because they do not choose items they should not eat as they go through the serving line.