

**Alabama State Department of Education
Child Nutrition Programs**

Meal Accommodations for Religious, Cultural, or Ethical Preferences

Child Nutrition Program (CNP) sponsors may receive requests for meal accommodations based on religious, cultural, or ethical preferences, such as halal, kosher, vegetarian, or organic meals. Sponsors are encouraged to make such accommodations when possible but are not required by federal regulations to do so.

1. A meal that is modified for religious or dietary preferences is only reimbursable if it meets meal pattern requirements.
2. Dietary preferences are not considered to be disabilities. If a diet prescription or medical statement only indicates a modification should be made for a religious, cultural, ethical, or other parent preference, the sponsor should explain to the parent or guardian that the form is intended only for disabilities.
3. Sponsor policies should ensure all religious groups are treated equally. For example, it is not appropriate to provide kosher meals on request but not halal meals.
4. School food authorities may use the offer versus serve option to accommodate a request for a meal modification based on religious, cultural, or ethical preference. (School food authorities may not use the offer versus serve option to accommodate a request for a meal modification based on a disability.)

Policy Approved: 8-24-2026

Appendix: Links to Resources

CACFP 14-2017, SFSP 10-2027 Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program (6-22-2017)

[CACFP 14-2017 SFSP 10-2017](#)

SP 26-2017 Accommodating Disabilities in the School Meal Programs: Guidance and Answers and Questions and Answers (Q & As) (4-25-2017)

[SP 26-2017 Accommodating Disabilities in the School Meal Programs: Guidance and Answers and Questions and Answers \(Q & As\)](#)

SP 59-2016 Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the School Meal Programs

[SP 59-2016 Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the School Meal Programs](#)

Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs: Guidance for Food Service Professionals (2017)

[Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs: Guidance for Food Service Professionals \(2017\)](#)