

Frequently Asked Questions - Parents

1. Q. I think my child/young person has an allergy to certain foods but I am not sure. What should I write on the form?

A. If you think your child/young person has a food allergy then we strongly advise you to seek the advice of either a medical or nutritional professional to obtain further information as soon as possible. If you tell us that your child/young person has an allergy, but you do not yet have an assessment of their condition from either a doctor or a dietician, their diet will be restricted to foods which our catering partner Sodexo believes are unlikely to induce any allergic reaction. Once you have been able to provide a doctor or dietician's assessment of your child/young person's condition we may be able to offer them a wider menu appropriate to their needs.

2. Q I have already told you verbally about the food allergy, why do I need to fill in a form?

A. We need to keep a written record with details of any food allergies that your child/young person has so that we can share it in an emergency with medical professionals. We also need to ensure that we are sharing accurate information about your child/young person's food allergy with Sodexo who are the company that provide our catering.

3. Q. What is the difference between an allergy, intolerance and medically related special dietary requirements?

A. A food allergy is when your immune system mistakenly thinks that certain foods are harmful to their body causing it to react. The symptoms are usually those of 'classic' allergy such as a red raised, itchy rash (urticaria), wheezing, vomiting, severe gut symptoms or (very rarely) sudden collapse. These can occur within a few minutes of eating or coming in to contact with the allergen. A food intolerance doesn't usually involve your immune system. However, coeliac disease is an intolerance to gluten and does involve the immune system. Some medical conditions may require a special diet, such as a modified texture diet such as fork mashed, smooth or pureed. All of the above should be recorded on the form.

4. Q. My child/young person requires a specific cultural or religious diets, vegan or vegetarian diets, should these be detailed on the form?

A. There is no requirement to complete the form, as Sodexo do not consider cultural or religious diets, vegan or vegetarian as 'special diets' as we believe our menus offer a diverse range of foods to cater for pupils for all backgrounds.

4. Q. Can your catering partner Sodexo promise to provide food that is created and served in 'nut free' environments?

A. Sodexo is unable to commit to ensuring that any establishment that it provides food to will be completely 'nut free'. Whilst Sodexo does not use whole peanuts or tree nuts as ingredients within its premises (unless specifically requested to do so), some of those ingredients come from manufacturers who have placed a 'may contain traces of peanuts or tree nuts' label on them. This means that food produced using these ingredients cannot be claimed to be 'nut free'.

5. Q. Can you guarantee that the meals served will be free from my child's allergens?

A. Sodexo have in place strict measures to control allergen contamination; we do handle allergens in our kitchen and therefore cannot guarantee the product to be free from the specific allergen.

6. Q. My child/young person has packed lunch. Why do I need to complete the form?

A. In certain educational establishments, children/young people who eat meals prepared by our caterers will sit with those who eat packed lunches. Some children/young people with food allergies can suffer a reaction by either coming into contact with or being in close proximity to the particular ingredient that they are allergic to. By understanding which child/young person has a food allergy we are able to limit the potential of an incident occurring.

7. Q, Providing and sharing medical information on of my child/young person with the catering partner Sodexo.

A. Allergens data is considered health data and under the GDPR this is a special category of data which has specific requirements. Legal advice received advises that the only relevant legal basis for the processing of allergens data is explicit consent from the data subject (or in our case the parent/guardian of the student due their age) and it is only with this explicit consent is permitted under GDPR to process the allergens data we receive from you. We ask for this explicit consent from parents/guardians via our Special Diet Information Form.