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*Food Service Policy for Compliance and Inclusivity*

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**1. Purpose and Scope**

- **Objective:** Ensure that the food service program complies with USDA guidelines, providing nutritious meals that accommodate diverse dietary needs.
- **Applicability:** This policy applies to all food service operations within Blooming Minds Academy serving children.

**2. Nutritional Standards**

- **USDA and CACFP Compliance:** Meals served must follow all nutritional standards set forth by the USDA guidelines, which include balanced servings of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy.
- **Menu Planning:** Menus will be planned to meet these standards and reviewed regularly to ensure ongoing compliance.

**3. Handling Dietary Restrictions**

- **Allergies and Intolerances:** Procedures are in place and outlined below to identify and provide alternatives for individuals with food allergies and intolerances.
- **Special Dietary Needs:** Accommodations will be made for medical or disability-related dietary needs as documented by a healthcare provider.

**4. Religious and Cultural Accommodations**

- **Respect for Beliefs:** The food service program will respect and accommodate religious and cultural dietary restrictions wherever possible, such as vegetarian, kosher, halal, etc.
- **Alternative Meals:** Provide alternate meal options adhering to religious restrictions without compromising nutritional requirements.

**5. Communication and Documentation**

- **Informing Participants:** Clear communication to all participants and caregivers about menu options is provided in Parent Handbook.
- **Record Keeping:** Maintain records of menu plans, accommodations requested, and measures taken to comply with dietary restrictions.

**6. Training and Education**

- **Staff Training:** Regular training for all food service staff on recognizing and respecting dietary restrictions, including allergy awareness and cross-contamination prevention is facilitated annually and on as-needed basis.
- **Nutrition Education:** Education is provided to families to understand the importance of balanced nutrition and how dietary accommodations are managed.

**7. Continuous Improvement and Review**

- **Feedback Mechanism:** A system is implemented to gather feedback from participants and caregivers regarding meal satisfaction and accommodation effectiveness.
- **Policy Review and Updates:** Annual reviews are conducted of the food service policy to ensure compliance with updated guidelines and inclusivity standards.



## Procedure for Managing Food Allergies and Intolerances



### 1. Identification and Documentation

- **Enrollment Form Review:** During the enrollment process, parents must complete a form detailing any known food allergies or intolerances their child may have.
- **Health Records:** Maintain updated health records for each child, including documentation from healthcare providers regarding specific allergies or intolerances.
- **Allergy List:** Create an allergy list accessible to all food service and caregiving staff, detailing each child's allergies and required precautions.
- **Post on the Wall:** post an allergy that a child has in his/her assigned room, so that all staff are aware and reminded about the allergy or food intolerance daily.

### 2. Communication and Training

- **Staff Training:** All staff must be trained on the importance of dietary precautions, recognizing symptoms of allergic reactions, and emergency response.
- **Clear Communication:** Ensure ongoing communication with parents to update any changes in a child's dietary restrictions.

### 3. Meal Planning and Preparation

- **Menu Review:** Regularly review menus to identify potential allergens. Adapt recipes to exclude identified allergens and label meals clearly.
- **Ingredient Check:** Verify ingredient labels for allergens each time meals are prepared; substitute with safe alternatives as needed.
- **Cross-Contamination Prevention:** Implement strict protocols for preventing cross-contamination in meal preparation areas.

### 4. Providing Alternatives



- **Safe Meal Options:** Develop a list of safe meal alternatives for children with allergies or intolerances. These meals should be nutritionally equivalent to standard offerings.

- **Emergency Substitutes:** Keep a supply of allergen-free snacks and foods to address any unexpected situations or shortages.

#### 5. Monitoring and Emergency Response

- **Constant Vigilance:** Staff should monitor children during mealtimes to ensure they are consuming only their designated meals.
- **Emergency Plan:** Review an emergency plan regularly, including training on an accessible epinephrine auto-injectors (if prescribed by a child's physician) and contact procedures for emergency medical services.

#### 6. Ongoing Review and Feedback

- **Regular Reviews:** Conduct regular reviews of procedures and update as necessary based on feedback from parents, staff, and healthcare recommendations.
- **Parental Engagement:** Encourage feedback from parents regarding the effectiveness of allergy management and alternative meal options.

7. <https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen>



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*Meal Satisfaction and Accommodation Effectiveness Feedback Mechanism*

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1. **Define Objectives:**
  - Determine the purpose of gathering feedback (e.g., improve meal satisfaction, address dietary needs).
2. **Identify Stakeholders:**
  - Include participants (children, where appropriate) and parents in the feedback process.
3. **Design Feedback Tools:**
  - Develop surveys or questionnaires for caregivers.
  - Create simple, age-appropriate methods (like smiley face cards) for children to express satisfaction.
4. **Establish Feedback Channels:**
  - Offer multiple ways to provide feedback, such as online surveys, paper forms, or suggestion boxes.
  - Regular feedback sessions will be scheduled throughout the year(e.g., quarterly meetings or monthly reviews).
5. **Communicate the Process:**
  - Inform caregivers about the feedback system and its importance.
  - Provide clear instructions on how to participate.
6. **Collect Feedback:**
  - Gather data periodically to ensure ongoing evaluation.
  - Allow for both structured responses and open comments.
7. **Analyze Feedback:**
  - Review and categorize feedback to identify trends and areas for improvement.
8. **Implement Changes:**
  - Develop an action plan based on feedback results.
  - Involve staff in modifying meal plans and accommodations.
9. **Communicate Improvements:**
  - Share with all stakeholders the changes made as a result of their feedback.
  - Encourage continued participation by highlighting positive outcomes.
10. **Review and Adjust Processes:**
  - Regularly assess the effectiveness of the feedback mechanism.
  - Adjust the process as necessary to better meet the needs of participants and caregivers.



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*What Blossoming Minds Academy New Jersey Provides?*

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BMA NJ is focused on the health and well-being of our children. In addition to nutritional meals provided by parents, we provide healthy fruits and vegetables on a daily basis, such as:

- Apples
- Oranges
- Kiwis
- Bananas
- Watermelons
- Mangoes
- Carrots
- Cucumbers

And other fruits and vegetables depending on a season.

For healthy drinks we provide water and 1% organic milk.

<https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen>