



Information to parents and guardians of children who require a special diet and adapted meals

The Gothenburg Compulsory School Administration follows the “National special diet and adapted meal recommendations for preschool and school”, published by the sector organisation *Kost och Näring*, as well as the “National school meal guidelines” published by the National Food Agency.

Application form – information and instructions

When your child needs a special diet or an adapted meal, it is important as a parent or guardian that you complete the application form correctly. In the case of joint custody, both parents/guardians need to sign the application form. The form, together with any medical certificates, must then be handed in to the class teacher at the start of each school year, and no later than two weeks after the beginning of the autumn term. If your child’s diet changes in any way, a new application will need to be submitted.

If your child would like a vegetarian diet or a non-pork diet, there is a vegetarian alternative on the regular menu, and an application does **not** need to be submitted. If your child would like a vegetarian diet or a non-pork diet and at the same time needs a special diet or an adapted diet, you must state this on the application form to ensure the school can prepare food in accordance with your child’s needs and wishes.

As a parent or guardian, when can you apply for a special diet for your child?

- In the case of an allergy that causes the body’s immune system to react to a certain type of food. The reaction could vary from mild to severe. An individual could, for example, be allergic to soya, eggs, cow’s milk, or fish. A small number of individuals could react to airborne allergens or have a contact allergy.
- In the case of cross-reactivity, which is when a person is allergic, for example, to birch pollen or grass pollen and their body reacts to a similar substance in stone fruit, apples, or hazelnuts. The reaction is often not severe and could take the form of itching in the mouth and throat. In many cases the individual can tolerate the food in question after it has been heated. Certain individuals may suffer a severe reaction, but this is rare.
- In the case of lactose intolerance, which is when the body is unable to fully digest lactose. This does not result in a severe reaction but does cause discomfort, stomach ache, diarrhoea, and a build-up of gas in the stomach. If your child is suffering from lactose intolerance, a medical certificate is not required.
- In the case of coeliac disease/gluten sensitivity, which is a disease where part of the intestine is harmed when a person eats food containing gluten. A strict gluten-free diet is required to manage this condition.
- In the case of other hypersensitivity reactions which for certain people result in mild symptoms, such as redness around the mouth if they eat certain fruits, vegetables, or berries.
- There are other, more unusual reasons for a special diet. These should be listed under “Other” on the application form. The school will then contact you if necessary.

When, as a parent or guardian, can you apply for an adapted meal for your child?

- When you opt for a vegan diet, which is an entirely plant-based diet.
- If there is a need for consistency adaptation, which refers to a regular diet with adapted food consistency to facilitate chewing and swallowing.
- In the case of an energy-enriched diet, which is a regular diet enriched with additional energy sources, often in the form of extra fat.
- In the case of a low-energy diet, e.g. if an individual is suffering from overweight, obesity, or a disease that affects the metabolism. Before applying for a low-energy diet for your child they will need to receive individualised guidance from the health service.
- In the case of adapted meals as a result of diabetes. Certain dishes could be problematic for diabetics, such as pancakes, rice pudding, mashed potatoes, and soup. Individualised adaptation is important.
- When the range of dishes and/or meal environment need to be adapted to accommodate selective eating, which is when your child only eats a small number of foods.
- When dishes and/or the meal environment need to be adapted to take account of a neuropsychiatric disorder.

What type of adapted meals do we offer?

We offer a vegan diet to pupils on request.

In the case of other adaptations

If your child needs a diabetes-adapted diet, a low-energy diet, an energy-enriched diet, a consistency-adapted diet, or a diet that takes account of selective eating and/or a neuropsychiatric disorder, the school will arrange for you and your child to meet representatives from the school.

If your child needs a diabetes-adapted diet, a low-energy diet, an energy-enriched diet, or a consistency-adapted diet, the school will use a medical certificate coupled with individualised guidance as a framework for the meeting.

If your child needs an adapted meal environment and if dishes need to be served in a way that takes account of selective eating or a neuropsychiatric disorder, the school will examine what your child needs in terms of adaptation and support at mealtimes.

When do you need to submit a medical certificate?

As a parent or guardian you will need to submit a medical certificate together with an application for a special diet or adapted diet for your child in the following cases:

- There is a risk of an anaphylactic shock.
- A child is on emergency medication, e.g. use of an adrenaline pen.
- Multiple allergies (three or four allergies).
- Airborne allergens.
- Contact allergy.
- Debilitating allergy – an allergy that is not life-threatening, but which leads to reduced quality of life, impaired academic performance, and lower school attendance (e.g. asthma, stomach pain, diarrhoea, nausea, nettle rash, itching, eczema, headache, breathing difficulties).
- Coeliac disease/gluten sensitivity.
- Need for a diabetes-adapted diet.
- Need for consistency adaptation to facilitate chewing and swallowing.
- Need for an energy-enriched diet.
- Need for a low-energy diet.

If the school is uncertain about something you may be asked to submit a medical certificate.

Why do you need to submit a medical certificate?

You need to submit a medical certificate as it confirms that your child has an allergy that has been investigated, or they have received a diagnosis, and their condition is being treated optimally. For practical reasons, extracts from medical records compiled by a doctor or a dietician are classed as a medical certificate.

How do you submit a medical certificate?

As a parent or guardian you submit a medical certificate together with the application form before the start of each school year. This could either be a copy of a previous medical certificate or a new medical certificate.

How long is a medical certificate valid?

A medical certificate is valid for the period of time stated on the certificate. If a validity period is not stated you will need to submit a new certificate every second year.

Test period

If, because of an allergy or hypersensitivity, your child needs to test the removal of a particular food from their diet or try a particular food to which they were previously allergic, it is important that you contact the health service first before you apply for a test period.

If your child needs to test the removal of a particular food

As a parent or guardian you need to submit an application and state the length of the test period. At the end of the test period you will need to submit a new, updated application, possibly together with a medical certificate. If you do not submit a new application at the end of the test period, your child's special diet will be discontinued.

If your child needs to try a food to which they were previously allergic

It would be preferable if your child first tried the food in question at home. If it works well at home they could then have a test period at school. As a parent or guardian you will need to submit a new application in which you state the length of the test period. At the end of the test period, you will need to submit an updated application to the school.

If a child who is on a special diet or has adapted meals is absent from school

As a parent or guardian you must always inform the school when your child is absent to ensure the school catering staff are notified. Otherwise time, food and money put into preparing a special diet or adapted meals would go to waste. You must use the school's reporting routine to inform the school that your child will not be attending. It is important that you also inform the school when your child is due to return.

Your child's special diet or adapted meals will be discontinued if they fail to collect the food for a period of 14 days without notifying the school catering staff of their absence. If your child still requires a special diet or adapted meals after being absent for 14 days, you will need to submit a new application.

Contact your child's school

Contact your child's school if you have any questions or views regarding a special diet or adapted meals.