

Parent and School Guide - Frequently Asked Questions

At IFG, ensuring the safety of all pupils is our top priority. We recognise the importance of providing safe, balanced meals for pupils with specific dietary needs, allowing them to enjoy lunch alongside their peers. This guide outlines our allergen diet process for parents and schools.

What is an Allergen menu?

An allergen menu is required when a pupil's regular catering options need to be adapted to accommodate their medically diagnosed dietary requirements, such as allergies, intolerances, or other medical conditions.

What Types of Allergen Menu are Available?

We provide the following allergen menu options:

Allergen Aware Menu - Suitable for pupils with allergies to Gluten, Milk and Soya.

We have developed the Allergen Aware Menu specifically to support pupils with allergies to gluten, milk, and soya because these are the three allergens most frequently reported within our primary schools. The Allergen aware menu has been designed to work alongside the main school menu providing variety, balance and choice of nutritious and tasty plates of food. By creating a dedicated menu for these food allergies, we can safely provide a consistent, nutritious, and inclusive offer for a large proportion of children with food allergies whilst minimising the potential for cross contamination of allergens within our kitchens or team members making unsafe substitutions at site level.

An allergen-aware menu will be provided within 2 days following complete information (request form and medical evidence) being provided to the Nutrition Team.

Main Menu - Suitable for pupils with allergies to any of the 14 major allergens, excluding Gluten, Milk, and Soya

A main menu with detailed allergen information will be provided within 2 days for parents to make informed choices from.

Bespoke Menu – For some pupils with more complex allergen needs including combination of combination allergens, outside of the major 14.

If a bespoke menu is necessary you will be advised within 2 days and the IFG nutrition team will create a bespoke menu, that will be provided and implemented within 10 working days.

How do I Request an Allergen Diet for My Child?

To request an allergen diet, please:

- Complete the Special Diet Request Form issued by the school/nutrition team.
- Provide supporting professional medical evidence, such as a letter from a dietitian or paediatric consultant.
- Include a recent headshot photograph of your child for easy identification at the service point.

What Happens After Submitting the Special Diet Request Form & medical evidence?

A member of the nutrition team will send your school a copy of the most appropriate menu, a copy of the allergen matrix and an order form for your child. If your school uses Appetite, we will assign the relevant menu through the system. This will be issued within 2 days of receipt of the completed allergen declaration form.

Where a bespoke menu is required this will be completed and issued within 10 working days of receipt of the completed allergen declaration form.

If your child has complex dietary needs (e.g., multiple allergens or allergies outside the 14 major allergens, combination of allergens with other medical needs such as diabetes or SEND requirements), a meeting may be arranged with the parent, school, and Executive Chef to discuss their requirements.

How are Allergen Meals Prepared and Served?

All allergen meals must be pre-ordered a week in advance by e-mailing the order form to the school (this is to ensure that your kitchen teams always have the correct produce in place to prepare your child's menu choice each day) or via the Appetite meal ordering system (if used in your school).

As an additional precaution our catering teams are trained to complete a check on all orders to ensure that they are suitable and safe for your child.

Meals are prepped, plated, sealed, and labelled before service.

No alterations to food are permitted at the point of service to ensure safety.

A termly allergen meal checklist must be completed and securely stored for at least 6 months.

How Will My Child Be Identified at the Service Point?

IFG uses lanyards, placemats, wristbands, or allergen cards to clearly identify pupils with allergen diets.

The identification method must be agreed upon between the school and the catering team.

All pupil information must be securely stored and not visible to the public.

What if My Child's Dietary Needs Change?

If your child's dietary requirements change, please complete a new Special Diet Request Form and provide updated medical evidence.

This information must be shared with the school immediately.

Where Can I Get More Information?

For further details on our allergen management process, please contact your school, or the IFG Safety Team on safety@impactfood.co.uk