

## To Whom It May Concern:

\_\_\_\_\_ has been diagnosed with celiac disease, and their care is monitored by the health care team at the Stanford Children's Health Pediatric Gastroenterology Clinic. This letter was developed to provide your school with information about this student's condition and to support their parent's desire for 504 Plan accommodations.

The only treatment for celiac disease is to strictly follow a gluten-free (GF) diet. This can be achieved at home, but the school environment also needs to be involved. Briefly, celiac disease is an inherited autoimmune disorder, due to intolerance to gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley. It results in inflammation of the small intestine and can lead to nutritional deficiencies. Common symptoms of celiac disease include poor weight gain, weight loss, abdominal pain or bloating, diarrhea, constipation, poor growth, vomiting, skin rashes, mouth sores, and fatigue. If this student is exposed to gluten at school, these symptoms may make it difficult for them to excel academically.

It is important for this student to have school accommodations via a 504 Plan to support their continued academic and medical success. We understand that your school will create the most appropriate accommodations that fit the school setting and the student's needs. However, celiac disease does restrict this student's diet, and all foods and snacks need to be free of gluten. In the event that this student participates in your school nutrition program for school breakfast, lunch, and snacks, gluten-free alternatives should be offered to them to prevent worsening of their symptoms and disease. Additionally, should there be any classroom or school activities, celebrations, or field trips that involve food, this student's parent(s) should be given advance notice in order for them and/or the school to provide them with a gluten-free alternative to ensure their inclusion and participation in all school functions.

In addition to food modifications at school, we generally recommend the following accommodations for children with celiac disease:

- The ability to use the bathroom or take breaks from class as needed without penalty.
- Classroom seating that allows for easy access to the door (for bathroom needs).
- Ability to use a private bathroom.
- Ability to eat gluten-free snacks and drink water throughout the day.
- Access to a counselor for support.



- Extended deadlines and additional support if school is missed due to clinic visits, labs, hospital admission, etc.
- Excused tardiness and absences due to symptoms, appointments, procedures, hospitalizations, etc. Presence of symptoms does not always require a clinic visit, and therefore a parent(s)' report of absence due to illness is sufficient to excuse absence/tardiness.
- Ability to self-monitor energy level and activity level for modified PE (physical education). Generally, we recommend patients to be graded on their participation in PE instead of their performance, due to unpredictability of flares and remission.
- Gluten-free alternatives for arts and crafts supplies. The following are examples of art supplies with gluten: play dough (Play-Doh and Crayola brands contain wheat). Alternatives may include the following: Lakeshore Wheat & Gluten-Free Dough, Colorations Wheat & Gluten Free Dough, Kinetic Sand; finger paint (Crayola's paints are gluten-free); paper-mache (Elmer's glue solution or make your own with glue, water, and paper); macaroni art (utilizing gluten-free pasta, rice, quinoa, corn pasta); craft paste/glue (Elmer's glue sticks are a safe alternative).

We also want to mention that bullying can happen at any age and appreciate anything your school can strategize to avoid this student possibly being bullied or feeling secluded or isolated while at school, with the consent of the student and their parents. A suggestion may be to make this a teachable moment with classmates to help get everyone on the same page. This student's parents have incorporated changes at home and educated them about their disease, such as avoiding sharing food with peers and the importance of label reading, and we ask for your help in making the school environment safe.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the medical condition and accommodations for \_\_\_\_\_ after reviewing the above information and its impact on their academic functioning, please call our office at (650) 723-5070.

Sincerely,

Pediatric Gastroenterology  
Celiac Disease Program  
Stanford Children's Health