



## SCHOOL PACK

### Welcome

Welcome to your coeliac disease in school information pack. The aim of this pack is to provide you with information to allow your child's condition to be managed effectively in school.

This pack includes information for you, as a parent/carer, your child, and for the school. Current legislation requires schools in England to make arrangements to support children with medical conditions. The legislation also places a duty on schools to offer universal free school meals to all pupils in reception, year one and year two. Please be aware that there may be other circumstances where your child is entitled to a free school meal.

This pack advises you on what you should expect from your child's school and things you can do to help ensure the right arrangements are in place for your child.

This pack contains:

- Care to expect at school
- Meeting with the school
- School activities
- Information card (to print).

### About Coeliac UK

Coeliac UK is the charity for everyone living without gluten. We provide the independent, trustworthy advice and support people need to live well, gluten free.

**coeliacuk**  
live well **gluten free**

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A charity registered in England and Wales (1048167) and in Scotland (SC039804) and a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (3068044).

[www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk)

## Care to expect at school

Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 states that schools must make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions at school. The requirements apply to maintained schools, academies, alternative provision academies and pupil referral units in England.

There is also a duty for schools to provide universal free school meals in reception and years one and two, and free school meals for eligible pupils.

Department for Education guidance on school food provision states that food allergies or intolerances must be taken seriously. Schools and caterers should work closely with parents to support children with medically verified allergies or intolerances and coeliac disease (which is an autoimmune condition triggered by eating gluten). Head teachers and school governors are best placed to make decisions in the case of pupils who have special dietary requirements, taking into account local circumstances.

Your child's school should have policies setting out how it manages long term medical conditions. This policy should cover the following:

- who the school should contact if there's an emergency
- how the school will meet special needs, including diet
- how the school will help children with medical conditions to participate in

physical activity and school trips, if needed

- how the school will manage your child's condition during the school day.

All children with a medical condition, such as coeliac disease, should have an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP). The school needs to do this to comply with the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education. The IHCP should include information on the needs of the child and who is able to help them. Coeliac UK has a template IHCP for parents to download and personalise. This can be found at [www.coeliac.org.uk/schools](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/schools).

Children with coeliac disease should not be excluded from any activity at school, including school meals with their peers.

## Meeting with the school

If your child has recently been diagnosed with coeliac disease or your child is about to start school, contact their school to discuss how the condition will be managed. Arranging a meeting with the school is a good way to ensure that everyone involved in the care of your child knows about their needs. Schools are required to make arrangements to support children with medical conditions, and meeting with the school is a good way to ensure that this is done and that appropriate support is in place.

Young children may make mistakes or swap food with other children so it is important that supervising staff are aware of the



importance of a gluten free diet for children with coeliac disease. Meeting with the school catering team, nurse and teachers can be really useful to discuss any concerns that you or the team may have. Your child's class/form teacher needs to be made aware of their condition and may be able to help coordinate a meeting with the catering team and school nurse.

To discuss with the class/form teacher

Explain what coeliac disease is and that as long as a child with coeliac disease follows a strict gluten free diet they should not suffer any symptoms.

Highlight that coeliac disease is not contagious nor an allergy, emphasising that they will not suffer a life threatening anaphylactic reaction.

Explain what will happen if your child eats gluten by mistake so they are aware of what to expect. The most common symptoms include diarrhoea, nausea, tummy ache and wind.

Clarify what foods can be eaten and what foods need to be avoided – it may be useful to provide them with a print out of this pack and the Gluten free Checklist which is available from the Coeliac UK website.

The school should provide an individual healthcare plan (IHCP) for your child. Ask for a copy of the completed IHCP from the school once it has been agreed.

To discuss with the catering team

Discuss adjustments they could make to the normal weekly menu to provide gluten free choices.

Suggest alternative meals for those days where adjustments are not possible.

Ensure that the catering team understand how to read labels which will enable them to identify whether a packaged food contains gluten or not. Information on reading labels can be found at [www.coeliac.org.uk/labels](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/labels).

Information like Coeliac UK's Gluten free Checklist, Guide to Common Grains and information available on the Coeliac UK website may also be useful: [www.coeliac.org.uk/gfdiet](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/gfdiet).

The Food Industry Professionals section of Coeliac UK's website is designed to help people to cater for those with coeliac disease and includes links to a catering training module. Ask the school catering team to take a look at [www.coeliac.org.uk/food](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/food).

## School activities

School trips

Children must not be excluded from school trips because they have coeliac disease. If food is provided as part of a school activity whether a day trip or longer, the school must make reasonable efforts to provide gluten free food for children with coeliac disease. Speak to your child's teacher about the meals and snacks provided. If the trip involves external caterers, teachers can



provide copies of the information in this pack to catering departments.

### Children's birthdays and celebrations

To avoid your child feeling different or excluded at snack times, you may need to provide gluten free snacks. Inform staff that these snacks should be stored separately to avoid contact with foods containing gluten. If children bring in sweets or snacks for their birthdays or other celebrations it is a good idea to provide a gluten free alternative that can be provided for your child.

### Cookery classes

Primary school children often make small cakes or cookies as part of the curriculum and with some forward planning there is no reason why your child cannot take part. Food technology classes should not cause a problem for your child and there is no reason why gluten free foods cannot be prepared. Speak to the teacher about using gluten free ingredients.

### Cross contamination

Before your child takes part in cookery lessons it may be useful to speak to the teacher about cross contamination. Top tips to avoid cross contamination:

- keep utensils separate during preparation and cooking of gluten free food
- don't fry gluten free food in the same oil as foods that contain gluten

- use a clean grill pan, separate toaster or toaster bags when making gluten free toast
- separate the preparation of gluten free foods from gluten containing foods when wheat flour is being used.

### Playtime

Gluten has to be eaten to cause symptoms, so using paints, crayons and glues should not be a problem unless your child accidentally eats them. As young children will often put things in their mouth, using materials made without gluten is a sensible option.

Preschool children will often make art and instruments with dried pasta. As this may be tempting for small children, it is advisable to use gluten free pasta or supervise the child.

Play Doh™ is not always gluten free. However, it is easy to make play dough without using gluten. A gluten free recipe is available on the Coeliac UK website at [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk).

### Information card

My name is:

I have coeliac disease. This means I can't eat **wheat, rye, barley** or **oats**.

I can eat fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, milk, eggs, cheese, rice, potatoes, pulses and nuts.

Ask:

for more information about what I can and can't eat.

