

Dear Faculty & Staff,

A student in our building, _____, has been diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder called celiac disease (CD). While this will affect some aspects of classroom and school management, patience and understanding can bring about the necessary changes that will quickly become a natural part of the school experience for all involved.

Also known as celiac sprue or gluten-sensitive enteropathy, CD is a genetic disorder. In people with CD, eating certain types of grain-based proteins sets off an autoimmune response which causes damage to the small intestine. This, in turn, interferes with the small intestine's ability to absorb the nutrients found in food, leading to malnutrition and a variety of other complications. The offending proteins are collectively called gluten and are found in wheat, barley, rye and, oats* (WBRO), and all of their derivatives.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the student to decide what he or she will eat and touch while at school. The student knows there are physiological consequences for his or her decisions. However, a newly-diagnosed celiac may need your help to reinforce the prescribed lifestyle change. The student may also be going through the grieving process because of the diagnosis. If you notice symptoms of grieving or other needs that this student may have, please be understanding and offer the student any help that may be required.

It is important to note that if this student should come into physical contact with any of the offending grains, it will be necessary to remove all protein residue from his or her skin as quickly as possible. If contact does occur, the student may also have an urgent need to use the restroom due to the possible onset of uncontrollable physical symptoms. The student's instant reaction may be to "run" to a sink or toilet without asking for permission. Because of this, special restroom privileges may be needed.

Please note that any member of the staff with primary responsibilities for this student has received specific information to help meet this child's special needs. If you would like to learn more about this disease, you are invited to visit the Celiac Sprue Association's website at www.csaceliacs.org.

Thank you for all you do to make our school a nurturing and caring environment for every child.

Sincerely,