



Dear Parents and Guardians,

“Happy Birthday!” Those words have special meaning for children in elementary school. As a school, we help students celebrate birthdays by announcing names over the school intercom during morning announcements. In the classroom, teachers use a variety of methods to honor student birthdays... and this year we are getting healthy about school celebrations!

Our goal is two-fold:

- (1) Make birthdays and holidays special while also assuring students' safety.

We all know that birthdays are important to every child and that kids like to celebrate with their classmates. However, sending in a food treat to the classroom to celebrate can exclude those children who have food allergies, food intolerances, diabetes or other dietary restrictions.

With 1 in 13 of children having at least one food allergy, anyone serving food to children needs to be aware of food allergies and the potential for a life-threatening allergic reaction. More than 15% of school-aged children with food allergies have had an allergic reaction at school. These reactions range from mild to severe and even fatal.

- (2) To “walk the walk” not just “talk the talk.”

Good nutrition and the value of healthy food choices are often taught in the classroom. However, many times foods served in the classroom, in the case of birthdays, class parties or rewards for behavior, are low in nutrients and high in calories, preservatives, dyes and other additives.

This sends students a mixed message – that good nutrition is just a part of their education and is not important to their health. To send the right message and to keep our children healthy, teachers, staff and parents can work together to offer healthy classroom party alternatives.

For these reasons, our celebration policy includes replacing foods (cupcakes, cookies, juices, etc.) as a means of celebrating birthdays with non-food items, activities, crafts and games. Seasonal holiday parties (Halloween, Winter, Valentine’s Day) may include plain fresh fruits and vegetables as part of the healthy celebration.

Alternatives to food treats for your child’s birthday celebration at school are available from your child’s teacher. **Please check with them** to see what he/she finds acceptable for their classroom and to provide advanced notice to make sure that they can fit the birthday plans into the classroom schedule.



Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have regarding school celebrations.

For specific arrangements, please speak to your child’s teacher.

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