SINGAPORE AMERICAN SCHOOL

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Food Guidelines for Classroom and Community Celebrations

For the safety of all students, SAS encourages purchasing food for school celebrations from a licensed food retailer. However, we also recognize that sharing food can help foster community spirit and better understanding of our diverse cultures. For families who choose to bring in homemade food for community celebrations, we ask you to follow these guidelines.

Hygiene Responsibilities

Hygiene while handling and transporting homemade food is of the utmost importance in ensuring food-safety standards. Responsibilities for any individual or group wishing to provide food include the following:

1. Ensure that all food is protected from contamination at all times up to use (i.e., covered in plastic wrap or within a container).
2. Ensure good personal hygiene of all involved—providers' hands must be thoroughly washed before food is distributed or sold and after any potentially contaminating action such as coughing, eating, or using the restroom.
3. No provider should touch the food with their bare hands; instead, plastic gloves, utensils, or similar should be used.
4. All display areas, counters, shelves, tables, and other equipment used for providing food must be kept clean.
5. During transport, the vehicle used should be clean; food should be tightly wrapped against dust, dirt, and insects; and no pets should be in the vehicle.
6. The designated provider must ensure that all rules and regulations are followed and only acceptable foods are offered.

Allergens

Some allergic reactions to food can be severe, require hospitalization, or even be fatal. Highly allergen-sensitive individuals may develop an allergic reaction simply by touching or smelling the food. The eleven most common food allergens are ***milk, citrus, eggs, soy, peanuts, wheat***, ***tree nuts, melons***, ***strawberries, shellfish***, and ***fish.***

To limit the potential for allergens to affect those attending a celebration or event, please consider the following:

- Avoid nuts in homemade items
- For celebrations including multiple homemade items, label items that contain allergens, i.e., "contains eggs and soy"
- Position foods containing known allergens away from other items or use a separate table
- For class birthday treats, let the teacher involved know if an item includes any of the above allergens, so that an alternate treat can be on hand for students with those food allergies

Acceptable Foods

To protect our students, only low-risk homemade foods are acceptable for most community celebrations. High-risk foods that require extra time and temperature controls to ensure food safety are not acceptable.

Acceptable foods include:

- Breads and quick breads
- Cakes (except cheesecake or cream-filled cake)
- Cookies
- Cupcakes (except cream-filled cupcakes)
- Bars
- Muffins
- Candies
- Fruit-based pies that do not require refrigeration
- Dried fruits, herbs, and spices

Non-acceptable items:

- Cheesecake
- Pastries
- Cream, meringue, custard, or pumpkin pies
- Cream-filled cakes, cupcakes, muffins, or doughnuts
- Frosting and fillings made with cream cheese
- Home-canned foods
- Fish and shellfish
- Meat and poultry
- Baked items that require refrigeration up to use

Further guidelines for large-scale homemade food events (bake sales, BBQs, pot-lucks, etc.)

Maintain lists and information regarding sources

1. The event organizer should create a list of who donated which food item, OR wrapped baked items should be labeled. Any list or label should include the name, address, and phone number of the food preparer.
2. Baked goods should be placed in food storage bags or containers, OR individually wrapped with new, food grade plastic, wax paper or foil, OR dispensed from a covered food storage container.

Allergens

Large-scale homemade food event organizers MUST know if any of the foods included contain allergens. If so, ingredient labels or ingredient table tent cards are required. It is the organizer's responsibility to maintain the ingredients labels for ALL foods and have these labels available and displayed at the food event, including commercially pre-packaged food and delivered food. If you are asked about an ingredient or food allergen and you do not know, simply say "I don't know."

Please consider the following:

- A sign stating "Homemade" or similar should be displayed.
- Label items that contain allergens, i.e., "Contains eggs and soy"
- Position foods containing known allergens away from other items or use a separate table
- Designate a person to handle the sales of only allergen-free foods to avoid cross-contamination

Acceptable items:

- Breads and buns
- Brownies
- Butter tarts
- Cakes (icing sugar only; no dairy or synthetic whipped cream)
- Cinnamon buns (sugar icing only)
- Cookies and squares
- Cupcakes (icing sugar only; no dairy or synthetic whipped cream)
- Doughnuts (icing or sugar only, no cream filling)
- Fruit pies and fruit pastries
- Fudge
- Hard candy
- Muffins
- Rice Krispy squares
- Whole fruits or vegetables

Items requiring extra care

The following are discouraged for classroom and most community celebrations, but may be included in dishes for events such as International Fair and Staff Appreciation Days. In this case, extra care should be taken that items are properly cooked, stored, and handled before and during the event.

- Meat and poultry
- Fish and shellfish
- Dairy-based foods, including custards, whipped creams, cream fillings, cheeses, cheese fillings, or pure butter buttercream fillings/frostings

Reference Document

For more information on preparing food safely at home, please read this public health document prepared by the Singapore Food Agency (SFA).

Additional consumer food safety information can be obtained by visiting www.sfa.gov.sg or by contacting the SFA.

Considerations

- Safety (duty of care)
- Convenience
- Cost to families
- Relationship building
- Cultural competence and diversity