

## Snack Overview

- You have all read the headlines and have seen the news stories: food allergies are a growing concern in schools across America. Millions of children - children who are perfectly healthy- must watch every single bite they eat, or risk suffering a severe or even life-threatening reaction. In fact, food allergies claim over 200 lives and are responsible for over 30,000 emergency room visits each year. A major health issue such as this one need to be taken very seriously and maintaining the health and safety of our students will always be our top priority. Students in our schools have serious nut/seed allergies. A child with a serious nut/seed allergy can suffer a reaction merely by touching something or someone that has touched a nut/seed-containing food. **Therefore, all classrooms at Betsy Ross, George Washington, and Lenape Meadows will be nut/seed-free rooms:**
  - Anything brought into the classroom for snack must be in a package separate from a student's lunch.
  - All snacks must be pre-packaged except for whole fruits. Please do not pre-cut fruit or vegetables at home as this is a cross contamination issue for classrooms.
  - Children may still bring in nut/seed products for lunch, as all of our cafeterias maintain nut-free tables as a safeguard for our students.

### Choosing a Safe Peanut, Tree Nut, Seed-Free Snack

Read the label every time you purchase a product. Do not assume that a product you have previously purchased is still safe. Manufacturers often change ingredients and equipment without prior warning. Do not bring snacks to class if manufacturers list peanuts, peanut oil, nuts, nut oil, or seeds. Snacks with such statements as, "May contain traces of ..." or "Made on equipment that manufactures or processes ..." or "Made in a facility that manufactures..." are not safe.

Homemade or prepared snacks are not permitted in the classroom due to the risk of cross-contamination from peanut, tree nut, and seeds containing products or preparation surfaces.

Only pre-packaged foods are safe.

### Birthday Treats and Celebrations

Birthday treats are a special time for a child but can be difficult for a child with food allergies. Since birthday treats are shared in the classroom, we ask that you follow the same guidelines for selecting birthday treats as you do with snacks. Please be advised that Mahwah

Board Policy #8505 states that foods with sugar as the first ingredient are not allowed and will not be distributed.

With your cooperation, we will provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all our students and help develop a greater understanding of individual differences. Please see the website link below which contains recommendations for nut and seed-free snacks.

We trust that you understand how deeply important it is to respect and adhere to these guidelines. If throughout the course of the year you have any questions or concerns about food-allergy-related issues, please do not hesitate to contact me. We wish you and your family a safe and healthy school year.

For more information on peanut, tree nut, and seed-free snacks, updated information is available at <http://www.snacksafely.com>. We ask that you consult this resource regularly to select daily snacks for your children, as well as appropriate snacks for birthday treats and celebrations.

Thank you for helping us to provide a safe environment for all our students.