

To our Mahwah families,

Food allergies have been and continue to be a growing concern in schools across America. Millions of children must watch every single bite they eat, or risk suffering a severe or even life-threatening reaction. A major health issue such as this one needs to be taken very seriously, and maintaining the health and safety of our students will always be our top priority.

There are many students in our schools who have serious peanut allergies. A child with a serious peanut allergy can suffer a reaction merely by touching something or someone that has touched a peanut-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.
- Children may still bring in peanut/nut 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. If you intend on sending in a treat, it must be one of the approved birthday snacks listed at the end of this letter. Only these treats will be accepted. 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.

All birthday snacks should be brought to the main office and will be sent to classrooms once approved by the school nurse. Please be advised that Dunkin Donuts is not a nut free facility, therefore we cannot allow their donuts to be distributed in the classroom for snack. We trust that you understand how deeply important it is to respect and adhere to these guidelines.

Please see the attached list which contains recommendations for nut and seed-free snacks. Only items found on this list or website will be accepted for celebrations. For more information on peanut, tree nut, and seed-free snacks, updated information is available at <http://www.snacksafely.com>. With your cooperation we will provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all of our students and help develop a greater understanding of individual differences.

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