Nut-Free Classroom Policy

Our aim is to provide a safe learning environment for all people in our school Community. To support this, Swallow is designating your child's classroom as "nut-free". This policy aims to increase our community awareness in order to minimize the risk for children with documented allergies to nut products. Our school has developed and will maintain a whole-school action and implementation plan when dealing with students who have critically life-threatening allergies.

WHY? Anaphylaxis is a severe form of allergic reaction which is potentially life-threatening. It can be fatal within minutes; either through swelling that shuts off airways or through a dramatic drop in blood pressure. There are many causative agents for anaphylaxis with nuts often being the precipitative factor. Anaphylaxis is preventable. Avoidance of specific triggers is by far the best option. Management is via immediate injection of epinephrine and emergency transport to the hospital.

Allergy to peanuts appears to be on the rise in children. According to a FARE-funded study, the number of children in the U.S. with peanut allergy more than tripled between 1997 and 2008. Studies in the United Kingdom and Canada also showed a high prevalence of peanut allergy in school children.

Based on recent studies, an estimated 25-40 percent of people who have peanut allergy are also allergic to tree nuts. In addition, peanuts and tree nuts often come into contact with one another during manufacturing and serving processes. For these reasons, allergists usually tell their patients with peanut allergy to avoid tree nuts as well.

Trace amounts of peanut can cause an allergic reaction. Casual contact with peanuts, such as touching peanuts or peanut butter residue, is less likely to trigger a severe reaction. Casual contact becomes a concern if the area that comes into contact with peanuts then comes into contact with the eyes, nose or mouth (for example, a child with peanut allergy gets peanut butter on her fingers, and then rubs her eyes).

What does this mean for me?

- Your child's classroom will remain a "peanut/nut-free zone." Please do not send in any food items to be consumed in the classroom that contains peanuts, nuts, peanut butter, nut butters, or peanut products.
  - This includes almonds, filberts, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nut, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts
  - Read labels carefully to make sure the products are nut free. This includes labels that read "May contain traces of peanuts/nuts" or "processed in a facility that processes products that contain peanuts/nuts." Food labels and ingredients change over time, so always read the label each time before purchasing snacks.
  - NO HOMEMADE TREATS MAY BE BROUGHT INTO THE CLASSROOM. All treats/snacks brought to the classroom must have an ingredient label.

- A peanut free table will be designated in the lunch room for all students with peanut/nut allergies.
- Peanut butter and peanut/nut products may be packed in your child's lunch, but CANNOT be eaten in the classroom, or at the peanut/nut free lunch table.

Here is a link with a nut-free food guide to help assist you in keeping our entire student body safe:
https://snacksafely.com/safe-snack-guide/

Find safe and inclusive ways to celebrate. The easiest way to avoid accidental exposure, is avoiding food all together! There are many ways to celebrate that do not involve food. Birthdays can be celebrated with crafts, games, or extra recess. Treat bags can be filled with tiny toys, no-homework passes, or other non-edible trinkets.

Thank you for your consideration and support in keep food-allergic students safe from having a life-threatening allergic reaction at school.

Please contact Nurse Beth with any questions. nurse@swallowschool.org