Dear Parents/Guardians,

At Encinitas Union School District, we are committed to fostering an environment where students are fully prepared for learning each day—both mentally and physically. While our dedicated teachers and staff work tirelessly to equip students for academic success, we also recognize the importance of promoting healthy eating habits and physical activity as key components of lifelong well-being. By instilling these habits early, we can help reduce health risks and set students on a path toward longer, more productive lives.

Classroom celebrations, including birthdays, present valuable opportunities to reinforce healthy lifestyles, promote consistent wellness messaging, and encourage nutritious choices within our schools. In alignment with the EUSD Wellness Policy and our commitment to student health, **classroom celebrations will take place once per month**, at the end of each month, to recognize birthdays and other special events. Celebrations involving food must take place after lunch. To support this initiative, we encourage non-food birthday celebrations or the provision of healthy snack options. By consolidating all student birthdays into a single, inclusive celebration, we can create a fun, health-conscious environment for all.

In planning for Classroom Celebrations, Parents/Guardians should:

- Honor their child's birthday by sending non-food treats such as stickers or pencils.
- Ensure all food sent to school for birthday celebrations promotes healthy food choices (see healthy snack list attached).
- Ask your child's teacher what non-food or healthy rewards/incentives they are utilizing in the classroom.
- Become involved in planning school parties that include games, crafts, and healthy foods/beverages.
- Participate in brainstorming ideas for healthy, non-food focused fundraisers for the school.

To support your participation in this initiative, we have attached a list of suggested food and beverage options. These selections align with the district's Wellness Policy and are designed to promote healthy eating habits among our students. If it is determined in collaboration with the teacher that food will be served during the monthly celebration, it must adhere to the district's healthy food guidelines and be free from any allergens present in the classroom.

As educators, caregivers, and loved ones, we all share the common goal of providing the best opportunities for our students. We sincerely appreciate your support in fostering a healthy environment where students can celebrate important milestones while prioritizing their well-being. If you have any questions, please reach out to your child's teacher or school principal. We look forward to creating the healthiest possible learning environment for our students to thrive and succeed.

Sincerely,

Encinitas Union School District

Our goal is not to cut out all treats, but to make sure they are eaten in moderation and are not the primary focus of parties or celebrations. The focus should be on fun, not food. Celebrations can focus on playing games and fun activities versus being centered around food items.

Key Guidelines from EUSD Board Policy (Regulation 5030: Student Wellness) for Classroom Celebrations involving food:

- Classroom celebrations must occur after the lunch hour.
- Parents must be notified of the date and time of these celebrations at least 5 days in advance and can choose to provide alternative foods or beverages for their child(ren).
- Store bought foods must contain an ingredients label, or if prepared at home, foods must be accompanied by a list of ingredients.
- Parents are asked to be mindful of the students with nut allergies and to notify the classroom if their food contains this ingredient.
- Schools will not use foods or beverages as classroom rewards for academic performance or good behavior

Be mindful of the following when bringing in food items for celebrations:

- Contact your teacher about student food allergies; either avoid bringing food that contains that allergen or provide an alternative for the student who cannot eat the allergen-containing food.
- Snacks and drinks should be kid-size portions.
- Snacks should be colorful. Kids eat with their eyes.

Healthy Snack Options for Celebrations:

- Granola & Cereal Bars
- Fresh Fruit & Vegetables
- Popcorn
- Chips & Puffs
- Low-fat Yogurt
- String Cheese
- Pretzels
- Crackers
- Fruit-based Snacks: Dried fruit,100% fruit leathers
- "Ants on a Log" celery with sun butter /nut free butter and raisins
- Cut veggies with low fat dip
- Whole wheat pita bread or crackers with hummus or bean dip
- Fruit kebabs
- Fruit smoothies
- 100% fruit popsicles
- Frozen banana pops- sliced in half, dipped in yogurt and rolled in a whole grain cereal
- Beverages: 100% fruit juice, water, nonfat or low-fat milk, Spa water, sparkling water

You may also choose to bring in ***non-food items*** to give to each child on your child's birthday:

- Glow-in-the-dark items
- Slap bracelets
- Party hats
- Bubbles
- Chalk
- Stickers
- Little toys
- Stamps
- Plastic rings
- Erasers

- Holiday theme items
- Pencils
- Crayons
- Pens
- Decorative pencils
- Key chains

Here are a few other ways that you can celebrate your child's birthday at school:

- Donate a book to the school in honor of your child's birthday with his/her name inside
- Have your child bring their favorite book to share and read it to the class
- Donate a ball or jump rope to the classroom for recess
- Choose a favorite song or musical piece to sing or play for the class