



## **MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS**

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### **Guidelines for the Management of Life-Threatening Health Conditions in Schools** **(Food Allergies, Diabetes, Dietary Restrictions)**

During official school hours, the following precautions will be enforced.

1. All classrooms are nut-free (\*nuts include peanuts, tree nuts and nut by-products).
2. Ingredient labels on all snacks to be consumed in the classroom must be nut-free. Product labels should be read by parents to confirm that the snack is free from peanuts, tree nuts and nut by-products.
3. Any snack containing nuts will be returned to the student's lunchbox and stored in their backpack to be consumed in the lunchroom or sent home.
4. Nut products may be kept in a student's backpack/lunchbox for later consumption in the lunchroom ONLY. Separate seating is available in the lunchroom for students with life-threatening allergies.
5. No outside food is permitted to be shared in the classroom. All food that is brought to school must be consumed ONLY by the student who brought it in.
6. Food will not be used for classroom activities unless the activity is part of the written Board of Education approved curriculum.
7. In-class birthday celebrations: No food will be permitted in the classroom as part of the celebration. Please consult with your child's teacher for alternative ideas and activities (see Non-Food Celebration Ideas).
8. Parents will be notified of the occasions when lunch will be held in the classroom to plan their child's lunch and snack accordingly.
9. Cafeteria rules apply to field trips.

#### **Special Events**

During official school hours, *food-free* parties may be held during the school year. These parties include: Halloween, Winter Holiday, Valentine's Day, and the End-of-School-Year.

Please note the guidelines listed below:

1. The same food guidelines for birthday celebrations and classroom activities shown above will be followed during the PTO/PTA parties.
2. No food may be used as gifts or party favors.

Guidelines for special events held after official school hours are listed below.

1. All classrooms are nut-free (\*nuts include peanuts, tree nuts and nut by-products).
2. Sharing of food is permitted.
3. Food should be consumed in the cafeteria whenever possible.

#### **Outside Organizations**

After official school hours, any organization utilizing the district schools must adhere to the nut-free (\*nuts include peanuts, tree nuts and nut by-products) classroom procedures.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**1. *What is a food allergy?***

Food allergy is a serious medical condition affecting up to 15 million people in the United States, including 1 in 13 children. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention defines a food allergy as an occurrence when the body has a specific and reproducible immune response to certain foods. This response can be severe and life-threatening, such as anaphylaxis.

**2. *Can my child still bring a snack to school?***

Yes, absolutely! They may have a snack that does not contain nuts or nut by-products.

**3. *Can I send a treat to school with my child to share in the lunchroom?***

No, students cannot trade or share food in the lunchroom.

**4. *What is the expectation for managing life-threatening allergies on a field trip?***

The same rules apply during lunch on a field trip as in school. Students may have lunches that contain nuts on a field trip.

**5. *Since we cannot have food for classroom parties during official school hours, what are some things that can be done instead of serving food?***

See the Non-Food Celebration Ideas below.

**6. *If we choose to celebrate a student's birthday, when is the best time to do so?***

The best time to celebrate any event in the classroom would be during snack time. Any type of celebration should not extend beyond a class period. Always check with your child's teacher first.

**7. *Can the PTA/PTO provide or sell food at events in the cafeteria or outside the classroom?***

No food may be shared during official school hours. At events held after official school hours, food may be shared and sold. However, at all times, classrooms are nut-free.

**8. *What are we permitted to do for the following celebrations: Halloween, Winter Holiday, Valentine's Day, and End-of-Year?***

See the Non-Food Celebration Ideas below.

**9. *Can we have nuts in the cafeteria?***

Yes. However, nuts are not permitted at the designated allergy tables.

## Non-Food Celebration Ideas

Birthdays are important to children and they like to celebrate with their classmates. However, sending in a food treat to the classroom to celebrate excludes children with food allergies, diabetes or other dietary restrictions. According to the Centers for Disease Control (2011) allergies have increased more than 20% among American children since the mid-1990s.

Students can:

- Choose a book for his/her parent to read and then possibly donate to the class;
- Bring in a special story or item to share with the class;
- Bring in non-food goodie bags (pencils, stickers, erasers);
- Bring in a craft for the class to make;
- Send in a decorated box with index cards/small pieces of paper for classmates to write something nice about the birthday child and put into the box (sent home with the birthday child);
- Send in an autograph book for classmates to write a message to the birthday child/draw a picture;
- Bring in something that his/her classmates can sign as a treat for the birthday child (shirt/sweatshirt, tote bag, autograph stuffed animal, pillowcase, etc.); or
- Ask classmates to color a picture and/or write what they like best about the birthday child (these can be bound together with a ribbon to make a keepsake book).

***Always check with your child's teacher first*** to inquire what is acceptable for the classroom and be sure to provide advance notice to make sure that birthday plans will fit into their schedule.