

Dear Parents,

Many of you have contacted me asking for a list of "safe treats" to send to school with your children. While I do have a few lists, there are actually many types of food allergies and the lists can become quite extensive.

In addition to nut allergies, we also have students at Father Andrew White with allergies to dairy, milk, wheat, gluten, blueberries, artificial colors, sesame, fish, shellfish, chicken, red food dye, sunflower seeds, rice, bananas, strawberries, carrots, apples, pork, melons, almonds, eggs, soy, and even cotton candy! Not all of these are actual allergies that could lead to anaphylaxis, but they can still cause problems if ingested. Because of this, it is difficult to make general school-wide guidelines on "safe treats." Instead, I recommend choosing snacks or treats on an individual basis.

A few weeks ago a parent sent in popsicles which were approved only after we checked to ensure they did not contain apple juice, since there was also a student with an apple allergy in that class. The popsicles seem to be popular with the students; along with "Lofthouse" cookies, which can be found in some of the local grocery stores (I think in the bakery section), and are made in a peanut and tree nut free facility. Many parents of children with food allergies send in a supply of treats that are safe for their children and can be used as substitutions. We also have a supply of various snacks available if needed. So rest assured, if you send in a treat that not everyone in the class can eat, we will make sure those students are not left out and that something is available for them.

On a daily basis, since peanut allergy is the most common, we have a lunch table dedicated as a "peanut free table." We also enforce the rule that students are not allowed to share their lunches with each other. This allows students without allergies to still enjoy foods that they can eat. When it comes to special treats, we appreciate the fact that so many parents desire to accommodate all the students in their children's classrooms. For this reason, I ask that before sending any food items in to share, parents should check with their child's homeroom teacher and/or myself. This will allow us to make recommendations based on individual classes. You can also find a wealth of helpful information at the website snacksafely.com. Additionally, for parents of children with food allergies, I ask that if you have any additional information (such as severity of restrictions) or recommendations for your child (what treats they eat at home), please let me know.

Thank you for your assistance in helping to ensure the safety of all our students.

Sincerely,
Rose Bates
School Nurse