



## Important Communication: Nut Aware School

Dear CHS Community:

One of the challenges of a leader is to balance and prioritize all of the needs at a new school, knowing when to make a change and when to press pause. I am writing to you now at a time to make change.

**I am writing to change our policy around nuts.** The school must balance the needs of each individual and provide a safe and inclusive environment for all students. Although we recognize there are students with a variety of allergies, peanut/nut allergies are most prevalent, and they are particularly severe; ingesting even a small amount can cause a life threatening reaction for some children, and avoiding the allergen is the only way to prevent the allergic (and potentially lethal) reaction. Although the school has had policies in place to try to reduce contact (i.e. hand washing, placemats), and although we will increase community education so that the children can understand how to help avoid exposure, we also need to create a common expectation regarding the presence of peanut products at school.

As a result, Chestnut Hill will adopt the following policy:

Although we have currently had a peanut/nut free policy in Beginners and Pre-K, we will now not allow peanut or tree nut items anywhere in the building (lunch areas, classrooms or lockers), in our outdoor play areas or on trips away from school (whether on walk, on a bus to and from school or a trip, or at an off-campus location like a museum or farm, etc.).

This means that **all community members will not be allowed to bring in any food that contains peanuts or tree nuts**, and it means that we are asking everyone to provide peanut/nut alternatives for student lunches and snacks. **When packing your child's lunch or bringing in snack, please do not send in products that contain nuts.** We ask that you carefully check labels on all pre-packaged foods like granola bars, as many of these products contain nuts.

As we begin the year, teachers will talk to students about allergies and about our nut aware policy. Our effort will be to educate and foster a community commitment to keeping everyone safe. We have added clementines and raisins.

As always, changes bring questions. For some of our children, peanut or tree nut products may be a staple of their diets. Your efforts are truly appreciated and are essential to our success in safeguarding against a potentially serious and regrettable incident. We know it is easy to forget when your family is not directly affected, so we will continue to provide food suggestions, helpful hints and reminders. In addition, although we cannot allow students to eat a nut snack, we will offer them our snack options and return home the nut item. Deb Bloomberg, Chris Cunningham, our teachers and I stand at the ready to help as we create a nut-aware space.



We began this policy at camp in June and we will continue it into the 2018-2019 school year.

### **Additional Details about Snack**

The Chestnut Hill School provides a daily optional snack to all students. The snack options are: varied seasonal fresh fruit options, mini carrots, pretzels (gluten-free as well), Rice and Corn Chex, cheese sticks and organic raisins. All Beginners and Pre-K students will have CHS snack only.

While we realize that families and students have varying food preferences, we believe strongly that sharing a common menu of snack items during the school day contributes to a sense of community and avoids the potential for comparisons that might lead students to measure themselves in terms of who brings or doesn't bring snack and how the items brought in stack up to school choices. **The School will provide all snacks for Beginners and Pre-K students.** We will not prohibit sending in a snack from home in Kindergarten through 6th grade, but hope that you will support us in our effort to avoid a potentially divisive and dangerous situation.

If you do provide a snack with your child, the snack must be peanut/nut free and would be considered healthful (we realize that is open to much interpretation!). Candy, soda and any peanut/nut containing foods are not permitted. If families choose to send in a snack, we offer the following nut-safe suggestions.

Please remember to double check all labels, as some of these items may also have flavoring that contains nuts (i.e. cereals, crackers...).

### **Peanut and Nut Butter Alternatives**

- Sunbutter Sunflower Seed Spread
- Don't Go Nuts Soy Butter
- Wowbutter

### **Produce**

- Fresh fruits (frozen grapes, apple slices, oranges, watermelon, berries, fruit salad...)
- Veggies (red pepper strips, broccoli, pea pods, green beans...)
- Applesauce
- Canned fruits in their own juice
- Raisins or other dried fruit

### **Dairy**

- Cheese, Babybel minis, cottage cheese with fruit
- Yogurt tube, pouch cup (without granola or cookies that may contain nuts)
- Pudding

### **Protein**

- Beef Jerky



### **Carbs**

- Crackers (wheat thins, saltines, plain triscuits)
- Rice cakes
- Popcorn
- Tortilla chips
- Pita hips
- Pirates Booty
- Graham Crackers
- Teddy Grahams
- Nilla Wafers
- Cereal, oatmeal
- Mini bagels with hummus

### **Other**

- Guacamole
- Tortilla chips/salsa
- Pumpkin seeds
- Hummus
- Fruit and Cheese
- Tomato and mozzarella balls
- Cut up veggies, baby tomato, with ranch dressing/hummus

### **Examples of food that contain peanuts/nut include but are not limited to:**

Peanut/Almond Butter, Nutella, Trail mix, granola bars, cereals, granola, baked goods with nuts

Thank you for supporting us in being thoughtful, inclusive, and health-minded in all we do!

All the best,  
Tamara