

February 25, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians,

You have all read the headlines and seen the news stories: food allergies are a growing concern in schools across America. Millions of children – children who are perfectly healthy in every other way – are at risk of having a severe or even life threatening reaction when exposed to certain foods. A major health issue such as this one needs to be taken seriously, and it has always been the policy of this school to make the safety and well being of our students our top priority. Several children in our school have a peanut allergy. Ingestion through inadvertent contact (nose, eyes, or mouth) to even trace amounts of peanuts can cause a serious reaction. I recently attended a meeting for all principals in the diocese regarding the ***Diocese of Metuchen Food Allergy Plan***. It has been mandated by the Diocese that we implement the following restrictions:

- The school has been declared a “peanut and tree nut safe zone.” This means that peanut and tree nut products will not be allowed in the school at any time. Please read all ingredient labels carefully and do not send any peanuts or tree nut products to be eaten in the school. This includes items with warnings such as “may contain traces of peanuts” or “manufactured on equipment that also processes peanuts and tree nuts.”
- Food items which are brought to school to be shared by the class must be store-bought and have a readable list of ingredients. No home-baked goods will be permitted. (This includes any food brought in for birthdays and other special celebrations).
- If your child eats peanut butter for breakfast, we would greatly appreciate your making sure that his/her hands are washed with soap and water before leaving for school. Water alone and/or hand sanitizers do not do the trick!

This is a learning process for all of us, but we trust that you understand how deeply important it is to respect and adhere to these guidelines. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Barbara Stevens
Principal