

Alvord Independent School District

School Nurse: Isela Palmer/LaDonna Sooter

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Dear Parents:

You've 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 and normal in every other way - must watch every single bite they eat, or risk suffering a severe or even life threatening reaction. In fact, food allergies claim an estimated 150 lives and are responsible for more than 125,000 emergency room visits each year. A major health issue such as this must be taken very seriously, and it has always been the policy of this school to make the safety and well-being of our students our top priority.

A student in your child's class has a serious peanut/tree nut allergy - the food allergy that claims more lives each year than any other. A child with a serious peanut/tree nut allergy can suffer a reaction merely by touching a peanut/tree nut-containing food. Therefore, we are putting the following safety guidelines into effect:

- Please do not send any peanuts/tree nuts, peanut butter or foods containing peanuts/tree nuts or peanut butter to be eaten as snacks in the classroom. It is fine to send these products for lunch, which is eaten in the cafeteria.
- We will not be doing any classroom projects that involve peanut butter (like bird feeders) or peanut shells (art projects). Please do not send any of these projects into the classroom with your child.
- Birthday parties are a special time for children, but can be a difficult time for the food-allergic child. If you would like to send in baked goods, please be careful about the ingredients. Please list the ingredients on the outside of the package and when preparing "treats" please pay close attention to cross contamination in your kitchen. To prevent cross-contamination, it is necessary that cooking utensils and preparation surfaces be carefully washed after each food is touched. It would be especially helpful if you could let your child's teacher know a few days ahead of when you'd like to celebrate your child's birthday, so that the food-allergic child can provide his/her own safe treat.
- We will try to keep the food at holiday parties to a minimum. As with birthday parties, we must be extremely careful about the ingredients in all of the food items. Please do not enclose candy or other treats with holiday cards.
- If your child ate 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 does 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. If throughout the course of the year you have any questions or concerns about food-allergy-related issues, please do not hesitate to contact either one of us.

Wishing you and your family a safe and healthy school year.

Sincerely,

Isela Palmer
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