

MANAGING FOOD ALLERGIES

◆ SAMPLE SCHOOL LETTERS ◆

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I. SAMPLE PRINCIPAL'S LETTER

Dear Parents of Students in (Teacher's name) class,

I am writing to share very important information and to request your help.

One of your child's classmates has a life-threatening peanut allergy. An allergic reaction can happen from eating, touching or smelling peanuts.

To make the classroom a safe place for every child it is important that we do not bring any foods items that contain peanuts to school.

Safety depends on every student eating only the food he or she brings from home. Having only safe food in the classroom prevents contact exposures from crumbs or residue on tables, rugs, door knobs, and school supplies.

Also, we are going to teach the children to wash hands before and after eating. Please reinforce this by doing it at home.

I appreciate your understanding and cooperation. Please read the FOOD CHOICES list to make healthy and safe choices for your child.

Please sign and return the tear-off form below. It helps me know that you have received this letter and that you will help make the classroom a safe and healthy place for all children by sending in only "safe" foods with your child.

If you have any questions, please call me, (PHONE NUMBER). Also, the child's mother (NAME, PHONE NUMBER) is most willing to make snack suggestions. She has studied the subject of managing food allergies thoroughly and is an expert.

Sincerely, (Principal's Name and phone number.)

I have read the letter about food allergies and will follow the guidelines for eliminating peanuts from foods in snacks and lunches sent to school with my child.

Name _____

Phone _____ Date _____

I have the following questions:

Notes

When the principal and/or school nurse take responsibility for writing the letter, it shows administrative support for the child's needs as a part of a safe school culture. The letter needs to emphasize the value of safety for every child.

The school needs to send this letter to parents of classmates before school starts.

All lists of foods needs to be in alphabetical order.

Use brand and generic names or all food products.

List more safe food suggestions than unsafe foods.

Reinforce the value of healthy choices and safety as part of good health for all. Explain that food safety and hygiene are part of the school health curriculum.

Classrooms for young children need to have a no-sharing-food rule. Having only non-allergenic foods in the classroom lowers the risk of contact exposures via contaminated common surfaces and objects.

Add other rules that are being implemented, if appropriate. For example: *We are going to help the children wash hands before and after eating. Please reinforce this by doing it at home.*

The tear off makes it easier to follow up to make sure everyone has received the information.

The principal and other school staff should emphasize that parents are allies and resources. If someone has a strong objection to food safety policies, invite discussion.

Feedback is useful. Invite comments and questions.

Post all policies, safety rules, suggestions for safe foods, on the school and classroom website.

Post reminder signs in the classroom and cafeteria.

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I. NURSERY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER ANNOUNCEMENT

Food Allergy Notice: (Child's name) has severe, life threatening allergic reactions to nuts, peanuts, beans of all kinds, peas and all lentils. When preparing snacks please consider (child's name)'s allergies. Read food labels carefully for hidden ingredients.

Call (child's name)'s mother, (mother's name), before sending in any food items or if you would like suggestions for safe foods. (Phone number)
Some safe and healthy snacks include Knox Blox, fruit pops, or fruit kabobs.
Thank you for your cooperation.

Be explicit. Take food allergies seriously.
Sometimes a brief note is more effective than a long letter.
Encourage communication.
Always provide suggestions

III. SAMPLE SCHOOL MANUAL POLICY

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS. We encourage non-food celebrations as part of our school Wellness Policy.

Please! No surprises. Call your child's teacher to plan a suitable day and time to be part of your child's birthday celebration. If you would like to give party favors or treats, call the teacher for a list of **non-food items** such as stickers, puzzlers, or colored pencils.

On the day of your child's class birthday he or she will receive a special birthday book made by his or her classmates.

There are lots of good reasons for encouraging non-food "treats" instead of the standard sugared or high salt baked goods and other high calorie and high-risk items
Alternative prizes such as small toys or school supplies are popular alternatives. Be creative.
Provide opportunities to build reminders about rules and expectations into routine communications.

IV. SAMPLE TEACHER'S LETTER

Dear Parents,

I am writing to share some very important information and to request your help.

As you may know, we have students in the class with severe food allergies.

To avoid a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction, we are using new procedures for managing food in the classroom.

Some of the precautions we take include frequent hand washing. We ask children not to share food or utensils. We have a milk-free table for students and their friends to eat snacks that do not include milk.

To make the classroom as safe as possible, we are changing the way we celebrate birthdays and other special events. Please do not send in food treats for the class so we can always follow the "no sharing" rule. Students can bring in their own snacks as usual.

To celebrate your child's birthday in the classroom, we suggest the following alternatives to food treats. Bring in special pencils, book marks, or stickers to give out. Donate a book in your child's name to the classroom. Send in a special story, song, or poem. Lead a game, art or craft project or activity.

Thank you for your cooperation in making the classroom a safe and healthy place for all children.. Please sign and return the tear-off below so we know that you have received this letter and that you understand the new guidelines. If you have any questions please call me.

I have read the letter regarding food allergies and I will not send in food treats.

Name _____ Phone _____

Date _____

Frequent handwashing is good hygiene.
Many parents appreciate the no sharing rule.
Post reminder signs in the classroom and cafeteria.
Provide handouts of fun ideas for party favors and prizes. It is good nutrition for everyone to avoid the practice of eating high calorie junk foods.
Emphasize safety for everyone.
Teacher can follow up with parents who do not return the tear-off.