Dear Parents,

The topic of food in the classrooms for snack and lunch times, birthdays and holiday parties comes up each year. While we like to recognize special events, the safety of all students is always at the forefront of our minds. Please read the following guidelines and reach out to me or Nurse Brienne Trignano with any questions.

**Food Allergies/ Healthy Snacks**

The incidence of food allergies continues to increase and there are children in the Glen Ridge Public Schools who are at a very high risk for having a severe allergic reaction. This reaction is called an anaphylactic reaction and is life-threatening.

This is a reminder that your child is not to bring any **snack foods containing peanut butter, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, poppy or sunflower seeds, or nuts of any kind for snack time.** We are asking that you read the labels carefully before packing your child’s snack bag. The risk of accidental exposure to foods can be reduced in the school setting if we all work together to minimize these risks and provide a safe environment for students with food allergies.

Students are not permitted to share or trade food any time. Foods containing peanuts or tree nuts are allowed at lunch time only, but children will be instructed to wash their hands and face after eating in order to remove any traces of nut oil. During lunchtime an allergy free table is provided for children with peanut and tree nut allergies. We feel it is extremely important for you to discuss this issue with your child.

Carefully chosen snacks can help provide the nutrients children need for energy. Parents should provide snacks that are simple, easy to eat, and cause little mess. Please pack the snack in a bag separate from the lunch and consider these ideas:

- Sticks of raw vegetables
- Grapes
- Pretzels
- Goldfish crackers
- Whole wheat crackers
- Fig or fruit bars
- Bagel (half)
- Raisons

- Cut up fruits (apples, pears)
- Dry cereal
- Animal crackers
- Graham crackers
- Cheese sticks (string cheese)
- Rice cakes
- Fruit or grain muffin
- English muffin (Whole wheat)

Please do not pack sugary treats, soda, potato chips, candy, cupcakes, or messy snacks.
Birthday Celebrations

State law prevents the serving or distribution of Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) including candy/cupcakes, etc. during the school day. Birthday celebrations in school will be non-food events and may focus on a craft and/or activity.

Classroom Holiday Celebrations

We want to keep holiday parties simple, easy to plan and manage, and safe for all of our students. Being mindful of food allergies must always be at the forefront of our plans. All parent contributions to classroom parties must have prior teacher and nurse approval, especially food items. Healthy food items and snacks (please see list above) are allowed while FMNV including candies, chocolates, and sweets of any kind are not permitted. For the health and safety of all students, please do not send any homemade items into school for classroom parties.

State and federal food guidelines

State and federal food guidelines prohibit the distribution and sharing of candies, chocolates, and other sweets at school, or sending them home from school. Please be reminded that the New Jersey School Nutrition Policy provides regulations for providing students with healthy and nutritional foods during the school day.

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value

The following items are considered Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value and should not be served, sold or given away as a free promotion anywhere on school property at any time before the end of the school day:

- Any item where sugar is listed, in any form, as the first ingredient
- Any item with more than 8 grams of fat per serving or 2 grams of saturated fat per serving.
- Soda Water
- Water Ices – Water ices which contain fruit or fruit juices, are not included in this definition.
- Chewing Gum
- Candies included but not limited to:
  - Hard Candy: Includes such food as sour balls, fruit balls, candy sticks, lollipops, starlight mints, after dinner mints, sugar wafers, rock candy, cinnamon candies, breath mints and jaw breakers.
  - Jellies and Gums: Includes such foods as gum drops, jelly beans, jellied and fruit-flavored slices.
  - Marshmallow Candies
  - Fondant: Includes such foods as candy corn and soft mints
  - Licorice/Spun Candy
  - Candy Coated Popcorn

Thank you in advance for your cooperation,

Sincerely,

Dr. Joseph A. Caravela