

MANAGING FOOD ALLERGIES AT SCHOOL

◆ SAMPLE LETTERS◆

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I. SAMPLE PRINCIPAL'S LETTER

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

I am writing to share some very important information and to request your help. One of your child's classmates, (obtain written permission from parents before using the name) has a life-threatening food allergy(ies). S/he has an allergic reaction not only from eating _____, but also from touching or smelling _____ or any food product that may contain _____ as an ingredient.

Our goal is to make the classroom a safe place for every child. Because of the seriousness of this allergy(ies), it is important that we do not bring any foods items that contain _____ or _____ to school.

Some foods that **always or often** contain _____ are _____.

FOOD CHOICES FOR YOUR CHILD: These foods or food products usually do not contain _____

- ◆ You always read the label to check ingredients.
- ◆ You choose a brand that does not contain any _____ as an ingredient.

If there are other household members who will be preparing your child's snack, such as older siblings, nannies, grandparents or baby-sitters, please make sure they have this information.

I appreciate your help and understanding about this important health and safety matter. I ask that you please sign and return the tear-off below. It acknowledges that you have received this letter and that you will do your best to make sure that the classroom is 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. As you can imagine, 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 regarding food allergies and will follow the guidelines for eliminating (_____) from foods 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.

Parents of classmates need to receive this type of letter before school starts.

The letter should emphasize the value of safety for every child.

All food lists should be in alphabetical order.

List unsafe foods and ingredients by brand and generic names.

List SAFE foods and ingredients. List more safe food suggestions than unsafe foods.

Reinforce the value of health choices and safety as part of good practice for all. Emphasize how food safety rules and good hygiene are part of school health curriculum.

In most cases, young children will eat only items brought from home. Limiting 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 the parents are allies and resources. If someone has a strong objection to food safety policies, invite discussion. Problem solve a solution.

Feedback is useful. Invite comments and questions.

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

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II. 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 or birthday treats 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 treats 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.

Please: **We encourage healthy eating.** Do **not** send cupcakes or goodie bags of candy or other sweets. Call the teacher for a list of healthy snacks or suggestions for **non-food items** such as stickers, puzzlers, or colored pencils.

Please provide a treat for the entire class on the day of your child's scheduled classroom birthday celebration. Please! No surprises. Call ahead to plan a suitable day and time with your child's teacher.

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 alternative foods instead of the standard sugared or high salt baked goods and other 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 already know, we have students in the class with severe food allergies.

To avoid causing 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 to eat snacks that do not include milk.

To make the classroom as safe and inclusive 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 consistently 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. By minimizing food in the classroom we can reduce the risk of a potentially life-threatening allergic reactions.

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. It acknowledges 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.

Lots of good ideas for alternative party favors. It is good nutrition for everyone to avoid the practice of eating high calorie snack foods.

Emphasize safety for everyone.

Teacher can follow up with parents who do not return the tear-off