

Northbridge Public Schools Protocol for Food in the Classroom

Northbridge Public Schools has developed a protocol for food celebrations in the classroom to address three issues:

There has been an increase in life-threatening food allergies in our schools. New legislation has been passed which supports Northbridge Public Schools' efforts to help prevent obesity in children.

We are concerned about the importance of good hygiene in the classroom in the light of the recent H1N1 outbreak.

Birthday Celebrations In The Classroom

All birthdays for the month will be celebrated on the last Friday of the month to decrease the amount of food celebrations in the classroom. (Non-food celebrations may be done on the child's birthday.) Parents/guardians of children whose birthdays are being celebrated may bring in treats to share from the attached Allowable Treats list. All food (except fruit) must be provided in individually packaged containers, prepackaged by the company that manufactures them. Whenever possible, we recommend that parents/guardians purchase food in "100 calorie" bags. Only the brands listed on the last page of this protocol will be accepted. Any food not on this list will be returned home. No homemade foods are permitted due to the difficulty in ascertaining ingredients. On the Friday of the birthday celebration, the regular snack will be omitted and replaced by the food provided at the birthday party. The teacher will review the student allergy list before the celebration and will contact the school nurse with questions.

Curriculum Related Food Lessons

When a teacher decides to include food as part of the curriculum, he/she will choose from the attached Allowable Food list, or will send permission forms home 7 calendar days before the lesson.

At the beginning of the year, a general food permission form will be included in the forms sent home on the first day of school for every student. On this form, parents/guardians will be able to indicate if their child can participate in any food celebration during the school year, or if the student has a special circumstance and the parent/guardian must be informed of the food to be provided. During the school year, teachers will only need to send permission forms home with students who require permission for each food lesson or to students who do not have a permission form on file at school. The nurse in each building will keep track of these forms and will provide teachers with the list of students who require permission forms for each food related lesson. Permission forms must be sent home at least 7 days before the food is to be provided. If a student cannot have a food, the teacher and parent/guardian will work out an acceptable alternative food.

During some teaching units students are asked to bring in homemade food that enhances a unit or lesson plan. If a teacher is including homemade food during a lesson such as

this, a letter will be sent home to parents of students who require permission describing the event and the foods that will be available (e.g. homemade food representing cultures studied in our lesson) at least 7 calendar days before the event. If a student cannot sample the homemade foods, the teacher and parent will work out an alternative that will still allow the student to participate in some way. An example would be having that parent/student make a cultural food item that that student can eat. Teachers and parents are responsible to remind the student that he/she cannot sample the foods.

Holidays and Other Celebrations

We recommend that these be limited as much as possible. When a holiday or other celebration is planned and involves food, teachers will follow the same protocol as for Curriculum Related Food Lessons.

Rewards and Incentives

Food will not be used as a reward or incentive for any student unless indicated in an IEP.

As always, children are not allowed to share snacks or food with each other, either in school, on the bus, or at school sponsored events such as Field Trips.