

Allergen Policy and Healthy Snack Management

Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School recognizes the increased prevalence of student food allergies including but not limited to nuts, peanut butter, dairy, gluten, and eggs. Research shows that poor snacking habits can negatively affect a child's academic performance. As a result, we have developed an allergen and healthy snack management policy to eliminate accidental exposure to any possible allergens *and* promote healthy eating habits.

Saint Thomas faculty and parents share a common goal of supporting the link between healthy eating, physical activity, and improved academic achievement for our students. We recognize the gravity and threat a student with a food allergy faces. Using food as a reward undermines nutrition education and encourages over-consumption of foods high in added sugar and fat. Research shows that obesity and Type 2 diabetes are linked to diets high in sugar and fat.

Saint Thomas believes the focus on allergy management and healthy eating go hand in hand in providing prevention, education, and communication.

Rationale:

Saint Thomas recognizes the importance of celebrating birthdays, accomplishments, and milestones within the classroom. Traditionally, food has been an important part of these events. To promote good nutritional practices and provide the safest and healthiest environment for ALL children, we ask parents to provide non-edible class treats. Saint Thomas school and teachers are happy to suggest a few non-food treats for birthday celebrations that comply with this policy.

Action Plan (Parent Information):

1. Saint Thomas will inform parents, verbally and in writing, when there is a student with food allergies in the classroom to avoid known products with allergens at all times, including all special classroom activities and celebrations.
2. Classrooms that have a student with severe food allergies will post a notice of the specific allergens that could potentially cause a life threatening reaction.
3. Saint Thomas lunch service will avoid the use of nuts and peanut butter in the preparation of food. There will be in the lunchroom an allergen free table in the lunchroom that allows student to enjoy a safer eating environment while at the same time allowing those without allergies to eat food that may contain allergens such as peanut butter.
4. Saint Thomas will initiate disciplinary consequences for any student that intimidates or intentionally exposes an allergic student to a known allergen.

Procedures for Management (Student Information):

1. Posting outside classrooms of students with severe/life threatening allergies
2. Teachers will instruct students to wash hands and clean surfaces at the beginning of the school day, after meals in the lunchroom, and after snacks in the classroom when there is a student with food allergies in the classroom to avoid contamination by contact.
3. School Personnel are instructed in the use of an Epi pen and what symptoms to watch for in the event of an allergic reaction.

Birthday Celebrations at school:

1. Saint Thomas acknowledges student birthdays and milestones at Chapel. With the announcement of their name, students are recognized and the entire school applauds their very own special day.
2. If you choose to celebrate your child's birthday in the classroom, please do so with non-food items such as pencils, stickers, notepads, or a donation of a game or book to the classroom or school library.
3. Any food items sent for the class will be distributed at the end of the school day and taken home by each student for parent approval.