

Inter-American Magnet School Peanut Free Policy

After reviewing the new CPS district policy on *Managing Food Allergies*, we have decided to make Inter-American Magnet School peanut free. Some of our children are allergic to peanuts and if in the presence of peanuts could become very sick. In order to be inclusive and have access for all of our children, we will have two simple changes:

1. Our cafeteria will no longer serve peanut butter sandwiches or peanut products.
2. Foods that contain peanuts can no longer be brought into the school.

At the Inter-American Magnet School...

What peanut free IS:	What peanut free IS NOT:
no snacks with peanuts	YES to almonds, cashews, pistachios and any other nuts
no peanut butter sandwiches	YES to ALL kinds of sandwiches

The Inter-American Magnet School will be Peanut Free beginning October 1st, 2011. Each week, leading up to October 1st, we will focus on a different aspect of our Peanut Free policy.

- Beginning September 6th, peanut butter sandwiches or peanut products will no longer be served in the cafeteria.
- Beginning September 26th, we will be sending notes home to families to ensure that peanuts are not present at Inter-American Magnet School.
- Beginning September 26th, all teachers will talk to the students about our peanut free policy and how to help a friend who is having an allergic reaction.
- Beginning October 1, no peanuts and snacks/foods containing peanuts may be brought into the school.
- Beginning October 1, we will send reminder notes home to families if necessary.

While we can't absolutely ensure that our school will be 100% peanut free, we will drastically diminish the possibility of a child getting sick due to coming in contact with peanuts. We understand that the "no peanut butter at school" policy will be a difficult change for some of our children and families. We are very hopeful that through our classroom activities and discussions at home about peanut allergies, that children will understand the importance of going peanut free. This is an opportunity for our children to learn more about our inclusive ideals and their role in supporting our community.

We thank all of our families and staff for their cooperation in upholding this policy.

Question: Why is My Child's School peanut-free? What food can she bring?

The rationale for peanut- and nut-free classrooms and schools has to do with the somewhat unique nature of these allergies. Most people with food allergies -- even severe allergies -- can manage their allergies by simply not eating foods that have their allergens in them.

There are two limits to this approach for people with peanut allergies. First, it's possible for people with these two allergies to react to traces of nut dust in the air (from peanut shells, for example). Second, nuts are full of natural oils that leave residues. While these residues can be removed with cleaning, it can be difficult to clean tables in the middle of lunch, for example, or for school cleaning staff to know to clean oils off of tainted walls or doorknobs during the school day.

Here are some rules of thumb for reading labels:

- Under federal law, peanuts have to be clearly identified in a food label if they're used as an ingredient.
- Always check labels on packaged foods. Look for warnings like "may include traces of peanuts." Package notices to the effect of "made in a nut-free facility" indicate safe snacks.

So what kinds of foods *are* good to bring to a nut-free classroom? Here are some ideas.

- Fresh fruit. Bananas are popular year-round, apples and pears are great in the fall, and clementines are easy to peel and available through the winter
- Cheese.
- Pudding cups.
- Applesauce. The healthiest and most convenient type is unsweetened applesauce
- Chips: potato, tortilla, etc.
- Juice, water and most other beverages.
- Vegetables. Baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, and cauliflower are among the vegetables some kids will eat raw.
- Raisins and other dried fruits.
- Fruit snacks.
- Lunch meat & sandwich bread.
- Air-popped popcorn.
- Some cookies, snack cakes, and crackers. These are more likely to contain nuts or to pose cross-contamination risks than other items on this list, so either check labels very carefully.

Question: What kinds of treats can I bring for my child's birthday or holiday party if my school is peanut-free?

1. Read your child's class a special book.

Every child will enjoy his/her parent coming to school to do a special read aloud. Talk with your child's teacher about this ahead of time.

2. Game or activity

Planning to play a game during recess or another time would be memorable for your child. Set this up ahead of time with your child's teacher or work with Coach Allie, our Playworks Coach.

3. Stickers

Popular with younger boys and girls of all ages, you can find stickers to go with what your child is studying in the classroom or something that your child likes to do. One great, easy-to-overlook source of stickers is the scrapbook section of art supply stores.

4. Pens and Pencils

Pens and pencils are obvious hits here.

5. Activity/Coloring Books

These sorts of gifts are ideal for parties, or for other situations where you can predict the age of the children receiving them. Small seasonal activity books are often available at drugstores and can be great deals.

6. Art Supplies

Small boxes of crayons or chalk, individual packages of modeling clay, small sets of watercolors, or kid-sized paintbrushes are examples of art supplies that please kids of many ages.

7. Small Puzzles

Look at drugstores or discount stores to make these viable cost-effective options.