

MASON-RICE SCHOOL
149 Pleasant Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Elaine P. Harold
Interim Principal

617-559-9570
(fax) 617-552-7315

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Dear Parents,

I am writing to enlist your support in a potentially difficult situation. Many of our Mason-Rice K-5 students have life-threatening food allergies to peanuts (a legume), sesame and/or tree nuts. If these children accidentally ingest either a peanut or tree nut or other foods containing certain peanut or nut products, they could become very ill requiring emergency life-saving treatment.

We need the cooperation of all of our families to ensure a safe environment for these children. Because a number of these children attend the aftercare program, they could be exposed to foods from any of our classrooms. Peanut butter can be messy and may make its way around these classrooms. Food stuffs left in any classroom could "travel" to after care with any of the children from that class. This poses a very serious problem for the child with the peanut allergy. If a peanut product is brought into aftercare and the child with the allergy touches it with his hands and then touches his hands to his mouth he could have an allergic life-threatening reaction.

I have informed the Newton Health Department of this situation. The Newton School Committee's Life Threatening Allergy (LTA) guidelines support the voluntary ban of peanut and tree nut products in our classrooms. **In each of our K-5 classrooms, I am asking all parents to refrain from sending any peanut or tree nut products to school during this school year.** Peanuts, peanut butter, peanut flour and peanut oil are often a hidden ingredient in food. Such foods include granola bars, granola cereal, trail mix and many cakes and cookies. As an added precaution, we will remind students that sharing of food during snack or lunch is not allowed.

It is very important that these children and their families feel safe and supported by the Mason-Rice community. I appreciate your understanding and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Truly yours,

Elaine P. Harold

I would like to make families aware of the following website that provides information about life threatening food allergies called "AllergyHome.org." Through this website you can access videos geared towards parents and children. You can access this website at <http://www.allergyhome.org/schools/>. Click on "teaching parents" to view the video. Having a greater awareness and understanding of life threatening food allergies is a benefit to our whole school community.