

# Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools

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Dear Gahanna-Jefferson Families,

We hope this letter finds you enjoying your summer. We are gearing up for the 2018-2019 school year and working hard to prepare schools for the return of students in August. When preparing for a new school year, we regularly evaluate our safety policies and procedures and this year due to a significant increase in the number of students in our schools with allergies, there was a need to include these practices in our review as well.

Allergies can range from mild to severe when a child is exposed to the allergen. If allergies are not something your family personally deals with, it can be hard to understand the impact they have on students. Though change can be difficult, we would like to share about an adjustment we are implementing in all preschool through 5th grade classrooms effective the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. **To maintain the safety of all students, parents/guardians will no longer be allowed to bring in food treats to be shared in any classrooms for birthday celebrations or classroom/holiday parties.** We know this change may be met with some resistance, but we ask that families adjust to this plan and work to rethink instances where food may have previously been included. It is important to note this change applies to all classrooms, not just classrooms with students that have allergies.

Non-food items can still be included and some suggested alternatives to food treats for birthdays and classroom parties may include:

- Party favors such as erasers, pencils, stickers, bracelets, keychains, etc.
- Parent/Guardian or guest visit the classroom and read a book to the students
- Donating an item to the classroom such as a book, game, plant, craft, etc.
- Providing an item classmates can sign such as a tshirt, tote bag, autograph book, etc.
- Planning and having the students participate in an activity such as a craft, a dance party, game, etc.

If your child's building/teacher incorporates optional snacks into the daily schedule, the students must utilize the safe snacks list when making their snack choices. At the start of the 2018-19 school year, you will be provided with a letter listing any classroom allergy details and asking you to follow the safe snack list. If your child has a medical condition requiring him/her to have a snack that is not on the safe snack list, you will want to contact your building principal to discuss a plan in order for your child's needs to also be met.

For more information on food allergies, check out these websites:

<http://www.kidshealth.org>

<http://www.foodallergy.org>

If you have a question about a specific food item or the information provided in this letter, please contact your school nurse or building principal.

Thank you!

Gahanna-Jefferson Administrative Team