

NEW JUNK FOOD / CLASS PARTY GUIDELINES

Dear Families and Teachers,

Health providers are concerned about the growing number of children who are overweight in America. The children are at risk for serious health problems such as diabetes. All children, whether overweight or not, need to be encouraged to develop good eating habits when they're young. For these reasons, the School Leadership Team has developed the following guidelines. We hope you'll keep them in mind when packing your children's lunches and snacks and also when planning class parties.

- 1) We want to encourage our students to eat nutritious food in school whenever possible, including fruits, vegetables, proteins, and whole grains. The less processed the food, the better. Also, the less junk food the better (things like candy, potato chips, cookies, and soda). Foods that are high in sugar or contain trans-fats are particularly unhealthy. Keep in mind that many juice products (even those that say they are "100 percent juice") are very high in calories.
- 2) Candy should NOT be used as a reward for good behavior or academic achievement.
- 3) We understand that there are going to be sweets at class parties –both for holidays and birthday celebrations, but we'd like to encourage moderation:
 - a) Students should be given small portions by teachers and parents rather than having open plates where students can grab as much as they want.
 - b) Try to create a balance between sweets and more nutritious foods. More nutritious alternatives for parties include sliced fruit (watermelon, grapes, and apple slices are popular). Other possibilities: low-fat pretzels, rice crackers, baby carrots, raisins and other dried fruit, whole grain crackers, cubes of cheese/string cheese.
 - c) Sometimes, in the lower grades, parents give out goody bags. If you must do so, please do not give out goody-bags full of sweets. Include safe, non-food items instead, such as pencils, erasers, etc.

These guidelines are consistent with the efforts of schools all across the country to deal with what is becoming a very real public health problem. Every day, when you pack your child's lunch or snack, you are affecting the eating habits they will have for the rest of their lives. By encouraging good eating habits early, you'll be setting your kids up for success in school, and later in life.

Thanks, in advance, for your cooperation.

The School Leadership Team
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