August 20, 2012

Dear Lower School Parents:

There are many students in the Lower School with a variety of food allergies and several are allergic to more than one item. The allergies include dairy, peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish. Coincidentally, these eight foods account for 90% of all food-allergic reactions in the United States.

Several of our students have experienced an anaphylactic reaction, and many more are at risk. An anaphylactic reaction is a life-threatening situation that requires an epinephrine (adrenaline) injection. Several of these Lower School students not only have a problem if they ingest these allergens but also if they come in skin contact or inhale them as well. There is no cure. The only way to avoid a reaction is to avoid the offending food.

We know that many parents like to celebrate birthdays and other occasions with special treats, however, we encourage parents to celebrate with non-food items such as making a donation to your child’s class with a puzzle, a book, a game, etc. instead of food. If you choose to provide a food item instead, the current school policy is that you will need to notify the classroom teacher 72 hours in advance of your treat choice so we can take appropriate measures to keep everyone safe.

We strongly encourage you to send in snack items from the “safe list” for your child’s daily snack. The list is available from your classroom teacher. Please be sensitive when selecting a snack or a birthday treat. Lower School tries to maintain an allergy aware environment that particularly excludes all nuts or nut products. Also keep in mind that teachers have to spend time cleaning up tables and washing hands in an effort to keep all children safe. This takes away from teaching time and student work time. However, if everyone is mindful of all our children, this diversion should be minimal.

To learn more about food allergies, you may visit the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network’s website, [www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org).

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. We look forward to a great school year!

Sincerely,

Carolyn Lengh Kathy Choren Kathleen Roebber

Head of Lower School Assistant Head of Lower School School Nurse

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