

St. Thomas of Villanova Nut Awareness Policy

This goal of this policy is to make all parents, staff and students aware of potential life threatening allergic reactions that may occur in certain children after coming into contact with peanuts or tree nuts. St. Thomas has several children with severe nut allergies, some too young to make safe decisions when it comes to what they can and cannot eat. In an effort to make their school environment as safe as possible, we need everyone's strict adherence.

What is important to know about nut allergies; some reactions include hives, swollen eyes, trouble breathing, throat tightening, vomiting and/or a drop in blood pressure. In more severe cases, a reaction called anaphylaxis may occur which can be fatal. This is a critical medical emergency that requires immediate treatment.

Anaphylaxis is defined as a type of allergic reaction in which the immune system responds to otherwise harmless substances from the environment. Unlike other allergic reactions, however, anaphylaxis can kill. Reaction may begin within minutes or even seconds of exposure, and rapidly progress to cause airway constriction, skin and intestinal irritation, and altered heart rhythms. In severe cases, it can result in complete airway obstruction, shock and death.

Please know that the entire St. Thomas of Villanova staff is provided with a list of children that have any and all types of allergies. The staff is trained on how to administer medications as allowed by medical release forms, including epinephrine, available under the brand names Epi-Pen® and Auvi-Q™.

We at St. Thomas of Villanova recognize the need to protect children to the best of our ability, and are therefore implementing the following policy. Your cooperation with this policy—the sacrifice of not having nuts or nut products in the school classroom is a small one to make compared to the consequences a child with severe allergies could face.

POLICY:

1. All classrooms are to be nut safe. This is important, as children snack in the classroom. An example of the danger would be spilled peanut butter on a classroom table that is then touched by an allergic individual and transmitted into the eyes, nose or mouth, which are the main entryways for an allergic reaction.

A. Please provide snacks that do not contain any form of nut or peanut oil. This includes Nutella .

- B. If a student brings a nut product, the teacher will put the item in a ziplock bag and it will be returned to the student with a note that states, "Please enjoy this treat at home"

C. Teachers will ensure that art, science or other classroom projects do not use birdseed or other items which may contain nuts as part of classroom projects or demonstrations. Many birdseeds and potting soils contain peanuts or peanut shells.

Please read all labels to make sure there are not hidden nuts in the food item. The FDA requires food allergens to be called out on the label. They are often at the end of the ingredient list.

2. Bake Sales will be nut safe.

- A. Please do not bake with any nuts, nut butters, peanut oil or nut extract, such as Almond Extract. If using a mix, please read the label to see if it includes any nuts.
- B. Bakers, if you choose to purchase you baked goods to bring in for the sale, if the label reads, "May contain or contains peanuts or tree nuts" those are NOT acceptable. If the label reads, "Made on equipment that also processes peanuts and nuts", that is NOT acceptable. If the label reads, "Processed in a facility that also processes peanuts and tree nuts" those will be allowed at this time, but labeled on the Bake Sale table as such.

3. Birthday treats are also to be nut safe. <http://snacksafely.com/> has a list of snacks that will be acceptable and safe for those with nut allergies.

4. Field Trip lunches will need to be discussed with the teacher in charge. The teacher will need to determine if a separate place is available to keep the children apart. If it is determined that nuts are acceptable, the child will need to have Wet Ones included with the lunch, to properly clean their hands after lunch. If the teacher does not feel nuts are acceptable, please provide an alternate lunch.

5. The lunchroom will allow peanut products for individual consumption at this time. (STV reserves the right to change this policy if needed, at any time.)

- A. The hot lunch table will remain a nut safe zone.
- B. Children with peanut butter or any other nut product will be seated away from those with nut allergies. Immediately upon finishing their lunch, the table is to be wiped down and the children need to wash their hands with soap and water.