



Orange County Public Schools

445 West Amelia Street • Orlando, FL 32801-1129 • Phone 407.317.3200 • www.ocps.net

January 21, 2010

Dear Parents,

One of our sacred trusts as a school district is to provide a safe environment for our students. It is an unfortunate reality today that something as simple as food can pose a threat to our students. With that said I am writing to alert you to two rules that we implement in all Orange County Public Schools during "bell times," between the start and end of classroom instruction.

It is not an option for the district to allow a threat that we can anticipate. The threats to our students from allergies and food-borne bacteria are real. We have students in the district who have life-threatening allergies to peanuts, soy, dairy, and MSG so we are constantly on alert. OCPS also responds instantly to food industry recalls.

Food available to students needs to be from safe sources and when an incident does occur the district is required to identify the source and intervene quickly. This means that food needs to be prepared at inspected food manufacturing facilities and labeled in a way to allow us to track its source should the need arise.

In consultation with the Orange County Health Department and the district's risk management department, we have revised the rules related to students or parents bringing food to school, especially the classroom. With their support the new rules are:

1. All foods given to students during normal school hours must come from an identifiable source and are presented in a sealed container with the manufacturer clearly identified so that OCPS has established a responsible party for the preparation, handling, and transportation of the food item.
2. Food prepared in homes may only be given by the parent/guardian to their own son, daughter or dependent and not shared with other students.

The district recognizes that some schools' past practices and rules on what you can bring or send to school will need to change. We hope you will appreciate the principle concern we have for maintaining a safe and healthy school environment. If you have any questions about how to correctly abide by these new rules, please consult one of your school administrators or Lora Gilbert, Director of Food and Nutrition Services at 407-317-3799, extension 5105.

Sincerely,

Michael Eugene
Chief Operations Officer