January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Allergy Aware School**

As you are aware, because at Russell Lower School there are several pupils and staff who have severe nut allergies, we have been a ‘nut free’ school to ensure that these individuals are able to participate in all the regular school activities without the risk of a serious and dangerous allergic reaction.

Alongside this, we have other children and staff with health threatening food allergies which we accommodate on an individual basis within the school. In line with recent Health and Safety advice, the school is changing our stated ethos from being a ‘nut free’ school to an ‘Allergy Aware School’. This enables us to maintain our focus on eliminating nuts and nut products within the school but to also ensure that alternative allergies are equally considered.

Nut allergies remain the most common allergy reported within school and therefore our current practice will not change:

* The catering service already operates as a nut free provision.
* Parents and Carers are requested to provide nut free healthy snacks (chopped fresh fruit and vegetables are requested)
* Parents and Carers should provide nut free packed lunches. This is particularly important when on a school trip as the potential risk is greatly increased because of the number of packed lunches being eaten. The advice is to particularly check snack/cereal bars as these are often likely to contain nuts
* All food, cooking or Science/exploration activities undertaken within classes are risk assessed
* All offsite activities are risk assessed and staff informed of the need to be ‘nut free’

Whilst a peanut allergy is the most likely to cause anaphylaxis, eight foods (peanut, tree nut, egg, milk, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish) account for the vast majority of total food allergies.

This means that we encourage parents, children and staff to avoid bringing foods that contain documented allergens to school. These include:

* Nuts
* Peanut butter
* Nuts spreads such as Nutella
* Some fruit and nut bars and muesli bars
* Some biscuits and cakes (which contain nuts – please check packaging)
* Chocolates
* Any other products that have nuts listed in the ingredients

**This includes ‘birthday sweets and treats’ that are sent into class by parents please.**

We appreciate all the support you have already given us. This has enabled us to minimise the risk for those individuals, and prevent a potentially dangerous allergic reaction. We do recognise that this is an additional thing to check, but hope that you will understand the reasons why we ask for your cooperation. We cannot completely eliminate any risk, but we can all do our very best within the school community.

As always, please do get in touch if you have any queries or question.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

Headteacher