



Samples of Letters from Principals to Advance the Good Food Promise

As Bellingham Public Schools continues to develop and refine the implementation of the Good Food Promise in schools across the district, staff have taken initiative and moved forward with procedures to put into practice. Below are three examples from principals who have taken the guidance and created resources for their schools.

Cordata Elementary School – School Food Policy

Food Policy

Students have access to breakfast in the classroom and school lunch each day. In many cases, they also have access to snacks throughout the day, using the share bowl with leftovers from breakfast. Those involved in after school clubs also receive a snack. When any other food is presented to children during the school day or in after school clubs, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- First and foremost, consider safety. If you are giving food to children, you **must be aware of any life threatening allergies or food sensitivities**. For a child with life threatening allergies to *any* food, you must get parent permission in writing before giving them *any* food. This applies *even if* you believe that the food you are providing doesn't contain the allergens to which the child is sensitive. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- The [Bellingham Good Food Promise](#) is our guide! When classroom celebrations involve food, it is an opportunity for teaching about a healthy relationship with food.
- As stated in the Good Food Promise: "Food should not routinely be used as a reward, and is only an acceptable reward when offered as an instructional device as a result of careful thought in collaboration with a school administrator." If you're unsure, be sure to ask an administrator!
- We do not celebrate individual birthdays with food. Parents will be asked NOT to bring food to school for classmate consumption for birthdays. If a parent brings food to school, please bring it to the office and the office staff will contact the family to make arrangements for pick up or disposal.



Alderwood Elementary School – Note to Parents

Good afternoon Alderwood parents,

I hope you are all having a great weekend, and Happy December!

As a school we continue to make a lot of growth as learners, and together we are making tremendous progress toward the priorities that we identified together last year during my Entry Plan process. (To see the document on our website, [click here](#).)

One of the main Themes in the entry plan was **Healthy Alderwood**. We are doing work currently to understand what it means to be both physically healthy and emotionally healthy, and one part of this work is developing a new practice for how we celebrate with food.

Attached you will find a document that describes our new policy for bringing in food for celebrations, which we will begin in January. We believe that celebrations for children are extremely important, but at the same time recognize the complications of bringing treats to the classroom. As the document explains, I will ask that birthdays not be celebrated with food, including the traditional cookies and cupcakes. You will also find other great ways that we *do* want to celebrate, and ways to include families in those celebrations. We feel that this will be a positive and inclusive practice, and aligns us with District and State policy.

[Alderwood Celebrations Guidelines](#)



Carl Cozier Elementary School – School Agreement Regarding Food and Celebrations

In the fall of 2015 the Carl Cozier community created a school-wide agreement related to food and celebrations. To engage our community in this discussion feedback was solicited from all families through a newsletter and during two PTA meetings. Below is the agreement created by our staff and families:

We believe that one of the greatest strengths of the Carl Cozier community is the diversity of our families. We also believe that the inclusion of all families in celebrations can unite us and strengthen our community. While we encourage each family to celebrate its own culture and traditions we ask that our community be open-minded about the differences within our community. As a school, we will focus on learning about different traditions and not celebrating holidays associated with religious origins. Our celebrations will be connected to classroom learning and be inclusive of all students. Teachers will notify families in advance of any celebrations that will take place during the school day. We encourage families to participate in celebrations at school and request that families coordinate their involvement with the teacher before the event.

Food is an important part of celebrations all over the world and we want to balance the use of food during celebrations with the school board policy associated with nutrition. Policy 3440 states, "Schools should encourage healthy food choices at celebrations and identify ways to recognize or celebrate without food or food distribution." Because of the frequency of birthdays within a class we have chosen to celebrate them without food. Please contact your child's teacher to find out how birthdays are celebrated in the classroom. There are many ways to celebrate birthdays without food and teachers may choose celebrations depending on the age and interest of students.

We encourage all food provided to students to be healthy and meet the [nutrition standards](#) set forth by the district. We believe that students perform best when they are well-fed and healthy. For a variety of reasons students get hungry at school and can benefit from a snack at times other than breakfast or lunch. Students are also able to select, when available, a non-perishable unopened item that was purchased from the cafeteria and donated to the "Share Bin". If teachers choose to provide food for students not supplied by the school district they will ensure that the food does not conflict with health concerns of their students, and they will notify families in writing the types of food being offered and the frequency in which it is distributed.

We appreciate the many ideas that were shared about this topic and the consideration our families showed for the different beliefs held by members in the Carl Cozier community.