



# WARWICK SCHOOL DISTRICT



## Guidelines for Use of Food in Schools

At Warwick School District, we are responsible to ensure the safety and security of all students and staff. We take that responsibility seriously and make every effort to ensure that safety. As part of those efforts, we need to be sure that all food served to students or staff is safe. We have well-developed policies and procedures in the food services areas in each of our schools and continuously evaluate those policies and procedures in order to maintain a high level of food safety.

In addition, at both the state and national levels of government, there is growing attention focused on health and nutrition within our schools. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and well-being. The Warwick School District has recently increased our attention in this area as well. We are committed to helping students establish and maintain lifelong, healthy eating patterns.

Finally, food allergies are an area of growing concern in schools across America. Millions of children suffer allergic reactions due to food exposure, whether that exposure is through ingestion, touch or even in an airborne form. Those reactions can vary in severity from mild to life-threatening. This is a major health issue and must be taken very seriously. Again, the safety of all students in our school is a top priority for the Warwick School District.

For the reasons mentioned above, the district is recommending changes to the existing procedures related to food in our schools and classrooms. The following guidelines will outline these updated procedures. Any snacks eaten in the classroom should be “healthy snacks.” Fruits, vegetables, and other snacks that are low in both calories and sugar content are considered to be “healthy snacks.”

Therefore, we would ask that parents coordinate their child’s snack, if permitted, with his or her classroom teacher. Outside food provided by parents or students as rewards, for parties or served as other treats is not permitted. In addition, food is not permitted to be consumed in the building hallways or other common areas.

### **What about food rewards and special parties?**

1. The use of outside food (i.e. pizza, fast food, candy, etc.) purchased and provided by teachers, other school staff, students or parents will not be permitted as part of a food reward. All food rewards should be purchased through the district’s Food Services Division to guarantee that the food meets the *Chapter 12 - Food and Nutritional*

guidelines. In addition, all recommendations and directives related to student needs due to food allergies in the classroom and school must be followed.

2. As stated above, outside food provided by parents will not be permitted, including Birthday treats. **If parents choose to provide a treat, healthy food options may be purchased through the district's Food Services Division utilizing the Birthday Treat order form which may be found on the Warwick School District website, or by contacting the Food Services Coordinator at your child's respective school. If an order is placed with the Food Services Division, the building principal will be notified in order to make any necessary recommendations and directives related to student needs due to food allergies in the classroom.**

3. Parties and celebrations that do include food purchased from Food Service may not interfere with school lunch and may begin no earlier than 30 minutes after the last meal period of the regular school day with the exception of classroom parties serving a meal in lieu of lunch.

4. If the classroom party or celebration is a meal in lieu of lunch, a healthy lunch that meets the nutritional guidelines will be ordered by the Food Service Director. The Food Services Director will inform the building principal, and the building principal will make any necessary recommendations related to student needs due to food allergies in the classroom.

5. Teachers and other school staff should always consider the use of non-food rewards such as pencils or erasers for in-class reinforcement or special celebrations and parties.

**Are there exceptions to these procedures?**

Yes. Special events that take place after school hours and are not sponsored by the school district (i.e. Fun Nights, etc.) are exempt from these procedures, but should try to offer healthy options to the attendees. Also, students who have medical conditions that require the availability of food/snacks as directed by a doctor will be permitted. This should be coordinated with the building nurse.