



Example of a lunchbox ban

The governors at the example primary school introduced a 'school meals only' rule for all pupils aged four to seven. Under the government's Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme, these youngsters qualified for free lunches - regardless of parents' income.

The head teacher sent a letter to parents to explain the new rule, insisting the school is acting in the best interests of its young pupils no items in lunch boxes that are nut based, and especially NO PEANUT BUTTER.

The school, which was rated outstanding by Ofsted , used nationwide catering company Chartwells to supply cook and chill meals, which are ordered online a week in advance by parents.

The lunchbox ban only applies to children in reception to Year 2. Children in Years 3 to 6 are allowed to bring lunches from home

They were banning all peanut products as they had a child with life-threatening, airway-reactive peanut allergies. Based on recommendations by this child's doctor, they chose to ban all peanuts and peanut products from their campus.

They stated:

'In our particular case, we feel that the ban is appropriate for several reasons':

- The child with the allergy has the risk of severe, airway-reactive allergy to peanuts. In this specific case, this ban is proportional to this child's specific situation.
- We feel that a preschool child should not be charged with

maintaining and regulating their environment for such a serious issue, as a school-age child might be able to do. We feel it is age-appropriate for adults to take on this important task.

- Our biggest reason for a school-wide ban is the issue of cross-contamination. As we have shared space in the restrooms and at the playground, it poses a unique threat. If a child has oily peanut butter at mealtime, and then touches the restroom faucet handle or scooter handle, it has now contaminated the surface with the allergen. The likelihood is exponentially greater that this child can ingest the allergen.
- Parents can send pre-packaged nut butters for their child. You may send unopened, sealed packets of sun butter, cashew butter, almond butter, etc. Parents MAY NOT send a nut butter sandwich; only the packet. Our teachers would not be able to tell the difference between the safe or hazardous nut butters.
- We need parents to help us to our job. All food is brought from home and packed by parents. Our staff will be aware and monitor snack and lunch items, as they always have but the cooperation of our parents is essential to the success of this policy.
- We are a half-day program. As your children attend only a few hours per day, we feel that peanuts and peanut products can certainly be consumed after school hours, even on the way home from preschool, if you so choose.
- We know that this may be surprising — we know that some of your children enjoy peanuts and other peanut products as well. It may be a change for you as a parent when packing lunches (please see our FAQ page on our website for some excellent lunch and snack ideas!). Further, we know that several children who attend preschool have allergies to other foods as well. We have no plans to restrict any other foods, as it would not be proportional in those cases. They are not life-threatening and each can be managed through adult supervision’.



the bear that cares