

## VCA'S PEANUT/TREE NUT-FREE SCHOOL POLICY

Food allergies, unfortunately, are on the rise. Peanut and tree nut (pecans, walnuts, almonds, pine nuts, and therefore pesto, etc.) allergy is a serious condition that affects approximately three million Americans.

Peanut allergy is the most common cause of deaths from food allergy. Severe sufferers may experience potentially life-threatening anaphylactic shock in response to contact with or the ingestion of peanuts. Anaphylactic shock is an allergic reaction in which the release of histamine causes swelling, difficulty in breathing, heart failure, circulatory collapse, and sometimes death. The reactions can begin and proceed rapidly.

### Common Symptoms

Mild to moderate allergic reaction

- Tingling of the mouth
- Hives, welts or body redness
- Swelling of the face, lips, eyes
- Vomiting, abdominal pain

Severe allergic reaction- ANAPHYLAXIS

- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness in the throat
- Difficulty talking or hoarse voice
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children) CPR instruction site >> [The Red Cross](#)

Strict avoidance of peanut and peanut-ingredient (tree nuts as well) is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction. There is no cure for peanut allergy and no therapies that eliminate or reduce the severity of peanut allergy. Current treatments only address the symptoms of an allergic reaction once it has taken place.

However, because accidental exposure is a reality, children and caregivers need to be able to recognize symptoms of an anaphylaxis and be prepared to administer adrenaline according to the individual's Anaphylaxis Action Plan. Research shows that fatalities more often occur away from home and are associated with either not using or a delay in the use of adrenaline. (EpiPen)

In order to ensure that Vail Christian Academy provides a fun and safe environment for the increasing number of students who suffer from peanut/tree nut allergy, *we have become a peanut and tree nut-free school.*

Two very important factors were taken into consideration for making this decision: 1) Medical literature has documented that peanut/tree nut allergy poses a dangerous health risk; 2) A child could have a peanut/tree nut allergy but not be aware of it. He /she may not have been previously exposed to these products, or exhibited any prior signs or symptoms of an allergic reaction.

In view of the danger and risks associated with peanut allergy–VCA will adhere to the following:

#### Hygiene

- Clean/wash hands and mouth of your children prior to their entering school. For the child who suffers from nut allergy—touching or inhaling even the *slightest trace* of peanut residue may cause an allergic response.
- If you are volunteering, please wash your hands promptly upon arrival.
- All teachers must wash hands entering school as well.

Lunches (Please review and keep the attached page for your convenience when shopping for school foods.)

- Send snack and lunch items that contain no peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, or nut butter.

### Shared Items

- Please review package labels to ensure that shared items, such as snacks, do not contain peanuts or tree nuts; nor that they are manufactured in a facility or near equipment that processes peanuts or tree nuts.
- Please provide shared food items in their original, unopened packaging.
- Please be mindful that cross contamination can also occur from in-home utensils and surfaces,

### Birthdays/Special Celebrations

- Consider sending non-food birthday or celebratory treats, such as a new or used book, game or activity to be shared in class. You may then consider donating that item to the classroom or giving an equivocal monetary gift to be used for classroom enhancement. This gift or contribution to the classroom could be given in honor of or in your child's name.

Thank You for your cooperation

Sources: *National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Mayo Clinic.com. [peanutallergy.com](http://peanutallergy.com)*

## Allergy Awareness Form;

Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_

We the \_\_\_\_\_ family, have read the above information, and agree to adhere to VCA's peanut/tree nut-free school policy to the best of our ability!

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return the above by the first day of school.*

### Peanut and Tree Nut-Free Snacks

Yogurt – plain or mixed with fruit

Baked tortilla chips with salsa

Fruit & Vegetables with dip (Hummus or other)

Low-fat granola bars or granola (no nuts)

Unsweetened cereal

Graham or goldfish crackers

Cottage cheese

Popcorn (NO Crunch-N-Munch)

Fruit Roll-ups

Applesauce (Go-Squeeze is a good one)

Fresh fruit

Jell-O pudding bites

Saltine crackers

Cheez-Itz

Pudding Cups

Teddy Grahams, Annie's Bunnies (Grahams and Fruit Snacks)

Pretzels

Animal crackers (Barnum)

Bagel w/ cream cheese Cheese or cheese sticks

Yum Earth candies

Vermont Nut Free Chocolates

### Meat & Alternatives

Hard-boiled eggs

\*Soy butter with jelly or Sunflower seed butter (Sunbutter)

Cold meats

Pizza (**NO PESTO**)

Refried beans

Lentil soup

Hummus

Crackers

Macaroni & cheese, Pasta or rice

Soups with rice or pasta

Vegetable soup Salad

The following are companies who are fantastic at labeling if there's cross contamination;  
[Whole Foods 365 Brand](#), [Annie's Organic](#), [Simple Truth](#), [Hershey's](#), [Cascadian Farms](#)...to name a few... (They are not always safe, but they promise to always label!)

Please do NOT send any of the following to school:

- Peanut butter or any other nut butter including Nutella
- Crackers with peanut butter filling
- Any muesli bar, biscuit or other product that list nuts as an ingredient
- Trail mixes with nuts, granola bars with nuts, or dried fruit with nuts
- Cereal with nuts (EG: Honey Nut Cheerios)
- Nuts in salad
- Candy or cookies containing nuts
- Loose nuts of any kind (peanuts, almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, walnuts, mixed nuts, coconut, pecans, pistachios, etc.)
- Anything cooked in peanut oil that has been cold pressed, expelled or extruded
- All nut pastes (EG: Almond paste)
- All nut extracts (EG: Almond extract – used in making various cookies)

*\*Be sure to label that you are using Sunbutter or Soybutter, so there is no misunderstanding that your child has a nut product!*

Please make sure that you always check the labels on the food you are sending in to school. The FDA requires all manufacturers to list on their label if peanuts and/or tree nuts are in their product. If it says peanuts/tree nuts are contained in the food, consider it a banned item. **Remember - manufacturing processes change, so a food that was safe, may not continue to be.** It's still important to read the ingredient label each time you purchase a food.

Food labels that say: — “May contain or contain peanut or tree nuts” are NOT OK to bring to school to eat.

Examples: Quaker Granola Bars S'mores flavor: May Contain Traces of Peanuts.

Food labels that say: — “Processed in a facility that also processes peanuts & nuts” are OK to bring to school for *personal consumption*.

Food that contains:

“Tree nuts or peanuts in the ingredient list.” **NO**

Food that is:

“Made on equipment that processes nuts or peanuts” or

“May contain traces...” **NO**

Food that is: “Made in a facility that processes peanuts & nuts” **YES (Personal consumption only)**