



# Chagrin Falls Exempted Village Schools

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January 30, 2015

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) 2004 requires that products containing the eight most common allergens, including peanuts and tree nuts, be listed either on the ingredient list or "contains" list on the food label. There is nothing ambiguous or voluntary about this type of labeling. Due to this required labeling, food service department staff are certain we are getting all the information needed from the manufacturer for every product to make an informed decision whether or not to carry a product in our cafeterias.

Precautionary labeling (also termed advisory labeling or defensive labeling), such as claims that a food item "was processed in a facility that also processes nuts" or "may contain," is **strictly voluntary and not required by federal regulation**. A food item that does not contain a precautionary statement on its food label may or may not have been in contact with equipment that processes nuts as the manufacturer is not required by law to provide that information on the food label. Furthermore, it has been our experience that *our* food manufacturers are often hesitant to provide documentation that their facilities are 100% peanut and tree nut free, even if the food items they produce do not contain peanuts or tree nuts. While it would be optimal to use certified peanut and tree nut free facilities for all of the items we purchase, that is not a feasible option for us at this time. As a school district that participates in the *National School Lunch Program*, our purchasing flexibility is limited by several factors such as cost, distribution and the required usage of designated USDA food processors for the majority of our processed food products.

To make assumptions that a product is from a peanut and tree nut free facility without having legal documentation either on the food label or in another form from the manufacturer would be irresponsible. **Therefore, we cannot guarantee that the products we serve in our school cafeterias are manufactured in peanut and tree nut free facilities.** We do, however, make every effort to ensure that the products we offer our students do not contain peanuts or tree nuts listed either on the ingredient or "contains" lists on the food label. The elimination of peanut and tree nut-containing products is not a requirement by law, but is a voluntary decision by the Chagrin Falls School District to try to ensure the safety of those students with common food allergies as well as to make the food in the school cafeteria more accessible to them.

Parents of children with peanut and tree nut allergies must decide whether or not to allow their child to purchase food from the cafeteria. Our new menus that identify food allergens with the click of a mouse are a useful tool in making purchasing decisions for your child.

Located on our website is the form for a Food Allergy Exposure Control Plan should you need this resource. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marti', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Marti L. Jacobson, MS, RD, LD  
Food Service Supervisor  
Chagrin Falls Exempted Village School District  
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