

An Important Message Reminder from the Principal, Concerning Peanut Allergies

August, 2008

Dear Edna Maguire Families,

Millions of Americans are allergic to peanuts and tree nuts. Thousands of kids now have emergency doses of epinephrine in spring-located injectors called EpiPens, to be administered if they go into anaphylactic shock. Anaphylactic shock is a life-threatening allergic reaction characterized by a swelling of body tissues including the throat, difficulty in breathing, and a sudden fall in blood pressure. At Edna Maguire we have several students for whom we hold EpiPens. These allergies can be life threatening. The reactions can be caused by a single exposure to peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oil or peanut flour and many other nuts and nut based products.

I am writing this letter to ask the Edna Maguire community for your support in approaching this concern with a sense of collaboration and caring for the children for whom this allergy poses a serious risk. I will be spending time in each classroom discussing peanut allergies by reading the book, *The Peanut Pickle*, by Jessica Ureel. It is about a 6 year old boy who has an allergy to peanuts and how he lives with his allergy during school, at play dates, family events and the precautions he must take. The important part of meeting with our students is to develop a sense of compassion and determining what a good friend does to help and understand classmates who have this kind of allergy. Although I can't mandate a "peanut free" school, I want to encourage you to join us in developing and maintaining a school-wide awareness that has enabled us to work together as a community to minimize the risk to these children. We are taking specific precautions for these children within their classrooms, but there are some simple things we can all do:

- **Peanut Alert Classroom signs will be posted in and outside classrooms that have students who cannot be in contact with peanuts or peanut based products.**
- Please make contact with the teacher before bringing food, birthday treats, classroom snacks, etc... into the classroom.
- Teach children to wash their hands before and after eating breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Consider alternatives to student's lunches in classrooms where students have severe allergies to peanuts or peanut products.

Thank you for your compassion and support.

Sincerely,

Lisa Zimmer