

DOCUMENT 2.16: PARENTS' HOMEWORK AGREEMENT

This agreement is designed to enlist parents' assistance in overseeing the completion of students' homework assignments. Although no real sanctions are possible, the second paragraph makes a strong case for compliance.

Parent's Homework Agreement

I, _____, parent or guardian of _____, have reviewed the attached Homework Policy. With the clear understanding that my child will obtain maximum benefits only with my support and assistance in meeting homework responsibilities, I pledge to check daily assignments for completeness and assist my child to the best of my ability.

Furthermore, I pledge to establish timely contact with the classroom teacher should any homework problems become evident. I understand that failure to meet my responsibilities in this partnership will adversely affect the ability of the teacher and staff to help my child succeed academically.

Date _____ Signature _____

LETTER 2.17: POLICY ON NONDISCRIMINATION

This letter is in response to a parent's phone call suggesting that her son has been the target of discrimination by a basketball coach.

Dear Mrs. Clark:

I would like to respond more fully and specifically to the subject of your telephone call this morning. Yes, our Board of Education does have a policy on nondiscrimination, based on the requirements of federal and state legislation. It is as follows:

"It is the policy of the Hamilton Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, or social or economic status in its educational programs or activities as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and NJAC 6:4-1.1 et seq."

We make a genuine effort to treat everyone fairly, but our nondiscrimination policy does not, and cannot, guarantee that every student will always *be* treated fairly. There is no such guarantee in any of our lives. Whether

Coach Hogan should have given your son Jesse more playing time this season is not an easy question to answer. Coach Hogan points out that Jesse's performance, as measured by his statistics, was not as impressive as that of the two players you mention. I realize, however, that this could be because of his lack of playing time.

I know you have discussed this matter with Coach Hogan. I urge you to do so again. If you believe the issue is still unresolved after that talk, you may want to make an appointment with Mrs. Sallie Jones, our school's Affirmative Action Officer, to see if she can explain the situation more satisfactorily.

Thank you for taking an interest in the school, its programs, its policies, and, most of all, your son's well-being. Jesse is a fine basketball player and an excellent student. All of us at Hamilton High School wish him continued success on the court, in the classroom, and in life.

LETTER 2.18: POLICY ON FOOD ALLERGIES

This policy statement comes from a private preschool. Although its specific provisions are applicable mainly to preschool, the general problem of food allergies extends to all grade levels.

Dear Parents,

This letter explains our school's updated policy on food allergies. We urge you to read it carefully.

Policy on Food Allergies

1. Parents of children with food allergies need to provide alternate daily snacks for their children. These snacks will be kept on hand in the classroom. They will be labeled with the child's name and class, and will be used for that child exclusively.

2. Parents who contribute birthday snacks, holiday baked treats, or "goodie bags" must inform the teachers of the ingredients they used so that our staff can determine whether or not children with allergies can safely consume these foods.

3. Please keep in mind that the teaching modules "Yummy Yummy" and "Mango Tango Cafe" emphasize cooking and baking. Therefore, they may not be appropriate for children with various food allergies.

4. We will continue to update our Master List of Food Allergies in each room as needed. Please tell us in writing of any changes. As allergies can

develop at any time, we will inform you of any reactions to foods that we notice. Some children can have allergic reactions to the smells alone, without having ingested any food.

5. For children with food allergies who attend Lunch Brunch, we will continue close monitoring to be certain that foods are not casually shared. Please review this matter with your child as well.

LETTER 2.19: PEANUT ALLERGY AND FRUIT JUICE POLICY

This letter, also addressed to parents of preschoolers, deals with a specific food allergy that was mentioned but not emphasized in a previous policy statement. It also notes a change in policy on the serving of fruit juice.

Dear Parents,

As a result of recent scientific studies and on the advice of pediatricians, Rising Stars Preschool has adopted a “no peanut policy.” This means that no products containing peanuts will be allowed on the premises. This policy will be strictly enforced. It means that we will not be using peanuts in any recipe, snack, art activity, or cooking activity at school. It also means that all snacks and lunches your child may bring to school must *not* contain *any* such products.

According to a fact sheet from The Johns Hopkins Children's Center, “Allergists, pediatricians, and emergency room physicians are reporting more cases than ever, and the number of patients with peanut allergic reactions *doubled* from 1981 to 1991.” The Center warns that peanuts are believed to be one of the leading causes of food-allergic reactions, and one of the major causes of fatal and near fatal food-induced reactions. Unlike allergies to other foods, peanut allergy is generally a lifelong condition, and is one of the most violent food allergies, according to Dr. Sampson, a professor of Pediatrics at The Johns Hopkins Children's Center.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, in its May 2001 issue, recommended *limiting* children's consumption of fruit juice in order to avoid “diarrhea, cavities, malnourishment, and obesity.” Although 100% fruit juice is served at Rising Stars Preschool and has been considered nutritious (as opposed to fruit drinks which we never serve), we will be offering more bottled water as well as *diluting* the fruit juice a bit with water, as has been recommended.

We will continue to update you on any other health issues and related policies as they come up.

WRITE IT RIGHT!



Refer to Prior Communications

If you are answering a letter or a phone call, it is always a good idea to say so immediately: “Thank you for your letter [phone call] of January 14.” An opening like that informs the reader of your reason for writing and also creates a continuing record.

Usually, it pays to add something about the subject of the previous letter, phone call, or e-mail message: “Thank you for your phone call yesterday in which you inquired about the reasons for your son’s failing grades in English and American History.”

You may want to refresh your reader’s memory about a sequence of events: “We have corresponded in the past about your daughter’s unexcused absences from school.” That opening sets the stage for the specific content of this letter—notice of another unexcused absence.

If you refer to prior events in this way, your letters, when looked at in the future, will be self-explanatory. A person reviewing your files will be able to make sense of nearly every letter, without requiring a briefing about the events leading up to each one.