

Letter to the District from General Wolfe Elementary School

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to voice our concern about the negative impact that the new VSB food safety protocols are having on our ability to share food in our school. Many teachers at our school, and throughout the district, have been accustomed to safely sharing food as an effective way of supporting the curriculum in many areas, but the new protocols are so onerous that almost all food sharing at Wolfe has stopped. Most teachers and school staff do not have their food safe certificate and it is costly and time-consuming for staff to complete the required training on their own. Therefore, to comply with the new rules, most teachers are opting to simply omit all food sharing from their classroom lessons and school events. Below are just a few examples of the many activities, taken directly from the B.C. curriculum, that Wolfe teachers will not be doing with their students this year due to the new restrictions:

Social Studies K: traditions and celebrations (e.g., Christmas, other winter festivals around the world), special holidays (e.g. Lunar New Year, Diwali, First People's celebrations, birthdays, and associated **foods**, clothing, art).

*In previous years we have eaten samosas for Diwali, latkes for Hannukah, cupcakes for birthdays, pan du muerto for the Day of the Dead, snack mixes for "Hundreds Day", and made gingerbread houses with our big buddies for Christmas. We have had parents teach us how to make culturally significant dishes such as home-made pasta.

Applied Skills, Design and Technology 7: Food Studies

- basic food handling and simple preparation techniques and equipment
- factors in ingredient use, including balanced eating/nutrition, function, and dietary restrictions
- factors that influence food choices, including cost, availability, and family and cultural influences

Physical and Health Education 6: Explore and plan food choices to support personal health and well-being

*In previous years, the grade 6/7's grew food in our school garden and then cooked and ate the fruits and vegetables as part of a food studies unit.

Science K: Plants have observable features that may include roots, stems, leaves, flowers and seeds. Students are expected to make exploratory observations using their senses.

*In previous years, the K's have grown, observed and tasted the fruits/vegies grown in the various seasons. For example, we roasted pumpkin seeds and made pumpkin muffins after our field trip to the pumpkin patch in the fall and we grew vegetables and ate them in the spring.

Physical and Health Education 3: Explore and describe strategies for making **healthy eating** choices in a variety of settings

*In previous years, the grade 2/3's have done the "Spuds in Tubs" BC Agricultural foundation program. They learned about the nutrients in a potato as well as table manners.

None of these important, engaging activities are happening this year due to the new VSB food safety protocols. We think these examples represent a significant loss to the education of our students at Wolfe and we ask that you please reconsider your decision to implement these new protocols.

Sincerely,

General Wolfe Elementary School Staff