Dear [teacher’s name],

Thank you for taking the time to reply to my previous email.

I’m worried about my child being exposed to this activity because of the potential unintended negative consequences. [Child’s name] has started to express worry about eating certain foods that are part of our family’s regular diet. This is concerning for me as a parent trying to support my child to build a healthy relationship with food and their body.

Using labels like ‘green’ and ‘red’ foods, ‘healthy’ or ‘unhealthy’ foods, or ‘everyday’ and ‘sometimes’ foods can have unintended consequences, like believing that some foods are ‘good’ and some foods are ‘bad’.

When a child hears a food is ‘bad’ they can internalise that eating the food will make them ‘bad’ too. It’s also tricky for them to comprehend what it means if someone they love and trust (like a parent or grandparent) gives them a ‘bad’ food.

Guilt, shame and worry around eating is a precursor to the development of disordered eating. So not only do these messages not directly help children to make ‘healthy’ choices, they have the potential to cause significant harm.

I appreciate that you have my child’s best interests at heart, and so I ask that you reconsider this classroom activity. Instead perhaps you could look at activities discovering where food comes from, growing food, learning about different cuisines, grouping foods by colours or the letters they start with, considering the sensory characteristics of different foods (temperature, texture, colour, taste, smell), using food in storytelling or writing/drawing recipes for example. These are all ways to discuss food in a neutral way, which still support children to learn about eating a variety of foods.

I am happy to discuss this further with you by email or phone, or in person.

Thank you,

[Your name]