

R 5331 MANAGEMENT OF LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES IN SCHOOLS
K-5 (M)

A. Definitions

1. Anaphylaxis - A serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death.
2. Epinephrine (adrenaline) - A drug that can be successfully utilized to counteract anaphylaxis.
3. Food Allergy - A group of disorders characterized by immunologic responses to specific food proteins. In the United States, the most likely common allergens in adults and children are cow's milk, eggs, peanuts, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, and nuts.
4. Individualized Emergency Healthcare Plan (IEHP) - A personalized healthcare plan written by the certified school nurse that specifies the delivery of accommodations and services needed by a student in the event of an emergency.
5. Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHP) - A plan written by the certified school nurse that details accommodations and/or nursing services to be provided to a student because of the student's medical condition based on medical orders written by a healthcare provider in the student's medical home.
6. School-Sponsored Function - Any activity, event, or program occurring on or off school grounds, whether during or outside of regular school hours, that is organized and/or supported by the school.

B. Policy and Regulation Development

1. Policy and Regulation 5331 address different allergens, varying ages and maturity levels of students, and the physical properties and organizational structures of schools in this school district. The components below were critical in developing Policy and Regulation 5331.



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- a. The school district nursing staff, in consultation with the school physician:
 - (1) Assessed the overall health needs of the student population at risk for anaphylaxis, particularly students with food allergies; and
 - (2) Assessed current and relevant policies and/or protocols regarding the care of students with life-threatening allergies and identified areas in need of development or improvement.
 2. Regulation 5331 were developed using a multidisciplinary team that included various school district administrators, support staff members, and parents.
 3. The Administration and/or the school nurses will educate staff and the community regarding Policy and Regulation 5331; obtain feedback on the implementation and effectiveness of the Policy and Regulation; and annually review, evaluate, and update the Policy and Regulation, as needed or required by law.
- C. General Regulations
1. All students bring their own snacks from home. The school district will not supply snacks for students.
 2. Sharing of food is forbidden in all K-5 grade-levels. This is the case in all classes – not just classes with food-allergic children. As a result, all K-5 classrooms are considered Allergy Aware.
 3. Any food that is served as part of a classroom event or celebration must be consumed in the classroom. No food should leave the school to be consumed in unsupervised situations. In addition, distribution of “goodie bags” i.e., candy intended to leave the classroom or be consumed on holidays (Halloween, Winter Holiday, Valentine’s Day, etc.) is not permitted.



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4. Teachers and other school staff, including substitute teachers, will not give food as a reward for good behavior and/or or good work unless noted in a child's Individualized Education Plan.
 5. A notice reminding parents of this policy and the presence of a food-allergic child will be sent home by the school prior to a holiday celebration.
 6. Using food as a part of lessons, demonstrations or craft projects is prohibited. In the event of science experiments, notification will be sent home notifying parents of potential allergens. This rule will apply to all areas of school building use, including after school enrichment programs and by outside organizations.
 7. Accommodations will be made for children with special needs related to eating in classrooms.
- D. Prevention Measures
1. Planning Regulations
 - a. Prior to entry into a school (or for a student who is already in school, immediately after the diagnosis of a life-threatening allergic condition), the parent/guardian will meet with the school nurse assigned to the student's building to develop an "Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHCP).
 - b. All staff will receive annual training, in the fall of each school year, on recognizing and responding to food allergy and other types of medical emergencies within their school and whenever they are responsible for a group of students.
 2. Considerations for the Cafeteria

The Principal, in consultation with the school nurse, teaching staff members, food service staff members, and other appropriate staff members, will work to make the cafeteria environment as safe as possible for food-allergic students. This process includes making determinations about serving foods with known allergens and



identifying steps that can be taken to reduce the chance of accidental exposure. The steps include:

- a. School district cafeteria and playground staff will be informed of the presence of students with severe allergies. These staff will be instructed and trained in recognizing and responding to potential allergic reactions.
- b. The “no-sharing” rule will be enforced by cafeteria personnel.
- c. Eating spaces shall be cleaned in such a way as to maximize the removal of food, germs, and dirt.
- d. Allergen-safe tables) **or** an allergen-safe space at a table will be in place at all K-5 schools. With written consent, a parent may opt-out of having his/her child eat at the aforementioned table or space.
- e. Students *will be encouraged* to wash hands before and after eating.

3. Considerations for the Classroom

Provisions have been developed for the protection of food-allergic students in the classroom. The school nurse will work with the classroom teacher(s) so the teacher understands and is able to initiate the student’s IEHP, as necessary.

- a. A standard letter will be sent home to parents of children in which an anaphylactic student is enrolled. The letter will not mention the child by name but will outline the known allergen and the restricted food item that may not be consumed in the classroom.
- b. Teachers will monitor their students’ snacks – they will not read every ingredient listed.
- c. If a student inadvertently brings a restricted food to the classroom which has been designated as such, s/he will not be



allowed to eat the snack in the classroom. The building administration will determine an alternate location for the child to consume the snack or the child may eat the snack at lunch.

- d. Teachers of students with allergies will be notified at the start of the school year by the school nurse.
- e. Students with a food allergy will have a medical icon in PowerSchool for the purpose of notification.
- f. Teachers' substitute folders will denote students with a food allergy.
- g. An alert notifying substitutes that they are prohibited from bringing into or consuming food items in any classroom that they are covering will be in place.
- h. Parents or guardians will be notified prior to a classroom celebration that involve food for the purpose of informing them of food-allergic children.
- i. If an animal is present in the classroom, special attention must be paid to the ingredients in their food, as many animal feeds contain allergens.

4. Consideration for Classroom Celebrations

- a. To better align with state regulations regarding sugar management, food items – including “treats” of any kind – will not be permitted for birthday celebrations.
- b. Each K-5 building will hold four classroom parties/celebrations a year at the discretion of the building principal. For these celebrations, parents of food allergic children will be notified in advance. In addition, parents who may be providing a healthy snack will also be informed of the food allergic children, and their food allergens, in the class. At the building administration's' discretion, additional celebrations sponsored by the PTO will be considered. Those celebrations will conform to the regulations herein.



5. Field Trips and Other School Functions

N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.6 requires a nurse or delegate to be available during school and school-sponsored functions in the event of anaphylaxis. Students with food allergies should participate in all school activities and will not be excluded based on their condition. The appropriate school staff member(s) will:

- a. Communicate (with parent(s) or legal guardian(s) permission) relevant aspects of the IEHP to staff, as appropriate, for field trips, school-sponsored functions, and before- and after-school programs.
- b. Encourage long-term planning of field trips in order to ensure that food-allergic students receive needed services while away from school.
- c. Evaluate appropriateness of trips when considering the needs of students e.g., a trip to a dairy farm should not be scheduled for a class with a milk-allergic student.
- d. Encourage, but do not require, parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of food-allergic students to accompany their child on school trips.
- e. Implement the district's procedure for the emergency administration of medications.
- f. Implement the district's procedure for emergency staff communications on field trips.
- g. Inform parent(s) or legal guardian(s), when possible, of school events at which food will be served or used.



6. Bus Transportation

The district administrative staff and transportation personnel will consider the needs of students with life-threatening allergies while being transported to and from school and to school-sponsored activities. The appropriate school staff member(s) will:

- a. Advise bus drivers of the students that have food allergies, symptoms associated with food-allergic reactions, and how to respond appropriately.
- b. Assess the emergency communications systems on buses.
- c. Consider assigned bus seating i.e., students with food allergies can sit at the front of the bus or can be paired with a “bus buddy.”
- d. Eating on the bus is prohibited.

7. Interfacing with the Larger Community

- a. All outside groups that use the Millburn School District buildings will be responsible to adhere to school policies regarding food. All written agreements for use of school buildings will require adherence to these policies. (This would, for example, include forbidding the use of peanut butter in projects.)
- b. No student should be excluded from Board of Education sponsored after-school activities due to the risk of allergen exposure. However, students and their parents will be informed in advance, when electing to participate in after-school activities, that a nurse is not on duty.
- c. Programs that are run by the PTO, or other outside groups, will include written notification to parents that nurses are not on duty.



8. Preparing for an Emergency

The Principal and school nurse will establish emergency protocols and procedures in advance of an emergency. These protocols and procedures will:

- a. Provide training for school personnel about life-threatening allergic conditions.
- b. Create a list of volunteer delegates trained by the nurse in the administration of epinephrine, and disseminate the list appropriately.
- c. Ensure that epinephrine is quickly and readily accessible in the event of an emergency. If appropriate, maintain a backup supply of the medication.
- d. Consider conducting anaphylaxis drills as part of the district or school-wide emergency response plan.
- e. Ensure access to epinephrine and allergy-free foods when developing plans for fire drills, lockdowns, etc.
- f. Ensure that reliable communication devices are available in the event of an emergency.
- g. Adhere to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Universal Precautions Guidelines for disposal of epinephrine auto-injectors after use.

9. Sensitivity and Bullying

A food-allergic student may become victim to threats of bullying related to his/her condition. N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.9 requires each Board of Education to develop, adopt, and implement a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying on school grounds, including on a school bus or at a school-sponsored function, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15. The appropriate school staff member(s) will:



- a. Remind students and staff that bullying or teasing food-allergic students will not be tolerated and violators should be disciplined appropriately.
- b. Offer professional development for faculty and staff regarding confidentiality to prevent open discussion about the health of specific students.
- c. Discourage needless labeling of food-allergic students in front of others. A food-allergic student should not be referred to as “the peanut kid,” “the bee kid” or any other name related to the student’s condition.

D. Roles and Responsibilities for Managing Food Allergies

The risk of accidental exposure to foods can be reduced in the school setting if schools, students, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and physicians work together to minimize risks of exposure to allergens and provide a safe educational environment for food-allergic students.

1. Family’s Role

- a. Notify the school of the student’s allergies.
- b. Work with the school team to develop a plan that accommodates the student’s needs throughout the school, including the classroom, the cafeteria, after-care programs, during school-sponsored activities, and on the school bus, as well as an IEHP.
- c. Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a physician. Include a photo of the child on written form.
- d. Provide properly labeled medications and promptly replace medications after use or upon expiration.



- e. Educate the child in the self-management of their food allergy including: safe and unsafe foods; strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods; symptoms of allergic reactions; how and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy-related problem; and how to read food labels (age appropriate).
 - f. Review policies and procedures with the school staff, the child's physician, and the child (if age appropriate) after a reaction has occurred.
 - g. Provide current emergency contact information and update regularly.
2. School's Role
- a. Review the health records submitted by parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and physicians.
 - b. Identify a core team including the school nurse, teacher, Principal, and school foodservice and nutrition manager/director to work with parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and the student (age appropriate) to establish an IEHP. Changes to the IEHP that promote food allergy management should be made with core team participation.
 - c. Assure that all staff who interact with the student on a regular basis understand food allergies, can recognize symptoms, know what to do in an emergency, and work with other school staff to eliminate the use of food allergens in the allergic student's meals, educational tools, arts and crafts projects, or incentives.
 - d. Coordinate with the school nurse to ensure medications are appropriately stored and ensure an emergency kit is available that contains a physician's standing order for epinephrine. Epinephrine should be kept in a secure but unlocked location that is easily accessible to delegated school personnel.



- e. Students who are permitted to self-administer should be permitted to carry their own epinephrine in accordance with State regulations and district policy.
 - f. Designate school personnel who volunteer to administer epinephrine in an emergency.
 - g. Be prepared to handle a reaction and ensure there is a staff member available who is properly trained to administer medications during the school day, regardless of time or location.
 - h. Review policies and prevention plans with the core team members, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), student (age appropriate), and physician after a reaction has occurred.
 - i. Work with the transportation administrator to insure that school bus drivers receive training that includes symptom awareness and what to do if a reaction occurs and assess the means by which a bus driver can communicate during an emergency, including proper devices and equipment.
 - j. Discuss field trips with the family of the food-allergic child to decide appropriate strategies for managing the food allergy.
 - k. Follow Federal and/or State laws and regulations regarding sharing medical information about the student.
 - l. Take threats or harassment against an allergic child seriously.
3. Student's Role
- a. Students should not trade food with others.
 - b. Students should not eat anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergens.



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- c. Students should be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions based on their developmental level.
- d. Students should notify an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic.

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