

Food Allergy Guidelines

The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk of exposure to potentially life-threatening food allergens for our growing number of students with severe allergies. It is the district's goal to provide a school setting that minimizes the risk of accidental exposure while maintaining a safe, positive educational environment for all students.

Impact on the School

Every school should expect at some point to have students with food allergies. Schools must be prepared to deal with food allergies and the potential for anaphylaxis.

The student with an undiagnosed food allergy may experience a first allergy reaction while at school.

When a physician assesses that a child's food allergy will result in anaphylaxis, the child's condition meets the definition of "disability" and is covered under the Federal Americans with Disability Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and may be covered under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) if the allergy management affects the student's ability to make educational progress.

Adequate plans and staff, who are knowledgeable regarding preventive measures and are well prepared to handle severe allergic reactions, can save the life of a child.

Family Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to:

1. Notify the school of a child's allergies and provide updates as necessary.
2. Help establish a core team of, but not limited to, the child's physician, school principal, school nurse, teacher, guidance counselor, and food service manager to develop and implement a plan that addresses the child's needs, including the school transportation, classroom, cafeteria, assemblies, etc. A detailed food allergy action plan should also be included.
3. Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and prescribed medications, using the food allergy action plan as a guide. A photo of the child must also be included.
4. Provide the child with a medic-alert bracelet identifying the life-threatening allergy. The bracelet should be worn at all times while at school or school-sponsored events.
5. Replace expired and/or used medications as per the food allergy action plan.
6. Educate the child in the self-management of the food allergy, including: safe and unsafe foods, strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods, symptoms of allergic reactions, how to communicate an allergy-related problem, how to read food labels (age appropriate). The child should not accept food from other students.
7. Review guidelines/procedures with the core team members as soon as possible following a reaction.

Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student to:

1. Take a proactive role in the care and management of his/her food allergies (age appropriate).
2. Not accept food items from or trade food items with other students.
3. Avoid food items with unknown ingredients or known allergens.
4. Immediately notify any teacher, administrator, assistant, or school nurse of possible exposure to food allergen.
5. Wear a medic-alert bracelet at all times.

School Responsibility

It is the responsibility of school personnel to:

1. Keep informed of and follow all applicable federal laws, including ADA, IDEA, Section 504, and FERPA, as well as all state laws and district policies/guidelines that may apply.
2. Include food-allergic students in school activities. Students shall not be excluded from school activities solely based on their food allergies unless those activities pose a legitimate threat to the health of the students.
3. Inform and update all families registered in the district about known allergens in order to minimize the risk of life-threatening exposure. Extracurricular groups using school facilities will also be notified, and shall be excluded from using any area designed as “allergen-free.”
4. Provide all families with a copy of food allergy guidelines as well as a listing of resources listing regarding food allergies, such as Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN – See attached).
5. Identify a core team of, but not limited to, the child’s physician, school principal, school nurse, teacher, guidance counselor, and child nutrition manager to work with the parents and student (age appropriate) to establish a food allergy action plan specific to that child. Changes will be made as necessary with team participation.
6. Consult with local emergency management personnel to establish and/or update emergency protocols and drill procedures as needed.
7. Educate staff who interact with students with food allergies, on a regular basis so they understand food allergy, can recognize symptoms, can take emergency action, and will work with other school staff to eliminate the use of food allergens in the lunch program, educational tools, arts and crafts projects, or incentives.
8. Identify school personnel who are properly trained to administer medications in accordance with state nursing and Good Samaritan laws governing the administration of emergency medications.

9. Coordinate with the school nurse to assure that medications are stored appropriately (easily accessible, secure location such as the main office) and that an emergency kit is readily available and contains a physician's standing order for epinephrine.
10. Practice the food allergy action plan as a drill to assure the efficiency/effectiveness of the plan. Emergency protocols shall be updated as needed with team participation.
11. Review the food allergy action plan with core team members and physician as soon as possible following a reaction.
12. Work with bus companies to determine appropriate management of transportation needs.
13. Discuss planned field trips as a team to decide appropriate strategies for managing the child's food allergy. Encourage parents of the child to participate as chaperones.
14. Take seriously threats or harassment against an allergic child.

Everyone's Responsibility:

1. Read information made available by the school regarding food allergies. Any questions regarding the food allergy guidelines should be directed to the school principal or school nurse.
2. Understand the seriousness of food allergies and consider how food choices may impact the lives of severely allergic students.
3. Promote understanding, acceptance, and compassion.