

Food Allergy Management Plan

The following procedures implement Board Policy 7:285, *Food Allergy Management Program*, which is based upon the joint Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) publication, *Guidelines for Managing Life-Threatening Food Allergies in Schools*.

Identifying Students with Food Allergies:

Parents/Guardians of students should notify the District of food allergies during the initial or annual registration process, or as needed. Parents/Guardians who indicate a severe food allergy will be requested to complete an Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan for their child.

Once completed, the Food Allergy Action Plan will be implemented and distributed to the appropriate school personnel, including but not limited to: building administrators, the student's teacher(s), specialists/coaches, health professionals, school office staff, school counsels, social workers, food service directors and staff, custodial staff, lunch/recess supervisors, and/or transportation staff.

If the student's parent/guardian refuses to cooperate with the District in the development of an appropriate Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan, the District may develop and implement a simple Emergency Action Plan, stating that 911 will be called immediately upon recognition of any symptoms. The District will send written notification via certified mail of the Emergency Action Plan to the parent/guardian.

Preventing Exposure to Known Allergens

The level of sensitivity and the types and severity of reactions vary considerably among individuals with food allergies. Some individuals may react to just touching or inhaling the allergen, while for others consumption of a miniscule amount of an allergenic food can cause death.

- When preparing and serving food, District staff will ensure that serving utensils are not exposed to allergens and then used for another food.
- Food production surface areas must be cleaned before, during, and after food preparation. For preparation areas, the work surface and all utensils and pots and pans will be washed with hot soapy water. Work surface areas, counters, and cutting surfaces will be cleaned thoroughly between uses.
- In all lunchroom areas, peanut or other allergen tables (or areas of tables) will be provided and clearly identified. The peanut and allergen free tables will be cleansed with District-approved cleaning agents solely for the purpose of cleaning the allergen-free tables. Staff and volunteers on lunch duty shall monitor the students' compliance with the food allergy protocol. They should also be aware of any bullying or teasing behavior toward a food allergic student and report any incidents to the administration.
- The school cafeterias have the responsibility to provide a safe, non-allergic meal to the student if it is determined that the condition is disabling. To do so, the school food service staff will make sure that all food items offered to the allergic student meet prescribed guidelines and are free of foods which are suspected of causing the allergic reaction. This

means that the food labels or specifications will need to be checked to ensure that they do not contain traces of such substances. In some cases, the labels will provide enough information to make a reasonable judgment possible. If they do not provide enough information, it is the responsibility of the school food service personnel to obtain the necessary information to ensure that no allergic substances are present in the foods served.

- Eating will not be allowed on routine school bus trips. Routine school bus trips are regularly scheduled routes to and from school. Exceptions will be provided as needed (i.e., students with diabetes who may need a snack to treat a hypoglycemic episode or for circumstances where students are traveling for long periods of time). Parents are strongly encouraged to inform the bus and any substitute driver when possible about their child's food allergy.
- The student's EpiPen and the Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan will be sent on all field trips. The nurse will review with the teacher the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and administration of an EpiPen prior to the trip. Planning for the field trip will include designation of persons carrying an EpiPen. The teacher will carry a cell phone (or other means of communication) and will be instructed to follow the Plan and to call 911 in the event of a suspected allergic reaction. Plans for lunch and snack will be discussed prior to the field trip. If eating takes place outside of school, the same precautions in place at school will be followed on the field trip. Lunches of children with food allergies should be stored separately to minimize cross-contamination.

All students will be encouraged to wash their hands before and after eating and throughout the school day.

Responding to Allergic Reactions with Prompt Recognition of Symptoms and Treatment

i. Allergic Reaction Characteristics

Allergic reactions to foods vary and can range from mild to severe, life-threatening reactions. Bee/insect stings, as well as medications and latex, also have the potential of causing life-threatening reactions.

During an allergic reaction to a specific food, the immune system recognizes a specific food protein as a target. This initiates a sequence of events in the cells of the immune system resulting in the release of chemical mediators, such as histamine. Ingestion of the food allergen is the principal route of exposure leading to allergic reaction. The symptoms of a food-allergic reaction are specific to each individual. Even a trace (very small) amount of food can, in some instances, quickly lead to fatal reactions. Research indicates that exposure to food allergens by touch or inhalation is unlikely to cause a life-threatening reaction. However, if children touch the allergen and then place their fingers in or near their nose or mouth, the allergen could become ingested and could cause a life threatening reaction.

Allergies can affect almost any part of the body and cause various symptoms. Anaphylaxis involves the most dangerous symptoms including but not limited to: breathing difficulties, a drop in blood pressure, or shock, which are potentially fatal. Common signs and symptoms of allergic/anaphylactic reactions may include:

- Hives
- Itching (any part of the body)
- Runny nose
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramps
- Change of voice/hoarseness
- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Throat tightness or closing
- Swelling (of any body parts)
- Red, watery eyes
- Difficulty swallowing
- Difficulty breathing
- Sense of doom

When the symptoms are rapid in onset and severe, the medical diagnosis is anaphylaxis. With anaphylaxis there is always the risk of death. Death could be immediate or may happen two to four hours later due to a late phase reaction. The most dangerous symptoms include breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure leading to shock. It is imperative that following the administration of epinephrine, the student be transported by emergency medical services (EMS) to the nearest hospital emergency department even if symptoms have been resolved. A single dose from an epinephrine auto-injector may provide a 10-15 minute (or less) window of relief. A second dose of epinephrine may be required if symptoms do not lessen or if medical help does not arrive quickly.

ii. **Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan**

The symptoms of a food-allergic reaction are specific to each individual. It is therefore imperative that District personnel follow the student's Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan. When allergic symptoms are suspected in a student, the following procedures will occur:

- The Food Allergy Action Plan will be implemented, and the school nurse will be notified as soon as possible. If no plan is on file, the District will immediately call 911.
- The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified as soon as practicable.
- The student will remain under adult supervision.
- If warranted, 911 will be called as soon as possible.
- If an emergency auto injector is administered, emergency responders will be directed to transport the student to the nearest hospital.
- Documentation of an anaphylaxis event and/or epinephrine administration will be completed in conjunction with the appropriate district incident report.

Education and Training

In accordance with Section 10-22.39(e) of the *Illinois School Code*, an in-service training program will be conducted for school personnel either by the school nurse or another person with expertise in anaphylactic reactions and management.

Appropriate food allergy training for faculty and staff will include, but not be limited to:

- The common signs and symptoms of allergic/anaphylactic reactions, which may include: difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing, a drop in blood pressure, hives, itching, runny

nose, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, hoarse voice, coughing, wheezing, tightness or closing of the throat, swelling, red/watery eyes, and/or a sense of doom;

- Identification of high-risk food allergy areas;
- Procedures to prevent exposure to food allergens;
- Emergency response procedures;
- The administration of an emergency auto-injector or other medications, such as antihistamines; and
- Bullying and sensitivity issues that students with allergies may face in the school setting.