

## LAWRENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### ALLERGY AWARENESS GUIDELINES

Every school district 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.

**GOAL** – To educate staff, students and parents regarding the awareness required to provide an allergy-aware safe environment for all students.

**STAFF:** All staff to be trained at faculty meetings and staff development day workshops. Training is to include the BOCES training module and speakers from Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network, Winthrop Hospital, etc. and the showing of the video It Only Takes One Bite from the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network. Special emphasis should be directed to food service preparation and busing.

**PARENTS:** Using the PTA meetings as a forum, the same training approach used for staff can be used for parents. Letters will be sent to those parents who have children with allergies requesting detailed information. Letters should be sent to all parents of students without allergies (see sample attached). Letters should give an overall description of allergy awareness, a listing of foods not to be sent to school and how to plan for special occasions (birthdays, etc).

**STUDENTS:** Begin awareness training in Pre-K and K by using DVD of “Alexander the Elephant” and age-appropriate books. Some examples are:

The Peanut Butter Jam – Elizabeth Sussman Nassau

No Nuts for Me – Aaron Zevy

Allie the Allergic Elephant – Nicole Smith

Alexander the Elephant Who Couldn’t Eat Peanuts – Anne Munoz-Furlong (series of books)

Alexander Leans His Lesson – Ann Munoz-Furlang

No Lobster, Please! – Robyn Rogers

In the higher elementary grades, the “Binky Goes Nuts” video would be used along with the inclusion of allergy awareness introduced in the science curriculum. Age appropriate books such as Andrew and Maya Learn About Food Allergies – Scott Sicherer, RN can be part of the curriculum.

Secondary Grades – Include allergy awareness in the health curriculum each year.

The following guidelines should address the measure to reduce exposure to allergens and the emergency procedures to treat allergic reactions.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT  
WITH FOOD ALLERGIES/ANAPHYLAXIS**

*District Goal: For Students to become more independent in managing their food allergies by:*

1. Taking as much responsibility as possible for avoiding allergens
  - Age appropriate – have students read food ingredient labels
2. Developing a relationship with the school nurse/and or another trusted adult in the school to assist in identifying issues related to the management of the allergy in school
3. Not trading or share foods
4. Washing hands before and after eating
5. Learning to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction
6. Promptly inform an adult as soon as accidental exposure occurs or symptoms appear

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS  
OF A STUDENT WITH FOOD ALLERGIES**

1. Inform the school nurse of your child's allergies prior to the opening of school, at registration of a new student or as soon as possible after a diagnosis
2. Provide the school with a way to reach you in the event of an allergic reaction
3. Provide a list of foods and ingredients to avoid
4. Provide the school nurse with medication orders from the licensed provider before the first day of school, or as soon as diagnosis is made
5. It is highly recommended that the parent/guardian provide a medical alert bracelet for the student.
6. Participate in developing an Individual Health Care Plan and ***Emergency Allergy Action Plan*** with the school nurse and the student's physician
7. Provide the school nurse with all updates on your child's allergy

8. Provide the school nurse with up-to-date auto-injectors as ordered by the student's physician
9. Provide the school nurse with the licensed provider's statement if student no longer has allergies
10. Participate in staff meetings with staff members who will be in contact with the child to:
  - Discuss the implementation of IHCP
  - Establish prevention plan
  - Periodically review prevention and emergency action plans with the team
  - Provide a bag of "safe snacks" in your child's classroom if age appropriate
  - Be willing to go on your child's field trips if possible and if requested
11. Periodically teach your child to:
  - Recognize the first symptoms of an allergic/anaphylactic reaction
  - Know where the epinephrine auto-injector is kept and who has access to the epinephrine
  - Communicate clearly as soon as s/he feels a reaction starting
  - Carry his/her own epinephrine auto-injector when age appropriate
  - Not share snacks, lunches or drinks
  - Understand the importance of hand-washing before and after eating
  - Report allergy-related teasing, bullying or threats to an adult authority
  - Take as much responsibility as possible for his/her own safety

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Include in the school's emergency response plan a written plan outlining emergency procedures for managing a life-threatening allergic reaction. Plan should meet the special needs of individual students. (see attached plan) Building level safety team should review each plan.

Support faculty staff and parents in implementing all aspects of the Allergy Awareness Guidelines

Provide training and education for faculty and staff regarding:

- Allergies in general
- Risk reduction procedures
- Emergency protocol and procedures
- How to administer an epinephrine auto-injector in an emergency

Include allergy awareness procedures in all food service contracts as required

Provide emergency communication devices for all school activities, including transportation that involve a student with life-threatening allergies

Inform parent/guardian if any student experiences an allergic reaction for the first time at school

Make sure a contingency plan is in place in the event a substitute teacher or nurse are required to be assigned to a school or classroom with an allergic student

Have a plan in place when the school nurse is unavailable

Ensure that the student is placed in a classroom where the teacher is trained to administer an Epi-pen, if needed

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL NURSE

Prior to entry into school or for a student who is already in school, immediately after the diagnosis of a life-threatening allergic condition, meet with the student's parent/guardian and develop an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) for the student.

Assure that the Allergy Action Plan (AAP) includes the student's name, photo, allergens, symptoms of allergic reactions, risk reduction procedures, emergency procedures and required signatures.

Arrange and convene a team meeting, preferably before the opening of school, to develop the plan with all staff who come in contact with the student with allergies, including principal, school physician, teachers, specialists, food service personnel, aides, physical education teacher, custodian, bus driver, local EMS, etc.

Familiarize teachers with the IHCPs and AAPs of their students by the opening of school, or as soon as the plans are written. Other staff members who have contact with students with life-threatening allergies should be familiar with their IHCPs and Allergy Action Plans on a need-to-know basis.

After the team meeting remind the parent to review prevention plans, symptoms and emergency procedures with their child.

Provide information about students with life-threatening allergies and their photos, if consent is given by parent, to all staff, including bus drivers, on a need-to-know basis as assessed and decided by the school nurse. **Parents to be informed of this policy and a sign off obtained.**

Conduct inservice training and education for appropriate staff regarding student's life-threatening allergens, symptoms, risk reduction procedures, emergency procedures and how to administer an epinephrine auto-injector.

Implement a periodic anaphylaxis drill similar to a fire drill as part of the periodic refresher course.

Educate new personnel as necessary.

Introduce yourself to the student and show him/her how to get to the nurse's office.

Post school district's emergency protocol and have available on all IHCPs and AAPs in the nurse's office. Post location of epinephrine auto-injector.

Make sure there is a contingency plan in place in the case of a substitute nurse.

Periodically check medications for expiration dates and arrange for them to be current.

Arrange periodic follow-up on semi-annual basis, or as often as necessary to review effectiveness of IHCP.

Meet with parents on an as-needed basis to discuss issues relating to plan implementation.

Communicate with local EMS about location of student and type of allergy. Assure the local EMS carry epinephrine and have permission to use it.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLASSROOM TEACHER/SPECIALIST

Receive the AAP (Allergy Action Plan) of any student(s) in your classroom with life-threatening allergies.

Request that the classroom has a functioning intercom or other communication device for communication with the school nurse.

Participate in a team meeting, prior to the opening of school, for the student with life-threatening allergies and training regarding:

1. Allergens that cause life-threatening allergies – such as foods, insect stings, medications, latex.
2. Steps to take to prevent life-threatening reactions and accidental exposures to allergens.
3. How to recognize symptoms of the student's life-threatening allergic reaction.
4. Steps to manage an emergency.
5. How to administer an epinephrine auto-injector.

Keep accessible the student's AAP with photo in classroom or keep with lesson plan.

Be sure volunteers, student teachers, aides, specialists and substitute teachers are informed of the student's food allergies and necessary safeguards.

Leave information in an organized, predominant and accessible format for substitute teachers.

Educate classmates to avoid endangering, isolating, stigmatizing or harassing student with food allergies. Be aware of how the student with food allergies is being treated; enforce school rules about bullying and threats.

Work with the school nurse to inform other parents about the presence and needs of a child with life-threatening allergies in the classroom. Enlist their help in keeping certain foods out of the classroom.

Inform parents of any school events where food will be served and make every effort to insure that only safe foods are presented.

Participation with the planning for student's re-entry to school after an anaphylactic reaction.

Never question or hesitate to act if a student reports signs of an allergic reaction.

### SNACKS/LUNCHTIME

If staff is in doubt of safety of food regarding the student with allergies, the item should be brought to the school nurse for assessment.

In the classroom, establish procedures to ensure that the student with life-threatening food allergies eats only what she/he brings from home.

Prohibit student from sharing or trading snacks.

Have parents/guardians to send a box of "safe" snacks and a list of safe foods for their child.

Have parents/guardians provide a non-perishable safe lunch in the event their child forgets their lunch.

Provide a safe area for the student to eat lunch.

Avoid cross-contamination of foods by wiping down eating surfaces with soap and water before and after eating. Using paper towels, tables should also be washed with soap and water in the morning if an after-school event has been held in the classroom the day before.

Reinforce hand-washing before and after eating for all students.

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Avoid use of foods for classroom activities.

Welcome parental involvement in organizing class parties and special events. Consider non-food treats

Use stickers, pencils or other non-food as rewards instead of food

### FIELD TRIPS

Teachers should collaborate with the school nurse, prior to planning a field trip to:

Ensure epinephrine auto-injectors and instructions are taken on field trip – nurse should review use of auto-injector, anaphylaxis symptoms and 911 procedures

Ensure that functioning two-way radio, cell phone or other communication device is taken on field trip

Invite parents of a student at risk for anaphylaxis to accompany their child on school trips, in addition to the chaperone. However, the student's safety or attendance must not be conditioned on the parent's presence

One to two people on the field trip must be trained in recognizing symptoms of life-threatening allergic reactions, trained to use an epinephrine auto-injector and trained in emergency procedures

While the best practice for hand washing is soap/water and friction, consider ways to wash hands before and after eating – provide hand wipes and/or sanitizers

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FOOD SERVICE CONTRACTED VENDOR

Read all food labels and recheck routinely for potential food allergens

Train all food service staff and their substitutes to read product food labels and recognize food allergens

Maintain contact information for manufacturers of food products

Review and follow sound food handling practices to avoid cross contamination with potential food allergens

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CUSTODIAL STAFF

Strictly follow cleaning and sanitation protocol to avoid cross-contamination

Create specific areas that will be allergen safe

Train all custodial staff to insure the thorough cleaning of all tables, chairs, benches and floors after each meal

Provide advance copies of the menu to parents/guardian and notification if menu is changed

REPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL BUS COMPANY

Provide training for all school bus drivers on managing life-threatening allergies

Know local Emergency Medical Services procedures

Maintain policy of no food eating allowed on school buses



## EMERGENCY PLAN

**Should a child with life threatening allergies exhibit any of the symptoms indicated in the Individual Health Plan, the school nurse should be contact immediately.**

Every school shall include in its emergency response plan a written plan outlining emergency procedures for managing life threatening allergic reactions. This plan identifies personnel who will:

| ACTION  | RESPONDER                                |
|---|--|
| • Give Emergency Medication   | nurse                                    |
| ▪ Remain with the student   | first contact person                     |
| ▪ Notify the school nurse   | first contact person                     |
| ▪ Assess the emergency at hand  | As directed by the Nurse                 |
| ▪ Notify the emergency medical services                                 | first contact person                     |
| ▪ Activate the emergency response team (building specific, system-wide) | Principal (Incident Commander)           |
| ▪ Refer to the student's Allergy Action Plan                            | Nurse                                    |
| ▪ Administer the epinephrine  | Nurse                                    |
| ▪ Notify the parent/guardian  | Principal                                |
| ▪ Notify student's primary care provider/ and/or allergy specialist     | Nurse                                    |
| ▪ Attend to student's classmates  | Teacher (if applicable)                  |
| ▪ Manage crowd control  | Teacher aide/monitor                     |
| ▪ Meet emergency medical responders at school entrance                  | Secretary                                |
| • Direct emergency medical responders to site                           | Secretary                                |
| ▪ Accompany student to emergency Care facility                          | Nurse or parent                          |
| ▪ Re-evaluate student's re-entry into school                            | Nurse, social worker and/or psychologist |

Practice drills should be conducted periodically as part of the district's emergency response plan to include allergic reactions.

### RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER A REACTION

Students who have experienced an allergic reaction at school need special consideration upon their return to school. The approach taken by the school is dependent upon the severity of the reaction, the student's age and whether their classmates witnessed it. A mild reaction may need little or no intervention other than speaking with the student and parents and re-examining the IHCP.

Post incident reviewed to be done by the building level response team i.e. nurse, social worker, principal, psychologist, teacher.

Moderate to Severe Reaction:

Principal to:

- Obtain as much accurate information as possible about the allergic reaction
- Identify those who were involved in the medical intervention and those who witnessed the event to discuss what was seen and dispel any rumors
- Provide factual information. When dispensing information, a letter can be sent to parents reassuring them that a specific allergic reaction incident occurred and that the incident has been successfully addressed by the building administration.
  
- If an allergic reaction is thought to be from a food provided by the school food service, request assistance of the food service vendor to ascertain what potential food item was served/consumed. Review food labels from food service director and staff to insure removal of the product from distribution.
  
- Review the EAAP described in the IHCP, or if a student does not have an IHCP then consider initiating one.
- Amend the student's EAAP and/or the emergency response plan to address any changes that need to be made.
- Review what changes need to be made to prevent another reaction; do not assign blame.

Dear Substitute Teacher,

The students listed below in this class have severe life-threatening allergies.

Please maintain the allergy avoidance strategies that we have developed to protect these students.

Should a student ingest, touch or inhale the substance to which they are allergic (the allergen), a severe reaction (anaphylaxis) may follow requiring the administration of epinephrine (Epi-pen). **CONTACT THE NURSE AT X\_\_\_\_\_ IMMEDIATELY.**

The Allergy Action Plan which states who has been trained to administer epinephrine is located \_\_\_\_\_.

Epinephrine is a life-preserving medication and should be given in the first minutes of a reaction.

Student Name

Allergies

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Please treat this information confidentially to protect the privacy of the students. Your cooperation is essential to ensure their safety. Should you have any questions, please contact the school nurse at \_\_\_\_\_ or the Principal at \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Classroom Teacher

LETTER TO PARENTS FROM BUILDING PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents,

Food allergies are a growing concern in schools across America. Millions of children must watch every bite they eat, or risk suffering a severe or even life-threatening reaction. In fact, food allergies claim over 200 lives and are responsible for over 30,000 emergency room visits each year. A major health issue such as this one needs to be taken very seriously, and it has always been the policy of this school to make the safety and well being of our students a top priority.

This letter is to inform you that a student in your child’s classroom has a severe allergy. Strict avoidance of certain products is the only way to prevent a life threatening allergic reaction. We are asking your assistance in providing the student with a safe learning environment.

Please do not send any \_\_\_\_\_ or food containing \_\_\_\_\_ to be eaten as lunch or snacks. We will not be doing any classroom projects that involve this product such as bird feeders or art projects. Please do not send any of these projects into the classroom with your child.

Birthday parties are a special time for children, but can be a difficult time for the food-allergic child. Please send only pre-packaged foods after carefully reading the labels to determine if any allergens are contained or if the item was produced in a facility produces products that contain the allergen (to avoid cross contamination).

We will keep the food at holiday parties under the same guidelines as with birthday parties. Please do not enclose candy or other treats with holiday cards.

We may request any student who may have the allergen or a product containing the allergen prior to coming to school to clean their hands upon arrival in the classroom.

We appreciate your support of these procedures. Please complete and return this form so that we are certain that every family has received this information. If you have any questions please contact me at 295-\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

I have read and understand the allergy awareness district procedures. I agree to do my part in keeping the classroom allergen free.

Child’s name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_