

# District 39 Resource Guide For Supporting Children with Life-Threatening Allergies

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**The purpose of this manual is as to provide a guideline for supporting children with life-threatening allergies in school. This resource is to assist teams in developing individual plans for children.**

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# CONTENTS

|  | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>General Overview of Allergies.....</b>                                      | <b>3</b>    |
| <b>Food Allergy Facts.....</b>   | <b>3</b>    |
| <b>Anaphylaxis.....</b>  | <b>4</b>    |
| <b>Individual Health Care Plan.....</b>  | <b>4</b>    |
| <b>Importance of Prevention.....</b>   | <b>5</b>    |
| <b>Food in the Classroom .....</b>   | <b>5</b>    |
| <b>General Guidelines.....</b>   | <b>7</b>    |
| <b>Guidelines for Students with Life-Threatening Food Allergies.....</b>       | <b>8</b>    |
| <b>Guidelines for Parents/Guardians .....</b>                                  | <b>9</b>    |
| <b>Guidelines for School Administration .....</b>                              | <b>10</b>   |
| <b>Guidelines for the Building Nurse .....</b>                                 | <b>12</b>   |
| <b>Guidelines for the Classroom Teacher.....</b>                               | <b>13</b>   |
| <b>Snacks/Lunch Time.....</b>  | <b>13</b>   |
| <b>Classroom Activities.....</b>   | <b>14</b>   |
| <b>Field Trips.....</b>  | <b>14</b>   |
| <b>Lunchroom Guidelines .....</b>  | <b>15</b>   |
| <b>Guidelines for Head Cooks.....</b>  | <b>15</b>   |
| <b>Guidelines for Lunch Room Monitors .....</b>                                | <b>15</b>   |
| <b>Guidelines for Coaches and Supervisors of School Funded Activities.....</b> | <b>15</b>   |
| <b>Appendix A: Sample Food Allergy Letter .....</b>                            | <b>17</b>   |
| <b>Appendix B: Sample Emergency Action Plan .....</b>                          | <b>18</b>   |
| <b>Glossary.....</b>   | <b>21</b>   |

## General Overview about Allergies

The first part of this guide is intended to give the reader general information about allergies, the importance of prevention and general considerations when planning for children with life-threatening allergies.

### Food Allergy Facts

Food allergies are presenting increasing challenges for schools. Because of the life-threatening nature of these allergies and the increasing prevalence, school districts and individual schools need to be ready for the entry of students with food allergies. Studies show that approximately 16 to 18 percent of children with food allergies have had a reaction at school, and reactions also occur among others without a previously diagnosed food allergy (Sicherer, Mahr, & the Section on Allergy and Immunology, 2010).

In 2007, three million children were reported to have a food allergy (Bock, Munoz-Furlong, & Sampson, 2007), and estimates suggest that one in 25 school-aged children have a food allergy (Sicherer, et al., 2010). School must take steps to protect the safety of students and recognize and respond to emergencies with they occur, including through the use of effective emergency protocols (Sicherer, Furlong, DeSimone, & Sampson, 2001).

Allergic reactions to foods vary among students and can range from mild to severe life threatening anaphylactic reactions. Some students, who are very sensitive, may react to just touching or inhaling the allergen. The severity of a reaction is not predictable. Because there is a cumulative effect from past exposures to an allergen, the severity of a future exposure cannot be predicted.

- **Eight foods (peanut, tree nut, milk, egg, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish) account for 90% of total food allergies.**
- **Peanut and tree nuts account for 92% of severe and fatal reactions, along with fish and shellfish.**
- **The student with an undiagnosed food allergy may experience his/her first food allergy reaction at school.**

Many students with food allergies who have experienced a life threatening (anaphylactic) reaction may be aware of their own mortality. The emotional, as well as the physical, needs of the child must be respected. Children with food allergies are at-risk for eating disorders or teasing. School social workers are available to work with families when teasing concerns are indicated.

Bee/insect stings, as well as medications and latex, have the potential of causing a life threatening allergic reaction.

## **Anaphylaxis**

Anaphylaxis is a potentially life threatening medical condition occurring in allergic individuals after exposure to their specific allergens. Anaphylaxis refers to a collection of symptoms affecting multiple systems in the body. The most dangerous symptoms include breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock that are potentially fatal.

Anaphylaxis typically occurs either immediately or up to two hours following allergen exposure. Anaphylaxis is often treated with the administration of epinephrine, a prescribed medication that immediately counteracts the life threatening symptoms. Epinephrine is administered by an injection that is easily administered.

In about one third of anaphylactic reactions, the initial symptoms are followed by a late phase of symptoms two or four hours later. **It is imperative that following the administration of epinephrine, the student be transported by emergency medical services to the nearest hospital emergency department even if the symptoms appear to have been resolved.** When in doubt, medical advice indicates that it is better to give the student's prescribed EpiPen and seek medical attention. Fatalities occur when epinephrine is withheld.

## **Individual Health Care Plan**

An Individual Health Care Plan puts in writing what the school can do to accommodate the individual needs of a child with a life-threatening allergy. Prior to entry into school (or immediately after the diagnosis of a life-threatening allergic condition), the parent/guardian should meet with the building nurse to develop an individualized health care plan. This plan details the preventative steps a school will take to help protect a student with life threatening allergies.

Included within the Individual Health Care Plan is an Emergency Action Plan. The Emergency Action Plan details specifically what steps staff must take in the event of an emergency.

*For school staff purposes, the Individual Health Care Plan and the Emergency Action Plan together are components of a 504 Plan. For more general information about 504 Plans please visit the special services link on the District website <http://www.wilmette39.org/specialservices/504plans.htm>.*

## Importance of Prevention

**Protecting a student from exposure to offending allergens is the most important way to prevent life-threatening anaphylaxis. Most anaphylactic reactions occur when a child is accidentally exposed to a substance to which he/she is allergic, such as foods, medicines, insects, and latex. Avoidance is the key to preventing a reaction.**

School is a high-risk setting for accidental ingestion of a food allergen, due to such factors as the large number of students, increased exposure of the food allergic student to food allergens, as well as cross-contamination of tables, desks, and other surfaces. Other high-risk areas and activities for the student with food allergies include: the cafeteria; food sharing; hidden ingredients; craft, art, and science projects; bus transportation; fundraisers; bake sales; parties and holiday celebrations; field trips; and substitute teaching staff being unaware of the food allergic student.

Ingestion of the food allergen is the principal route of exposure; however, it is possible for a student to react to tactile (touch) exposure or, in rare cases, inhalation exposure. The amount of food needed to trigger a reaction depends on multiple variables. Each food allergic person's level of sensitivity may fluctuate over time. The symptoms of a food allergy reaction are specific to each individual. He/she should be medically evaluated.

*District procedures shall be in place at school to address allergy issues in the classrooms and Physical Education, food service/cafeteria, for art, science, and mathematics projects, crafts, outdoor activity areas, and school sponsored field trips.*

## Food in the Classroom

### *Background*

District 39 recognizes the importance of healthy nutrition and protection of students with life-threatening food allergies. We also recognize celebrating accomplishments and milestones and the variety of ways to celebrate. As food may be a component to events, a review of food in the classroom was conducted to update guidelines for the elementary buildings.

### *General Guidelines for Communal Food*

1. District 39 discourages the use of food as a reward.
2. District 39 encourages alternate methods for recognition of birthdays other than food treats. Some possible non-edible alternatives are school supplies, pencils, stickers, note pads, donate a book in your child's name for his/her classroom or school library, a parent or family member read to his/her class in honor of the event, or donation of a game or activity to his/her classroom.

3. Activities across classrooms involving communal food sharing are not recommended as this increases the likelihood that a student could ingest a food containing an ingredient that may cause an allergic reaction. Any such activity will need the Principal's permission and a formal plan to communicate food allergies to parents providing the food and parents of children with allergies.
4. If food is brought into the classroom to be shared, items should be commercially prepared or prepared by licensed food vendors. This includes fruits and vegetables. Pre-packaging will avoid the possibility of cross-contamination. Pre-packaged foods should list all ingredients on the labels.
5. For any food or drink brought into school for instructional purposes or celebrations, the classroom teacher should authorize and approve the food selection at least two days in advance.

Curriculum and supporting activities will be reviewed individually as needed to evaluate the use of food for projects.

### *Classroom Snacks*

Teachers may allow time during class for a mid-morning or afternoon snack. The district is moving towards fruits and vegetables as the allowable daily classroom snack option. This new practice will be phased in starting at our elementary buildings for the 2013-14 school year. As a result, should parents of kindergarten through fourth grade students choose to send a snack to school with their children, fruits and/or vegetables are the only snacks considered appropriate for our classrooms.

## **General Guidelines**

This next section serves as a guide to outline the range of responsibilities District 39 staff can have concerning a child with a life-threatening allergy. Note that each child's team ultimately determines the responsibilities of individual staff members. This guide will help teams determine which accommodations are necessary for a given child.

## **Guidelines for Students with Life-threatening Allergies**

The long-term goal is for the student with life threatening allergies to be independent in the prevention, care, and management of their food allergies and reactions based on their developmental level. To this end students with life-threatening allergies are asked to follow these guidelines.

- It is important not trade or share foods.
- Wash hands or use hand wipes before and after eating.
- Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction and notify an adult immediately if a reaction is suspected.
- Promptly inform an adult as soon as accidental exposure occurs or symptoms appear.
- Develop a relationship with the building nurse and at least one other trusted adult in the school to assist in identifying issues related to the management of the allergy in school.
- Do not eat anything with unknown ingredients or ingredients known to contain an allergen.
- Develop a habit of always reading ingredients before eating food.
- You should not board the bus if you are experiencing any symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- If medically necessary, the student is responsible for carrying medications(s). If a Medic Alert bracelet is provided by the parent, the child is responsible for wearing the ID at all times.
- Empower the student to self-advocate in situations that they might perceive as compromising their health.



## Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

Parents are asked to assist the school in the prevention, care, and management of their child's food allergies and reactions. Additionally, parents are encouraged to foster independence on the part of their child, based on her/his developmental level. To achieve this goal, parents are asked to follow these guidelines.

- Inform the building nurse in writing of your child's allergies prior to the opening of school (or immediately after a diagnosis). In addition, provide:
  - medication orders from the licensed provider
  - up-to-date EpiPens and other necessary medication(s)
  - annual updates on your child's allergy status
  - a current picture of your child, for the IHCP, to post in school and bus
  - if the child carries medication, periodically check for expiration dates and replace medication as needed.
- Provide a Medic Alert bracelet for your child.
- Participate in developing a 504 Plan, which includes an Emergency Action Plan, with the building nurse.
- Notify supervisors of before and after school activities, and/or PTA/O lunch clubs, regarding your child's allergy and provide necessary medication.
- Introduce your child to the bus driver and head cook to explain your child's allergy.
- While the school will not exclude an allergic student from a field trip, a parent may choose to do so. Be willing to go on your child's field trips if requested.

### Food at School:

- If needed, help decide upon an "allergy-free" eating area in the cafeteria.
- Provide safe classroom snacks for your own child.
- For lunch at school call the head cook to review menus and then reconfirm daily food choices, eating a lunch provided by the school may not be appropriate.

**It is important that children take increased responsibility for their allergies as they grow older and as they become developmentally ready. Consider teaching your child to:**

- Understand the seriousness and recognize the first symptoms of an allergic/anaphylactic reaction and notify an adult immediately.
- Carry his/her own EpiPen when appropriate (or know where the EpiPen is kept), and be trained in how to administer her/his own EpiPen, when this is an age-appropriate task.
- Recognize safe and unsafe foods and do not share snacks, lunches, or drinks.
- Encourage the habit of reading ingredient labels before eating food.
- Understand the importance of hand washing before and after eating.
- Report teasing, bullying, and threats to an adult authority.
- Inform other of your allergy and specific needs.

## **Guidelines for School Administration**

Administrators are asked to assist the school team in the prevention, care, and management of children with food allergies and reactions. Educators are encouraged to foster independence on the part of children, based on her/his developmental level. To achieve this goal, administrators are asked to consider these guidelines when developing an a 504 Plan for a student with a life-threatening allergy.

- The Individual Health Care Plan (for prevention) and an Emergency Action Plan are components of the 504 Plan for managing life-threatening allergic reactions.
- Offer training and education for staff regarding:
  - Allergies, insect stings, medications, latex, *etc.*
  - Emergency and Risk reduction procedures.
  - How to administer an EpiPen for an emergency.
  - Special training for food service personnel and lunch/recess monitors.
- Provide emergency communication devices for all school activities, including gym, lunch recess and transportation that involve a student with life-threatening allergies.
- Have stickers attached to all building phones that instruct how to dial 911 and how to contact the building nurse.
- If medically necessitated in the 504 Plan, arrange for an allergy free table in the lunchroom and/or provide an allergy free lunch substitute.
- Have wipes available for student use in the lunchroom.
- Have the custodian wash doorknobs, tables, desks, and other potentially contaminated surfaces when cleaning the classroom, as needed.

### **Plan for student transitions each spring for the next school year.**

#### **Administrator Guidelines for Substitute Teachers:**

- Make sure a contingency plan is in place for substitute teachers, nurses, or food service personnel.
- Concerning sub folders, make sure that a brightly colored sticker is attached to the substitute folder, alerting the substitute that a child in the classroom has a life-threatening allergy.
- Include the following statement in the sub folder, “If this is your first-time in this classroom, see the building nurse for training in implementing the Emergency Action Plan and how to administer an EpiPen. Do not eat lunch in the classroom, when there is a known allergy.”

#### **Specific Guidelines for Business Manager:**

Provide sound food handling practices to avoid cross-contamination with potential food allergens. (Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network video is available).

- Have cooks trained on safe food handling procedures pertaining to food allergies *e.g.* cross-contamination.
- Have cooks trained on proper cleaning and sanitation pertaining to food allergies.
- Provide information about reading product food labels and food allergens.

- Provide training for custodians on proper cleaning and sanitation pertaining to food allergies.
- For non-English speaking staff provide a simple list of basic allergens (e.g. peanuts, milk, eggs) in their native language.

## Guidelines for the Building Nurse

When it comes to the school care of children with life-threatening allergies, nurses may carry the largest responsibility. Nurses are asked to assist the school team in both prevention and emergency care of children with food allergies and reactions. Nurses are encouraged to foster independence on the part of children, based on her/his developmental level. To achieve this goal, Nurses are asked to consider these guidelines when developing an Individual Health Care Plan for a student with a life-threatening allergy.

- Schedule a meeting including the classroom teacher (team), and the student's parent/guardian to develop the Individual Health Care Plan for the student.
- Use the District 39 Individual Health Care Plan and Emergency Action Plan and distribute final copies as needed.
- Conduct and track attendance of in-service training for staff that work with the child at beginning of school (all staff) and after mid-year break with pertinent staff. **All specific training protocol is available in the Health Office Procedure Manual.**
- In the nurse's office post and label location of Individual Health Care Plans and emergency medication *e.g.* EpiPen.
- For Benadryl and EpiPens stored in the health office, periodically check medications for expiration dates and arrange for them to be current.
- Make sure there is a contingency plan in place in the case of a substitute building nurse.
- Be able to communicate with playground staff and Physical Education teacher via communication device.
- Refer to the School Food Allergy Program, available in the health office, for any additional information, as needed.
- Provide a poster in private areas of the front office, and lunchroom that provides staff photos and immediate emergency care for children with life threatening allergies. Notify parents of the posters at annual 504 meetings.
- Provide parents with link to Allergy Guide after 504 meetings

## Guidelines for the Classroom Teacher

Teachers are asked to assist the school team in the prevention, care, and management of children with food allergies and reactions. Educators are encouraged to foster independence on the part of children, based on her/his developmental level. To achieve this goal, teachers are asked to consider these guidelines as they work with their team to develop an Individual Health Care Plan for a student with a life-threatening allergy.

- Prior to the start of school, teachers will receive the 504 Plan (which includes the Individual Health Care Plan and Emergency Action Plan) of any student(s) in the classroom with life-threatening allergies.

*The 504 Plan is a legal document providing assurances about the necessary steps the school will take to help prevent an allergic reaction and what steps the school will take in the event of a specific emergency.*

- Participate in any team meetings for the student with life-threatening allergies and in-service training.
- Keep accessible the student's Individual Health Care Plan (which includes Emergency Action Plan) with photo in classroom.
- Be sure both student teacher and classroom aides are informed of the student's food allergies. (Seek training and information from nurse when notified).
- Leave information for substitute teachers in an organized, prominent, and accessible format for substitute teachers. Follow building guidelines for subfolders.
- Reinforce school guidelines on bullying and teasing to avoid stigmatizing, or harassing students with food allergies.
- Inform parents of the allergic child in advance of any in class events where food will be served.
- **Never question or hesitate to immediately initiate Emergency Action Plan if a student reports signs of an allergic reaction.**
- Students with food allergies should not be sent home on the bus if they report any symptoms of an allergic reaction, no matter how "minor".
- Include lanolin free hand wipes on the "classroom supply list" for "in class" hand washing, anytime students come into contact with food in the classroom.

## Snacks/Lunch Time

- If the teacher discovers unknown or restricted food (as defined in Individual Health Plan) in the classroom, refer to the student's Individual Health Plan.
- If contamination of foods is suspected, have the students wipe down their own individual desk with their own wet wipes.
- Reinforce hand washing before and after eating.
- Follow the District guidance when allowing snacks (only fruits and vegetables – phase in starting 2013-14 K-4 grade)

## **Classroom Activities**

- Consider the presence of allergenic foods in classroom activities (*e.g.*, arts and crafts, science projects, and celebrations, or other projects). Modify class materials as needed.
- Try not to isolate or exclude a child because of allergies *e.g.* using candy as part of a math lesson.
- Encourage the use of stickers, pencils, or other non-food items as rewards instead of food.
- If an animal is invited to the classroom, special attention must be paid to other allergies children may have (*e.g.* dander) and to the animal's food (peanuts, soy milk).

## **Field Trips**

- Consider the student when planning a field trip due to a risk of allergen exposure.
- Collaborate with the building nurse prior to planning a field trip. Ensure Benadryl, EpiPen, and Emergency Action Plan are taken on field trips.
- Consider eating situations on field trips and plan for prevention of exposure to the student's life-threatening foods.
- Invite parents of student at risk for anaphylaxis to accompany their child on school trips, in addition to the chaperone(s). However, the parent's presence at a field trip is not required.
- Consider ways to wash hands before and after eating (*e.g.* provision of hand wipes, *etc.*)
- Identify one staff member who will be assigned the task of watching out for the student's welfare and handling any emergency.
- Plan for the availability of a communication device.

## **Guidelines for the Lunchroom**

Because a cook cannot guarantee that food served in the general lunch program is allergen free, parents or students may have access to reading food labels to identify these ingredients in the products used by a school's cafeteria. If medically necessitated through a 504 Plan, a cook will make available an allergy free lunch substitute. It is ultimately the responsibility of the parent to decide whether the child will buy the medically necessitated allergy free lunch substitute or bring a lunch to school.

## **Guidelines for Head Cooks**

- If requested meet with parent to discuss student's allergy.
- Review the Emergency First Aid Guidelines and a photograph of the student with life-threatening allergies (per parent permission).
- Maintain contact information for manufacturers of food products. (Consumer Hotline)
- Follow cleaning and sanitation protocol to prevent cross-contamination.
- Create specific kitchen areas that will be allergen safe *e.g.* allergen-free prep tables.
- Make appropriate substitutions or modifications for meals served to students with food allergies.
- Make available advanced copies of the menu to parents/guardian when requested.
- If requested, have safe meals for field trips.
- When necessary avoid the use of latex gloves by food service personnel. Order non-latex gloves instead.

## **Guidelines for Recess/Lunch Room Supervisors**

Teachers and staff responsible for lunch and/or recess should be trained by the school nurse to recognize and respond to a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis.

- Take all complaints seriously from any student with a life-threatening allergy by immediately contacting the building nurse.
- Lunch room supervisors are responsible for ensuring that food containing allergens are not being eaten at the allergy-free table
- Encourage hand washing or use of hand wipes for students after eating.
- Thoroughly clean all tables and chairs after lunch.
- Reinforce that only children with "safe lunches" eat at the allergy free table.
- A Medic Alert bracelet should not be removed but may be covered.

## **Guidelines for Coaches and Supervisors of School Funded Activities**

- Share list of school athletes with school nurse.
- Review the Individual Health Care Plan and Emergency Action Plan with building nurse.

- Make certain that a emergency communication device (*e.g.* cell phone) is always present.
- Call 911 if you suspect an allergic reaction.
- Clearly identify who is responsible for keeping the EpiPen and emergency medication and where it will be kept.
- Medic Alert identifications may be covered or taped but must not be removed for activities.
- Consider the presence of allergenic foods in classroom activities (*e.g.*, arts and crafts, and celebrations, or other projects). Modify class materials as needed.



## Appendix A

### Sample Food Allergy Letter

Dear Parents,

One of the children in my classroom has a life-threatening allergy to nuts. We need your help to provide the safest environment for this child.

Please help by following these procedures:

- Do not send any nuts or products containing nuts for consumption in classroom.
- Do not send containers that have contained nuts, such as washed out peanut butter jars for use in classroom.
- Do not send birthday treats or party snacks that contain peanuts, almonds, walnuts, or any other nuts.
- After your child eats peanut butter, please have your child thoroughly wash his/her hands before coming to school. It is important that peanut residue is not on a child's hands when they handle common school books and equipment.

Thank you for your help and cooperation. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

---

Classroom Teacher

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Nurse

## **Appendix B**

# Wilmette #39 ALLERGY EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN AND TREATMENT AUTHORIZATION

Child's  
Photograph

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

TEACHER: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

ALLERGY TO: \_\_\_\_\_

Asthma:  Yes (higher risk for a severe reaction)  No

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ lbs

## ANY SEVERE SYMPTOMS AFTER SUSPECTED INGESTION:

LUNG: Short of breath, wheeze, repetitive cough  
HEART: Pale, blue, faint, weak pulse, dizzy, confused  
THROAT: Tight, hoarse, trouble breathing/swallowing  
MOUTH: Obstructive swelling (tongue)  
SKIN: Many hives over body

Or Combination of symptoms from different body areas:

SKIN: Hives, itchy rashes, swelling  
GUT: Vomiting, crampy pain

## INJECT EPINEPHRINE IMMEDIATELY

- Call 911
- Begin monitoring (see below)
- Additional medications:
- Antihistamine
- Inhaler (bronchodilator) if asthma

\*Inhalers/bronchodilators and antihistamines are not to be depended upon to treat a severe reaction (anaphylaxis) → Use Epinephrine.\*

\*\*When in doubt, use epinephrine. Symptoms can rapidly become more severe.\*\*

## MILD SYMPTOMS ONLY

Mouth: Itchy mouth  
Skin: A few hives around mouth/face, mild itch  
Gut: Mild nausea/discomfort

## GIVE ANTIHISTAMINE

- Stay with child, alert health care professionals and parent.

**IF SYMPTOMS PROGRESS (see above), INJECT EPINEPHRINE**

- If checked, give epinephrine for ANY symptoms if the allergen was likely eaten.  
 If checked, give epinephrine before symptoms if the allergen was definitely eaten.

## MEDICATIONS/DOSES

EPINEPHRINE (BRAND AND DOSE): \_\_\_\_\_

ANTIHISTAMINE (BRAND AND DOSE): \_\_\_\_\_

Other (e.g., inhaler-bronchodilator if asthma): \_\_\_\_\_

**MONITORING: Stay with the child. Tell rescue squad epinephrine was given. A second dose of epinephrine can be given a few minutes or more after the first if symptoms persist or recur. For a severe reaction, consider keeping child lying on back with legs raised. Treat child even if parents cannot be reached.**

Student may self-carry epinephrine

Student may self-administer epinephrine

CONTACTS: Call 911 Rescue squad: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Licensed Healthcare Provider Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (Required) Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby authorize the school district staff members to take whatever action in their judgment may be necessary in supplying emergency medical services consistent with this plan, including the administration of medication to my child. I understand that the Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act protects staff members from liability arising from actions consistent with this plan. I also hereby authorize the school district staff members to disclose my child's protected health information to chaperones and other non-employee volunteers at the school or at school events and field trips to the extent necessary for the protection, prevention of an allergic reaction, or emergency treatment of my child and for the implementation of this plan.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## DOCUMENTATION

- Gather accurate information about the reaction, including who assisted in the medical intervention and who witnessed the event.
- Save food eaten before the reaction, place in a plastic zipper bag (e.g., Ziploc bag) and freeze for analysis.
- If food was provided by school cafeteria, review food labels with head cook.
- Follow-up:
  - Review facts about the reaction with the student and parents and provide the facts to those who witnessed the reaction or are involved with the student, on a need-to-know basis. Explanations will be age-appropriate.
  - Amend the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) and/or 504 Plan as needed.
  - Specify any changes to prevent another reaction.

## TRAINED STAFF MEMBERS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Room: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Room: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Room: \_\_\_\_\_

## LOCATION OF MEDICATION

- Student to carry
- Health Office/Designated Area for Medication
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI)**  
414-272-6071 <http://www.aaaai.org>  
[http://www.aaaai.org/patients/resources/fact\\_sheets/food\\_allergy.pdf](http://www.aaaai.org/patients/resources/fact_sheets/food_allergy.pdf)  
[http://www.aaaai.org/members/allied\\_health/tool\\_kit/ppt/](http://www.aaaai.org/members/allied_health/tool_kit/ppt/)

**Children's Memorial Hospital**  
773-KIDS-DOC  
<http://www.childrensmemorial.org>

**Food Allergy Initiative (FAI)**  
212-207-1974  
<http://www.faiusa.org>

**Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN)**  
800-929-4040  
<http://www.foodallergy.org>

This document is based on input from medical professionals including Physicians, APNs, RNs and certified school nurses. It is meant to be useful for anyone with any level of training in dealing with a food allergy reaction.

## GLOSSARY

**Acute-** Symptoms that occur suddenly and have a short and fairly severe course

**Adrenaline-** Syn. for epinephrine

**Allergen-** A substance that can cause an allergic reaction. For some students, milk is an allergen.

**Allergic Reaction-** An immune system response to a substance that itself is not harmful but that the body interprets as harmful. When an allergen is eaten, the food allergic student produces histamine. Once the histamine is released in the body it causes chemical reactions that trigger inflammatory reactions in the skin (itching, hives, rash), the respiratory system (cough, difficulty breathing, wheezing) the gastrointestinal tract (vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain), and the cardiovascular system (lowered blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, shock) Each person with a food allergy reacts to the allergy differently. Each reaction by a food allergic student may differ in symptoms.

**Allergy Warning Label-** A bright colored label placed on the substitute teacher's folder in the classroom alerting the substitute to look for information in the folder regarding the food allergic student

**Anaphylactic Reaction-** Syn. for Anaphylaxis

**Anaphylaxis-** It is an immediate potentially life threatening allergic reaction. The most dangerous symptoms include breathing difficulties, and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which can be fatal. Asthmatic students are at an increased risk for anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis often involves various areas of the body at once such as the skin (itching, hives, rash), the respiratory system (cough, difficulty breathing, wheezing) the gastrointestinal tract (vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain), and the cardiovascular system (lowered blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, shock). The drug to immediately use to abate anaphylaxis is Epinephrine (contained in an EpiPen or EpiPen Jr.).

**Antihistamine-** A drug that stops histamine from being released in the body during an allergic reaction. Benadryl is an example of an antihistamine.

**Asthma-** A disease of the lungs in which there is widespread narrowing of airways. The airways become clogged with mucus. Students with asthma and food allergy appear to be at an increased risk for fatal anaphylaxis. Epinephrine is the first-line of defense for an anaphylactic reaction even with a child with asthma medicine.

**Chronic-Symptoms** that occur frequently or last a long time.

**Consumer Hotline (for food staff)-** Major food distributors toll-free numbers usually found on packaging. Can be used to check for additional information on ingredients in a food or the foods processing procedures. (e.g., cross-contamination)

**Cross Contamination-** When a pan, utensil, or food that is a known allergen comes in contact with a food that is allergen free it contaminates it. The allergen free food is now unsafe for a student allergic to the food it was contaminated with.

**Emergency Action Plan-** Part of the 504 Plan. It is a specific protocol that explains exactly what steps are taken if a child has an allergic reaction. It usually has the student's recent photograph on the plan.

**EpiPen-** By prescription only. It is a device that, once activated, will automatically inject one measured dose of epinephrine when jabbed into the thigh. It looks like a black magic marker. The EpiPen is contained in an orange cylindrical container, as the medicine is light sensitive. Once out of the container, the EpiPen's gray cap is removed and it is activated and ready to use. It is firmly jabbed, with black tip, on the allergic student's outer thigh. After a 10 second hold, the EpiPen is removed and the area is massaged. If the needle is projecting from the thick black tip of the EpiPen, then the medicine has been injected. If no needle appears, then jab again. An EpiPen simply abates allergic symptoms for 15-20 minutes. Symptoms may reappear if prompt medical attention is not given to the allergic student. Always call for emergency personnel when epinephrine is given.

**EpiPen Jr.-** It operates the same as the EpiPen. It has the same medicine as in the EpiPen but at a lower dose for lighter weight children. Like the EpiPen, it delivers one dose only. The newer EpiPen Jr. has green packaging that distinguishes it from the yellow EpiPen. Always call for emergency personnel when epinephrine is given.

**Epinephrine-** The medicine contained in the EpiPen and EpiPen Jr. is the drug of choice for anaphylaxis. It is the first medicine that should be used in the emergency management of a child having a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. It is synonymous with adrenaline. There are no contraindications to the use of epinephrine for a life-threatening allergic reaction. Always call for emergency personnel when epinephrine is given.

**FARE-** Acronym for the Food Allergy Research Education that has educational material on food allergies. This is a merger between FAAN (Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network) and FAI (Food Allergy Initiative)

**504 Plan-** Refers to a section in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which prohibits discrimination against a qualified handicapped individual by any program that receives federal funds. It is a legal document. It confers rights upon the parents by establishing a grievance procedure if the parents and school team do not agree on an issue in the Plan or if the Plan is violated. The parents are entitled to a due process hearing if the grievance cannot be eliminated through the school channels. There are administrative and federal

court procedures. A 504 Plan encompass the student's Emergency Action Plan and Individual Health Care Plan, and any other documents the parents and school deem relevant. More information on 504 Plans on the District web site at: <http://www.wilmette39.orgtspecialservices/504plans.htm>.

**Food Allergy-** An immune system response to a certain food. Upon ingestion, the body creates antibodies to that food. When the antibodies react with the food, histamine and other chemicals are released from cells. The release of those chemicals may cause hives, difficulty breathing, or other symptoms of an allergic reaction. See Allergic Reaction, above.

**Histamine-** A chemical released by the body during an allergic reaction. It causes the symptoms listed above in Allergic Reaction.

**Hives-** Itchy, red, mosquito-like bumps that may appear anywhere on the skin. Often a symptom of an allergic reaction.

**Individual Health Care Plan-** A detailed protocol developed between the school and the allergic student's parents, which includes but is not limited to precautions and emergency procedures for the food allergic student.

**Latex-** A synthetic rubber. It is an allergen for some people. It is commonly found in rubber gloves and balloons.

**Life Threatening Food Allergy-** Students with allergies have over-reactive immune systems. The immune system produces chemicals and histamine that cause the severe symptoms in the body (e.g., swelling, breathing difficulty or shock). See Allergic Reaction, above. Epinephrine found in the EpiPen is the recommended treatment.

**Medic Alert Bracelet/Necklace-** A necklace or bracelet worn by an allergic student that states the allergens and gives a telephone number for additional information.

**Periodic Anaphylaxis Drill-** Practice in procedures that would be carried out if there were an anaphylactic emergency. The drill may include but is not limited to: who helps the student, who retrieves the EpiPen or administers it, who calls 911, and who directs the paramedics to the child.