

New Bedford Public Schools
Protocol for the Prevention and Management
of Life Threatening Food Allergies

The New Bedford Public School System recognizes that the incidence of life threatening food allergies in students continues to increase. The school system is committed to providing a safe and healthy school environment for all children. Although it is impossible to prevent all anaphylactic reactions from occurring, it is prudent that measures be instituted to decrease allergen exposure for students with diagnosed life threatening food allergies, and to increase staff awareness of this issue. A strong emergency response plan is implemented at each school in the event that a student develops a severe allergic reaction. Communication, planning and education with faculty/staff, parents/guardians and students will minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to students.

One of the most challenging issues in the management of children with life threatening food allergies is that many foods contain hidden allergens often used to thicken or preserve food products. Cross contamination is also a major problem, and occurs when the same serving utensils are used for different foods, or when a manufacturing plant utilizes the same equipment to prepare various food products.

The following guidelines will assist staff in minimizing a student's risk of exposure to allergens, and will assist with the management of children with diagnosed and undiagnosed life threatening allergies.

School Wide Guidelines

- Trading food, or sharing food, utensils, or food containers among students is discouraged.
- Bake sales are prohibited.
- Food products for non-curriculum related classroom based celebrations and parties must be purchased through the food services department. Parental permission must be obtained for consumption of these foods just prior to the celebration.
- School staff that perform activities involving the preparation and handling of food that will be consumed by students must be ServSafe certified.

Teacher/Administrator Responsibilities:

- Obtain permission from the superintendent or his/her designee prior to using a food product for a fundraising event.
- Reinforce hand washing before and after eating.
- Avoid the use of food as a reward or incentive during the school day except used as indicated in a child's Individualized Education Plan, or 504 accommodation plan. Consideration should be given to the use of non food incentives.
- Obtain parental permission for the use of food for curriculum based instruction (i.e. arts and crafts, science projects, counting, cooking projects....). Teachers should have food ingredient lists accessible, and a plan must be established for food preparation, contact, serving and clean up if applicable.
- Every attempt should be made to order food through the food services department for all field trips. However, if this is not possible, parents should be provided with information regarding menu items at any restaurants or cafeterias that are utilized during the field trip. Parental permission must be obtained for the student to purchase/consume the food.
- Participation in a building based education and training program that focuses on the management of life threatening allergies, symptom recognition, and administration of epinephrine via auto injector is highly recommended.
- Building administrators will work in collaboration with the school nurse to implement an emergency response plan for children with known life threatening allergies.

School Nurse Responsibilities:

- Collaborate with physicians and parents/guardians to develop an individualized health care plan for all students with diagnosed allergies.
- Offer Life Threatening Food Allergy and EpiPen trainings, at least twice each year, to appropriate staff members.
- Educate the staff, on a "need to know" basis, about students with life threatening food allergies. Trainings should include student specific symptoms, risk reduction procedures, and emergency procedures.

- Collaborate with the school cafeteria staff to implement prevention strategies according to the individualized health care plans for students with life threatening food allergies. When appropriate, designate allergen free tables or areas.
- Work with building administrator regarding emergency response plans for students with life threatening food allergies.
- Delegate use of epipens to appropriately trained staff members for field trips with students who have diagnosed life threatening food allergies.

Food Service Department Responsibilities:

- Train all food service staff on life threatening allergies, proper cleaning techniques, and methods for preventing cross contamination with potential food allergens.
- Provide menu items to parents/guardians.
- Maintain contact information for the manufacturers of all food products.
- Review food products regularly to determine if substitutions or ingredient lists have been altered.
- Make appropriate modifications or substitutions for meals served to students with food allergies and/or food intolerance.
- Use only non-latex gloves.
- Be prepared to take emergency action.

References:

1. Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network <http://www.foodallergy.org>
2. Managing Life Threatening Allergies in Schools. Massachusetts Department of Education and Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 2002.

Legal References:

1. 105 CMR 210.000: The Administration of Prescription Medications in Public and Private School
2. Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71: Section 54B. Administration of Medications in School Settings
3. American with Disabilities Act and Section 504