

POLICY

Mansfield Township

Board of Education

Section: Students

5331. MANAGEMENT OF LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES IN SCHOOLS (M)

Date Created: June, 2019

Date Edited: June, 2019

5331- MANAGEMENT OF LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES IN SCHOOLS (M)

M

Definition/Purpose

The Mansfield Township Board of Education acknowledges that food allergies can be life threatening. The risk of accidental exposure to foods can only be reduced in the school setting if schools work with students, parents, and physicians to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for food allergic students. The Mansfield Township School District shall take reasonable steps to identify students who may be at risk of life threatening food allergies and to prevent the likelihood of an allergic reaction.

The Board of Education recognizes pupils may have anaphylaxis to certain foods. Anaphylaxis is a sudden, severe, potentially fatal, systemic allergic reaction that can involve various areas of the body (such as the skin, respiratory tract, gastrointestinal tract, and cardiovascular system). Symptoms can occur within minutes to hours after contact with the allergy causing substance and these reactions can be mild to life threatening.

Many allergic reactions can be avoided if reasonable steps are taken. But when emergencies occur, steps must be taken by staff to control allergic reactions. Strategies to avoid allergic food reactions will include identifying students at risk of an allergic reaction and the education of all school staff on emergency procedures. Staff education will include steps to take should a life threatening allergic reaction occur.

The Board of Education acknowledges that it is difficult, if not impossible, to completely avoid exposure to all allergy causing foods or other life-threatening allergens. Therefore, the Board of Education does not support a ban on any particular allergen.

Parent's Responsibilities

- A. Notify the school nurse of the student's food allergy;
- B. Complete and return the annual allergy update form before the student's first day of each school year, and update the information as needed throughout the school year;
- C. Provide required medical documentation and properly labeled medications to the school nurse by the first day of the school year or upon transfer date into the Mansfield Township School District;
- D. Educate the child in self-management of their food allergy;
- E. Provide current emergency contact information and update regularly;
- F. Provide allergen free snacks for classroom celebrations and classroom "snack time;"

- G. If child is purchasing school lunch, parent is responsible for obtaining ingredient list from cafeteria personnel prior to the day of planned consumption.

School Nurse's Responsibilities

- A. Identify students with food allergies from student health history and student annual health update forms.
- B. Send Food Allergy Update form to parents of students with identified food allergies as needed.
- C. Review information obtained from Food Allergy Update forms to determine who requires medication, special cafeteria seating and/or teacher notification.
- D. Send appropriate physician/parent medication permission forms and epinephrine delegate forms to parents of students who require epinephrine and/or an antihistamine while in school as needed.
- E. Recruit and train epinephrine delegates on an annual basis.
- F. Instruct and train school personnel about the management of food allergies in the school setting.
- G. Ensure that epinephrine is readily accessible in a secure and unlocked location for students with the required epinephrine delegate approval.
- H. Send a letter to parents of classmates of the food allergic student explaining any prohibition of food in the classroom.
- I. As per N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.6, ensure that a nurse, epi pen delegate, or parent of a student who has a physician documented risk of having an anaphylactic reaction to a food allergen, accompany such students on all school sponsored field trips. Depending on availability of seating on the bus, a parent of a child with a documented risk of anaphylaxis may need to provide his/her own transportation to/from the field trip destination. The school nurse will inform the nurse accompanying the students on the trip and/or an epi pen delegate of any student who has a known food allergy.
- J. Advise bus drivers of any students that have food allergies and how they should respond to an allergic reaction by a student should one occur.

Student's Responsibilities

- A. Do not eat foods with unknown ingredients or foods with known allergens.
- B. Do not trade food with others.
- C. Notify an adult immediately if they have eaten a food to which they are allergic.
- D. Sit at an allergen free table in the cafeteria if required to do so.

Teacher's Responsibilities

- A. Participate, as needed, in training offered on the management of food allergies in the school setting;
- B. Provide substitute teachers with a list of students in their class with food allergies. This list and accompanying information will be placed in their "Substitute Folder;"

- C. Prohibit the use of peanut/nut food allergens for classroom projects, activities, celebrations, etc.;
- D. Ensure that no food or beverages are brought into the classroom or sent home with the students for birthday celebrations;
- E. Encourage students to wash their hands before and after eating;
- F. Develop standard procedures for cleaning desks, tables and the general classroom area;
- G. Homerooms with students who have a known food allergy requiring an antihistamine and/or epinephrine to counter an allergic reaction will be clearly marked with a sign outside the classroom door.

General School Environment

- A. Develop cleaning procedures for common areas (i.e., library, computer lab, music and art rooms and hallways, etc.);
- B. Prohibit the use of peanut/nut food allergen products as displays or components of displays in general school areas and consumption at school celebrations;
- C. Develop protocols for appropriate cleaning methods following events held at school involving food.

Field Trips

- A. Encourage long term planning of field trips in order to ensure that food allergic students receive needed services while away from school;
- B. Ensure that a nurse, epi pen delegate, and/or parent of student with a documented life threatening food allergy accompany all field trips that food allergic students attend;
- C. Have a procedure for emergency staff communications on field trips;
- D. No foods/beverages will be purchased and/or distributed by teachers, parents and/or chaperones to students.

Bus Transportation

- A. Bus drivers will be advised of food allergic students on his/her bus and given procedure to follow in the event that a child has an allergic reaction while on the bus.
- B. Prohibit the consumption of any food and/or beverage while on the school bus.

Cafeteria

The district should work to make the cafeteria environment as safe as possible for food allergic students. This process includes making determinations about serving foods with known allergens and identifying steps that can be taken to reduce the chance of accidental exposure, such as:

- A. Provide training to food service personnel on food label reading;
- B. Educate cafeteria staff and lunchroom aides about food allergy management and make them aware of the students who have life-threatening food allergies;

- C. Develop standard procedures for cleaning tables, particularly those designated as allergen safe. Use disposable rags to clean allergen safe table;
- D. Make an allergen safe table an available option for allergic students;
- E. Discourage students from sharing or trading food/snack items, drinks, straws or utensils;
- F. Per parent request, share ingredient/allergen information for food provided by the cafeteria;
- G. Take reasonable precautions to prevent cross contamination of foods with common allergens.

N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.3 through 18A:40-12.6

New Jersey Department of Education - Guidelines for the Management of Life-Threatening Food Allergies in Schools – September 2008

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REGULATION

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Prevention Measures

A. Considerations for the Parents/Guardians of Students With Life-Threatening Food Allergies

Parents/guardians of students with life-threatening food allergies are responsible to notify the school of the student's allergies by filling out the required medical form. The school nurse shall evaluate all medical and other documentation provided by the parent/guardian and work with the parent/guardian in developing a plan for the safe maintenance of the student in school.

In addition to requirements specified by the school nurse and in Policy 5331, parents/guardians of students with life-threatening food allergies should also:

1. Obtain ingredient lists from cafeteria personnel prior to the first day or planned consumption.
2. Provide allergen-free snacks for classroom celebrations and snack time.
3. Remind their children not consume any food item when they are uncertain as to whether it contains any known allergens, either as ingredients or due to the possibility of cross-contamination.

A parent/guardian of a student who has a physician-documented risk of having an anaphylactic reaction to a food allergen may attend classroom parties if there is a chance that consuming, smelling, or touching the food allergen may cause his or her child to have an allergic reaction.

B. Considerations for the Cafeteria

The Principal, in consultation with the school nurse, teaching staff members, food service personnel, and other appropriate staff, will work to make the cafeteria environment as safe as possible for food-allergic students. This process includes making determinations about serving foods with known allergens and identifying steps that can be taken to reduce the chance of accidental exposure. The steps may include:

1. Training to food service personnel on food label reading and safe handling, as well as safe meal substitutions for food-allergic children;
2. Educating cafeteria staff and monitors about food-allergy management and make them aware of the students who have life-threatening food allergies;

3. Developing and implementing standard procedures for cleaning tables, chairs, and trays, particularly those designated as allergen-safe, after lunch periods using dedicated and disposable supplies to avoid cross contact;
4. When possible, sharing ingredient/allergen information for food provided by the school to students and parents/guardians;
5. Making allergen-safe table(s) an available option for allergic students;
6. Considering allergen-full table(s) (i.e., all those eating peanut butter sit together);
7. Discouraging students from sharing or trading food/snack items, drinks, straws, or utensils;
8. Encouraging students to wash hands before and after eating;
9. Considering the benefits and ramifications of serving and/or removing allergen-containing foods or removing a particular food item from the school menu;
10. Making accommodations in the event a student cannot be in direct proximity to certain allergens that are being cooked/boiled/steamed.

C. Considerations for the Classroom

Provisions will be made to develop safeguards for the protection of food-allergic students in the classroom. The school nurse will work with the classroom teachers so to initiate the student's IEHP, as necessary:

1. If possible, consider prohibiting the use or consumption of allergen containing foods in the classroom;
2. Conduct training for teachers, aides, volunteers, substitutes, and students about food allergies;
3. Develop and implement a procedure that will alert substitute teachers to the presence of any students with food allergies and any accompanying instructions;
4. Develop and implement a letter to parents/guardians of classmates of the food-allergic student (without identifying the student), particularly in lower grades, explaining any prohibitions on food in the classroom;
5. Discourage the use of food allergens for classroom projects, activities, and celebrations;
6. Encourage the use of nonfood items for all classroom projects, activities, and celebrations as a way to avoid the potential presence of known food allergens;
7. Encourage students to wash hands before and after eating;
8. Develop and implement standard procedures for cleaning desks, tables, and the general classroom area.

D. General Considerations for the School Environment

The Principal, in consultation with the school nurse, teaching staff members, food service staff members, and other appropriate staff members, will work to make the school environment as safe

as possible for the food-allergic student to include:

1. Developing and implementing cleaning procedures for common areas (i.e. libraries, computer labs, music and art rooms, hallways, etc.);
2. Developing and implementing guidelines for food fundraisers (i.e. bake sales, candy sales, etc.) that are held on school grounds;
3. Avoiding the use of food products as displays or components of displays in hallways;
4. Developing protocols for appropriate cleaning methods following events held at the school, which involve food.

E. Field Trips and Other School Functions

N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.6 requires a nurse or delegate to be available during school and school-sponsored functions in the event of anaphylaxis. Students with food allergies should participate in all school activities and will not be excluded based on their condition. The appropriate school staff member(s) should:

1. Communicate (with parent/guardian permission) relevant aspects of the IEHP to staff, as appropriate, for field trips, school-sponsored functions, and before- and after-school programs;
2. Encourage long-term planning of field trips in order to ensure that food allergic students receive needed services while away from school;
3. Encourage, but do not require, parents/guardians of food allergic students to accompany their child on school trips;
4. Implement the district's procedure for the emergency administration of medications;
5. Implement the district's procedure for emergency staff communications on field trips;
6. Inform parents/guardians, when possible, of school events at which food will be served or used.

F. Bus Transportation

The district administrative staff and transportation personnel will consider the needs of students with life-threatening allergies while being transported to and from school and to school-sponsored activities. The appropriate school staff member(s) should:

1. Advise bus drivers of the students that have food allergies, symptoms associated with food-allergic reactions, and how to respond appropriately;
2. Assess the emergency communications systems on buses;
3. Assess existing policies regarding food on buses.

G. Preparing for an Emergency

The Principal and school nurse will establish emergency protocols and procedures in advance of an emergency. These protocols and procedures should:

1. Provide training for school personnel about life-threatening allergic conditions;
2. Create a list of volunteer delegates trained by the nurse in the administration of epinephrine, and disseminate the list appropriately;
3. Ensure that epinephrine is quickly and readily accessible in the event of an emergency. If appropriate, maintain a backup supply of the medication;
4. Coordinate with local EMS on emergency response in the event of anaphylaxis;
5. Consider conducting anaphylaxis drills as part of the district or school emergency response plan;
6. Ensure access to epinephrine and allergy-free foods when developing plans for fire drills, lockdowns, and other emergency responses;
7. Ensure that reliable communication devices are available in the event of an emergency;
8. Adhere to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Universal Precautions Guidelines for disposal of epinephrine auto injectors after use.

H. Sensitivity and Bullying

A food-allergic student may become victim to threats of bullying related to his or her condition. N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.9 requires the Board to develop, adopt, and implement a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying on school grounds, including on a school bus or at a school-sponsored function, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-16. The appropriate school staff members should:

1. Remind students and staff that bullying or teasing food-allergic students will not be tolerated and violators should be disciplined appropriately;
2. Offer professional development for faculty and staff regarding confidentiality to prevent open discussion about the health of specific students;
3. Discourage needless labeling of food-allergic students in front of others (e.g., a food-allergic student should not be referred to by any name related to the student's condition).

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