

Saint Joseph School Allergy Policy Handbook

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL ALLERGY POLICY

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St. Joseph School recognizes the increasing prevalence of student allergies and the life-threatening nature of allergies for many students. This policy and protocol were developed to minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to students, to educate members of the school community on management of student allergies, and to plan for the needs of students with allergies. The protocol will aim to provide age appropriate procedures and to assist children in assuming more individual responsibility for their health and safety as they grow older. The school is committed to working with allergic students and their parents to address the students' emotional needs in addition to their health needs.

BACKGROUND

The number of students with life-threatening allergies, especially food allergies, has increased substantially in recent years.

Allergic reactions vary among students and can range from mild to severe and life-threatening anaphylactic reactions. Anaphylaxis refers to a collection of symptoms affecting multiple systems in the body, the most dangerous which are, breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which are potentially fatal. Anaphylaxis may occur in allergic individuals after exposure to a specific allergen, even when prior exposure to an allergen has not resulted in symptoms. Anaphylaxis can occur immediately or up to two hours following allergen exposure. Some students who are very sensitive, may react to just touching or inhaling the allergen.

The most common causes of anaphylaxis in children include allergies to:

- Foods (most common: peanuts, tree nuts, milk, dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, fish and shell fish)
- Insect stings (yellow jackets, bees, wasps, hornets)
- Medications
- Latex

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The policy will include the following:

- A. Education and Training: The school nurse consultant will provide education and training to all appropriate personnel on management of student allergies. The training will address prevention efforts, information about common allergens, recognition of signs of an allergic reaction, and the emergency response plan.
- B. Individualized planning and accommodations: An individual Allergy Action Plan that address management of anaphylaxis will be developed for each student with an allergy. A copy of the Allergy Action Plan and an EPI pen will be provided to the classroom teacher. Information will be shared with other personnel as needed.
- C. Classroom management procedures: Appropriate accommodations will be made in the classroom, including designation of the classroom as allergen free, as necessary. Procedures will address education of parents and students planning for special events involving food. The protocol will allow for age-appropriate classroom rules. For Pre School to grade 4 students, the nurse, with input from the parents of the food-allergic child, will develop a classroom specific protocol regarding the management of food in the classroom. For grade 5-8 students, the nurse, with input from the parents of the food-allergic child, will develop a classroom specific protocol regarding the management of food in the classroom.
- D. Common Use Areas: The protocol will address foods used in common areas, including those areas used by groups other than students.
- E. Field Trip procedures: Planning for field trips will include plans to implement students Allergy Action Plan, plans for carrying an EPI pen as needed, and plans for emergency response, such as identification of the nearest hospital. A trained professional designated by the school nurse consultant will attend field trips including a student with a life-threatening allergy in the event that a parent cannot attend.
- F. Emergency response procedure: All staff members supervising students with life-threatening allergies must have a means of communication to call for assistance. The school nurse or other school staff member trained to administer epinephrine in accordance with 105 CMR 210 must be available in the school during the school day.
- G. Procedure for handling/storing epinephrine: The school nurse will comply with all Department of Public Health regulations for administration, storage, and record-keeping concerning epinephrine. The school nurse consultant consultant will register with the Department of Public Health and shall train other school personnel to administer epinephrine in accordance with 105 CMR 210. All staff will be informed of the location of EPI Pens.

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Allergy Protocols and Procedures:

The goals of this protocol are to minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to students, to educate all members of the school community on management of student allergies and to plan for the needs of students with allergies. Further, this protocol aims to provide age-appropriate procedures and to assist children in assuming more individual responsibility for their health and safety as they grow older.

Classroom Procedures (preschool – grade 4)

1. At the start of the school year, the school nurse consultant will provide the classroom teacher information regarding students with allergies and the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction. The allergy policy will be provided at this time.
2. A copy of the students Allergy Action Plan, with photo if provided, and an EPI Pen, will be given to the student's classroom teacher.
3. The classroom teacher, in collaboration with the nurse and with input from the parents of the allergic child, will develop a classroom-specific protocol regarding the management of food in the classroom. The classroom will be designated allergen-free. The classroom protocol will also address the cleaning of tables, chairs and hands after eating. Development of the classroom protocol will take into account the ages of the students and the emotional and social needs of the allergic student.
4. Food related activities are discouraged in the classrooms.
5. All restrictions regarding foods for consumption will also apply to materials used in the classroom. For example, any organic material such as birdseed, play dough, clay etc. should be pre-approved by parents of allergic children to avoid accidental exposure to nuts (that may be in bird seed), or wheat (that may be in clay), etc. Special care should be taken when using recycled materials such as milk containers etc since trace amounts of food previously contained in these materials may be present.
6. The nurse will inform other staff members about the students with allergies, as needed and with the permission of the student's parents.
7. A letter will be sent to all parents in the class informing them that a student with a food allergy is a member of the class, stating that the classroom will be designated as "**allergen free**".
8. An age-appropriate review of food allergies will be conducted with classroom students at the beginning of the school year. This review will be done by the classroom teacher or in conjunction with the school nurse consultant if requested by the teacher.
9. All students will be instructed that sharing or trading food in the classroom will not be allowed.

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10. In no instance shall a staff member make a decision to allow food to be given to a food allergic child unless that staff member has spoken with the parent.
11. Information on appropriate hygiene, including the benefits of hand washing, will be provided to students at the beginning of the year and reinforced throughout the school year.
12. The classroom teacher of a student with a life-threatening allergy will be provided a means to communicate with the school nurse or administration office in the event of an emergency.
13. Clear instructions will be provided for substitute teachers. In the event a student with a life-threatening allergy is in a classroom taught by a substitute, Administration will meet with the substitute to give instructions on specific accommodations, communication expectations, actions or safety needs that must be met.

Classroom Procedures (grade 5 -8)

1. At the start of the school year, the school nurse consultant will provide the classroom teacher information regarding students with allergies and the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction. The allergy policy will be provided at this time.
2. A copy of the students Allergy Action Plan, with photo if provided, and an EPI Pen, will be given to the student's classroom teacher.
3. The classroom teacher, in collaboration with the nurse and with input from the parents of the allergic child, will develop a classroom-specific protocol regarding the management of food in the classroom.
4. The classroom protocol will address the cleaning of tables, chairs and hands after eating.
5. A letter will be sent to all parents in the class informing them that a student with a food allergy is a member of the class, stating that the classroom will be designated as "**allergen aware**".
6. **OR** if the student is very allergy sensitive, reacts by touching or inhaling the allergen, a letter will be sent to all parents in the class informing them that a student with a food allergy is a member of the class, stating that the classroom will be designated as "**allergen free**".
7. The nurse will inform other staff members about the students with allergies, as needed and with the permission of the student's parents.
8. The school nurse will be consulted prior to any school-wide activity during school hours involving the consumption of food. The teachers, in consultation with the school nurse, will review any curriculum-related activity involving food, the presence of animals in the classroom or other practices that may expose a student to allergens (i.e. sharing musical instruments).
9. The classroom teacher of a student with a life-threatening allergy will be provided a means to communicate with the school nurse consultant or administration office in the event of an emergency.

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Field Trip Procedures

1. The nurse must be notified of field trips 2 weeks in advance of the scheduled date.
2. It is recommended that the parent (s) of the allergic students attend all field trips with their child. If the parent is unable to attend, the allergic student will be placed in the group chaperoned by the teacher.
3. The students EPI Pen and Allergy Action Plan will be sent on the field trip. The nurse will review with the teacher the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and administration of an EPI pen prior to the trip. Planning of the trip will include designated person carrying the EPI pen.
4. The teacher will carry a cell phone or other means of communication, and will be instructed to follow the Allergy Action Plan and to call 911/*77 in the event of a suspected allergic reaction.
5. Plans for lunch and snack will be discussed prior to the field trip. If eating takes place outside the school, the same precautions in place at school will be followed on the field trip.

Emergency Response Procedures

1. Staff will be trained on the management of students with allergies. The training will address prevention efforts, information about common allergens, recognition of signs of an allergic reaction including anaphylaxis, and the emergency response plan.
2. Each classroom teacher, with an allergic student, will have an EPI pen and copy of the Allergy Action Plan to keep in a secure place in the classroom.
3. Appropriate staff members will be trained regarding the administration of and EPI pen, as outlined in the Department of Health regulations.
4. When allergic symptoms are suspected in a student, the teacher or staff member supervising the student shall activate the Allergy Action Plan. Parents will be informed whenever allergic symptoms are suspected in a student diagnosed with allergies.
5. All staff members supervising students with life-threatening allergies must have a means of communication to call for assistance.
6. Any student receiving emergency epinephrine will be transported to the hospital via ambulance, along with the discharged EPI pen.
7. The student's parents will be notified as soon as possible in the event of anaphylactic reaction and as appropriate in the event of other allergy symptoms.
8. The staff member trained to administer epinephrine in accordance with 105 CMR 210 must be available in each school facility during the school day. Staff will be informed of procedure to follow in the absence of the school nurse.

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Responsibilities

The implementation of the protocol and the individualized plan for each allergic student requires a team approach and cooperation among the administrators, teachers, and other staff members, parents and the student as appropriate.

Responsibilities of the School Nurse Consultant

The School Nurse will:

1. discuss the child's allergy history with the parent at the beginning of the school year, or as needed when a student's allergy is identified.
2. maintain an Allergy Action Plan in the nurse's station.
3. consult with the classroom teachers to develop a classroom-specific protocol to accommodate students as needed.
4. provide training to staff members on management of student allergies. This training will address prevention efforts, information about common allergens, recognition of signs of an allergic reaction including anaphylaxis and the emergency response plan. The training will be provided annually at the beginning of the school year.
5. provide resources and support for training substitute teachers on the management of student allergies.
6. provide training to appropriate staff members regarding the administration of an EPI Pen, as outlined in the Department of Public Health Regulations. This training will be reviewed periodically throughout the year, as needed, such as prior to a field trip.
7. provide training to lunch parent volunteers on management of student allergies. This training will address prevention efforts, information about common allergens, recognition of signs of an allergic reaction including anaphylaxis and the emergency response plan. The training will be provided annually at the beginning of the school year.
8. provide training to appropriate lunch parent volunteers regarding the administration of an EPI Pen, as outlined in the Department of Public Health Regulations.
9. maintain a list of all staff members, and parent volunteers trained to use an EPI pen.
10. keep a record of all EPI pens, with their expiration dates, along with physicians orders and care plans.
11. ensure that any student receiving emergency epinephrine will be transported to the hospital via ambulance along with discharged EPI pen.
12. provide reminders to staff of the risks of food allergies at high-risk times of the year (i.e. Halloween, Valentine's Day)

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Responsibilities of the Administration

The Administration will:

1. arrange time for the school nurse consultant to conduct training of staff during staff meeting time.
2. provide communication means to staff supervising students with food allergies.
3. facilitate and support the accommodations developed for individual students, including the classroom-specific protocols.
4. require that, when food is consumed by the staff and parents in areas students access, tables/desks or other spaces will be wiped prior to leaving the room

Responsibilities of Parents

The Parents of food-allergic students will:

1. notify the school of the child's allergy
2. provide updated and complete medical documentation, instruction and medication for specific food allergen(s), annually and upon request.
NOTE: Medication must be brought school by the parent. No child shall "drop off" medication to the nurse.
3. provide complete and updated emergency contact information
4. provide properly labeled medication, and to replace medications after use or upon expiration, for both the main office and classroom.
5. be encouraged to participate in the food-allergic child's class room, as a room parent or lunch parent
6. be encouraged to volunteer as a chaperone for field trips or during activities that are outside the scope of the normal day (field day, special events)
7. be strongly encouraged to provided the classroom teacher with safe snacks that can be eaten during classroom celebrations
8. educate their child about managing his/her allergy at school, including but not limited to: not sharing foods, knowledge of safe and unsafe foods, symptoms of allergic reactions, how to communicate an allergy-related problem, strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods. As age appropriate, teach how to read food labels.
9. educate their student on the students responsibilities and what they are.

Student Responsibility

The student with a food allergy will:

1. eat only food snacks brought in from home (i.e. no trading with others)
2. Avoid food items with unknown ingredients of known allergens
3. notify school staff immediately if symptoms of a reaction are present
4. be proactive in the care and management of their food allergy based on their developmental level.