

The Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee recognizes the increasing prevalence of severe and life threatening food allergies among our school population. The committee also recognizes that an effective food allergy program needs the cooperation of parents, teachers, school nurses, food service personnel, administrators, and any staff that might be present where children can be exposed to the food allergens that can trigger their extreme reaction.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a safe environment for students with food allergies and to provide all students, through necessary accommodations where required, the opportunity to participate fully in all school programs and activities.

The goals for the district policy are:

1. To maintain the health and protect the safety of children who have life-threatening food allergies in ways that are developmentally appropriate, promote self-advocacy and competence in self-care and provide appropriate educational opportunities.
2. To ensure that interventions and individual health care plans for students with life-threatening food allergies are based on medically accurate information and evidence-based practices.
3. To define a formal process for identifying, managing, and ensuring continuity of care for students with life-threatening food allergies across all transitions. (Pre-K-Grade 12)

While this document focuses on food allergies, treatment of anaphylaxis (a life-threatening allergic reaction) is the same whether caused by: insect sting; latex; or exercise induced, etc. For those life threatening allergies triggered by allergens other than food, similar and appropriate measures should be implemented. In all cases, the school principal, in collaboration with the school nurse, may take additional steps and precautions as deemed necessary.

General Guidelines

Each school shall establish a method of ensuring that relevant information is transmitted to all personnel supervising students identified as having potentially life threatening allergies. The primary concern of the school is the prevention and appropriate treatment of potentially severe allergic reaction, anaphylaxis.

Parents or guardians of children with severe or life threatening allergies must provide the school with documentation from the student's physician detailing the student's specific allergies. The school nurse will develop, in consultation with the parent(s) and/or physician of the student, a written Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) and an Allergy Action Plan (AAP) for allergen avoidance and response. This IHCP and AAP will establish the specific protocols to help the student avoid food allergens as well as develop emergency response protocols in the event of the student's contact.

In the event that an identified life threatening allergy is a peanut allergy, the student's classroom(s) will be designated as a "Peanut Free Classroom" prohibiting peanuts and foods containing peanut products. A sign will be posted to that effect to ensure the room remains peanut free throughout the day (before and after normal school hours). Regardless, all pre-school and kindergarten rooms will be designated as

“Peanut Free Classrooms” as will shared specialty rooms at the elementary level (i.e. art, music, science, etc.).

The school principal, in collaboration with the school nurse, will determine appropriateness of all field trips which include students with life threatening allergies and will ensure proper protocols are in place to provide for the safety of those students. The school nurse along with personnel supervising the field trip and the parent/guardian will collaborate to ensure proper protocols are implemented.

The school principal, in collaboration with the school nurse, will also work to ensure that all staff in a temporary situation, such as substitute teachers, are aware of, and have access to, the student’s IHCP and AAP.

Student management of emergency medication will be governed by separate policy and Massachusetts General Law covering Student Self-Administration of Medication.

Parent / Guardian Responsibilities

- Meet with the nurse of the student’s assigned school building to develop, review and/or modify the student’s IHCP. It is strongly recommended that this meeting happen prior to the student entering the school system.
- Provide signed documentation from the student’s physician detailing the nature of the student’s condition including medication orders and emergency care protocols.
- Communicate any changes in condition or status of the student’s allergies and/or treatments with the school nurse.
- Provide an up-to-date EpiPen® to be maintained by the school along with any other related medications as prescribed by the student’s physician.
- Provide classroom snack for his/her child.

Student Responsibilities

- Avoid trading food with others.
- Avoid any food with unknown ingredients or ingredients known to contain any allergen.
- Notify an adult immediately if they eat, touch, or inhale something they believe may contain an allergen.
- Be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions based on their developmental level.

School Nurse Responsibilities

- Develop and maintain an IHCP based on materials and information supplied by the parent or guardian.
- Develop and maintain an AAP which, with the parent’s permission, will be distributed to classroom teachers and other adults that will be supervising the student throughout the day.

- Complete a medication care plan which identifies individuals trained and approved to administer medication (such as EpiPen®) and plans for storing and maintaining medications.
- In collaboration with the school principal, generate a letter home to parents of classmates of the identified food allergic student informing them of conditions and restrictions such as “Peanut Free” classrooms.
- In collaboration with classroom teachers, develop the protocols necessary for students participating in field trips. Provide medications and AAP’s to those personnel supervising the field trip.
- Provide training for district staff on guidelines for managing student allergies (i.e.: in forums such as orientation or professional days).

Classroom Teachers and other supervising staff

- Become familiar with the IHCP of students under their supervision and respond to emergencies as per the emergency protocol documented in the AAP.
- Work in collaboration with the school nurse to inform parents of classmates of the identified food allergic student informing them of conditions and restrictions such as “Peanut Free” classrooms.
- Monitor identified students to help them avoid consuming restricted foods inadvertently brought into the classroom or any baked goods sent to school by anyone other than the student’s parent.
 - Note: School personnel cannot be responsible for determining food allergens and/or those foods or ingredients in foods that are safe for a student with an identified food allergy to consume.
- Pay particular attention to the contents of animal feeds for any animals that might be present in the classroom as those feeds often contain peanut products.
- Be aware that “bullying” situations which utilize allergen triggers against a student with life threatening allergies represents a serious assault and should be dealt with accordingly.

Food Service Personnel

- Food service personnel will be instructed by the Director of Food Services about necessary measures required to prevent cross-contamination during food handling, preparation and serving of food.
- Parents/guardians will be encouraged to review/preview menus. Information regarding the ingredients of the school lunch will be provided, upon request, by the Food Services Director to parents/guardians, student and staff.
- At least one “allergy free” table will be made available to students with identified food allergies in each school cafeteria. Parents will indicate if their child is to be seated at this table. Friends whose lunches do not contain an offending food may also be seated at this table.
- The “allergy free” table will be washed with a hot water and soap solution prior to the first lunch and after each following lunch period.
- The Food Services Director will investigate ingredients and cross contamination issues with vendors. No foods with peanut/tree-nut contents will knowingly be served in the elementary, middle or high schools.

- Note: It is important to note that the ingredients in many food products may be changed by the manufacturer without specific notice or indication of such change. While food service personnel should routinely recheck products for known food allergens, not all such situations may be detected.

ADOPTED: October 26, 2006

CROSS REFS.: JLCD, BMR Crisis Management Handbook

LEGAL REFS.: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794 § 504; 34 C.F.R. § 104 et seq.)
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.; 29C.F.R. §1630 et seq.)
The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1976 (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.); 34 C.F.R. § 300 et seq.