

# BRIDGEWATER-RAYNHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## MANAGING LIFE –THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES IN THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District recognizes that students with life-threatening food allergies require reasonable accommodations necessary to ensure access to available education and education-related benefits. It is the policy of the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District that the management of life-threatening food allergies be accomplished in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations. We have implemented these policies and administrative procedures pursuant to the guidelines established by the Massachusetts Department of Education, in a document entitled, “Managing Life-Threatening Food Allergies in Schools” and other reliable resources relating to this issue.

It is the policy of the school committee to establish age-appropriate guidelines for students within the school district in order to minimize the risk of students with life-threatening food allergies (LTA). The guidelines established might include building-based medical emergency plans, the implementation of Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP) that includes an individualized emergency plan, effective training programs for personnel, students, and consultation with appropriate medical specialists.

The Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District maintains the expectation that specific building-based guidelines /activities will be established to insure that the health needs of all students will be met in the least restrictive environment. In order to assist students with developing the skills necessary to participate in all educational programs, school nurses will communicate with parents and students to allow the student to gradually assume more responsibility for maintaining their safety as they advance from elementary school to secondary school.

The Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District has developed a protocol/guidelines for the management of life threatening food allergies. School Nurses will consult with parents, and where applicable, the student, to develop a safe and effective health plan so that the student will be able to access all educational programs. If appropriate, the school-based team of administrator and nurse, may indicate on the IHCP and/or the 504 Plan that the student will carry the EPI-Pen on his/her person. Where this is a recommendation all necessary training procedures and guidelines articulated in the policy will be adhered to.

Policy Reviewed and Protocols Updated/October 2014  
Policy and Protocols Reviewed/ November 2017

Legal Reference: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. §794, the American Disabilities Act, U.S.C. §1201, et seq. and United States Department of Agriculture Regulations, 7 C.F.R §15(b), 105 CMR 210.000.

# **PROTOCOL AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF LIFE-THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES IN THE BRIDGEWATER-RAYNHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **BACKGROUND:**

Allergic food reactions can span a wide range of severity of symptoms. The most severe and potentially life threatening reaction is anaphylaxis. This protocol is to be used for students who are at risk for anaphylaxis and in circumstances where a previously undiagnosed life-threatening allergic response occurs.

Anaphylaxis is a potentially life-threatening medical condition occurring in food allergic individuals after exposure to their specific food allergens. Anaphylaxis refers to a collection of symptoms affecting multiple systems in the body, the most dangerous of which are breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which are potentially fatal. The most common causes of anaphylaxis in children include allergies to:

- Foods (most commonly; dairy products, eggs, fish/shellfish, milk, peanuts/tree nuts, soy, wheat)

Anaphylaxis can occur immediately or up to two hours following allergen exposure, so it is important to:

- Identify student at risk
- Have appropriate preventative policies
- Be prepared to handle an emergency

## **PURPOSE AND GOAL:**

The Bridgewater-Raynham Regional Schools cannot guarantee to provide a food allergen-free environment for all students with life threatening allergies, or prevent any harm to students in emergencies. The goal is to minimize the risk of exposure to food allergens that pose a threat to those students, educate the community, and maintain and regularly update a system-wide protocol for responding to their needs. A system-wide effort requires the cooperation of all groups of people within the system.

The sections below highlight the major responsibilities of the various groups, but each child's plan will be individualized and therefore not all responsibilities can be spelled out in this protocol.

The goal of the Bridgewater-Raynham Schools regarding Life-Threatening Food Allergies is to engage in a system-wide effort to:

- Prevent any occurrence of life-threatening food based allergic reactions
- Prepare for any allergic reactions to food
- Respond appropriately to any food allergy emergencies that arise

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District:**

The Superintendent and his/her staff shall be responsible for the following:

1. Create a system-wide emergency plan for addressing life-threatening food based allergic reactions.
2. Provide annual in-service training and education on reducing food-allergy risks, recognizing food allergy symptoms, and emergency procedures for staff.
3. Training shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a. A description/definition of severe allergies and a discussion of the most common foods causing allergic reactions.
  - b. The signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis.
  - c. The correct use of an Epi-pen.
  - d. Specific steps to follow in the event of an emergency.
4. Adopt a **“NO FOOD TRADING/SHARING”** and **“NO UTENSIL SHARING”** procedure in all schools with particular focus at the elementary school level.

5. School Health Professionals in conjunction with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and the primary care provider/allergist prepare an Allergy Action Plan/Individual Health Care Plan for any student with a life-threatening food allergy. The Plans will be reviewed by the school nurse, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and primary care provider and/or the student's allergist, and signed off by the child's physician/allergist, indicating that he/she deems it to be adequate.
6. Provide and maintain life-threatening food allergy free tables in each elementary school cafeteria as needed by the Individual Health Care Plan. These tables will be designated by a universal symbol. These tables will be cleaned and sanitized as per district protocol.
7. Lunch Room Attendants/Cafeteria Personnel, who report to the principal, will be assigned to clean life-threatening food allergy tables.
8. Make the Individual Health Care Plan available in the nurse's office and a student's homeroom at the elementary level and in the nurse's office at the middle and high school. Recommend that parents/guardians attach a photograph of their student with a Life-Threatening Food Allergy to their Individual Health Care Plan.
9. School nurses will provide parents with *School Bus Emergency Medical Form* so that parents can inform their child's bus driver of any Life-Threatening Allergies.
10. Make Epi-pens (belonging to the school and those prescribed to the students) available in the nurse's office and in other clearly designated locations as specified in the Individual Health Care Plan.(They are to be kept in an unlocked cabinet.) At the secondary level, students are allowed and encouraged to carry their Epi-pens on their person as allowed by the district's Administration of Medication Policy.
11. Familiarize teachers with the Individual Health Care Plan of their students and any other staff member who has contact with student on a need-to-know basis.
12. Consult with facilities personnel to develop protocol for cleaning classrooms, cafeteria, and other areas of the building to insure that the threat of allergens is minimized.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:**

To the extent possible, the principal of each school shall be responsible for the following:

1. School nurse will familiarize teachers with the Individual Health Care Plan of their students and any other staff member who has contact with student on a need-to-know basis.
2. In conjunction with nurses, provide in-service training and education for staff regarding life-threatening allergies, symptoms, risk reduction procedures and emergency procedures including demonstration on how to use the Epi-pen.
3. Send letters from school nurse to all parents of children assigned to a classroom where one of the students has been identified as having a Life-Threatening Food Allergy (Pre K-grade 4)
4. The protocol that explains Life-Threatening Food Allergy and the application of the protocol at the school, concerning Life-Threatening Food Allergy will be discussed at kindergarten orientation.
5. Post the school's emergency protocol on Life-Threatening Food Allergies in appropriate locations.
6. Notify staff the locations of Epi-pens in the school.
7. A contingency plan will be in place and understood by all staff and students in the event the nurse is not in the office or in the building. Staff will call 911 in all instances of any allergic reaction.
8. Ask for cooperation among staff in **NOT BRINGING ANY FOOD PRODUCTS INTO THE CLASSROOM AREA.** This will minimize the risk of allergen exposure for ALL students in the building.
9. **NO OUTSIDE FOODS for student consumption shall be brought into the classrooms by parents or staff.**

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS:**

The school nurse is the primary coordinator of each student's plan.

Each school nurse will have the following responsibilities:

1. Meet with each parent/guardian of a student with a Life-Threatening Allergy and develop an Individual Health Care Plan for the student. During meetings with parents/guardians, nurses shall discuss and encourage the use of MEDIC-ALERT bracelets and other methods of identification for students with Life-Threatening Allergies.
2. Maintain updated Individual Health Care Plans in the nurse's office and in the student's homeroom at each school and in the nurse's office at the middle and high schools.
3. Nurse will assist the principal in providing information about students with Life-Threatening Allergies to staff.
4. In conjunction with the principal, provide in-service training and education for staff regarding Life-Threatening Allergies, symptoms, risk reduction procedures and emergency procedures including demonstration on how to use the Epi-pen.

5. Familiarize teachers with the Individual Health Care Plan of their students and any other staff member who has contact with student on need-to-know bases.
6. The school nurse will be responsible for following Department of Public Health regulations governing the administration of prescription medications. Nurses are also responsible for following the regulations that permit registration of non-licensed personnel to be trained and to administer Epi-pens.
7. Discuss with parents the appropriate locations for storing the Epi-pen and the possibility of receiving more than one Epi-pen as necessary.
8. Inform the school principal and parent/guardian if any student experiences an allergic reaction that has not been previously diagnosed.
9. Emergency protocol will be in place in the event the nurse is not in the building.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS:**

Each teacher shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Receive and review the Individual Health Care Plan, in collaboration with the nurse and parent(s) of any student(s) in your classroom with life-threatening allergies.
2. Leave information in an organized, prominent and accessible format for substitute teacher.
3. Participate in in-service training for students with life-threatening allergies
4. Teacher, in collaboration with the nurse and input from the parents of the allergic child, will set a classroom protocol regarding the management of food in the classroom.
5. Participate in the planning of a student's re-entry into school after an anaphylactic reaction.
6. Advise parents of any school related activity that requires the use of food in advance of the project or activity (Pre K-4 ).
7. Avoid use of food for instructional lessons.  
If food is to be used in a lesson, teacher will notify parent of students with LTA before the lesson. **No food product will be used in a classroom if there is a child with an allergy to that food. Also, no peanut products will be used in any classroom at any time. No outside foods for student consumption will be brought in to the classroom. Foods can still be ordered through our Chartwell's Food Service Director.**
8. Whenever reasonable, the teacher will reinforce appropriate hygiene techniques/hand washing before and after eating.
9. **Teachers will not use candy as a reward in any classroom or gymnasium.**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF FOOD SERVICE PERSONNEL :**

The food service department shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Supply cleaning materials for washing and sanitizing tables as per district protocol.
2. Provide in-service to food service employees regarding safe food handling practices to avoid cross contamination with potential food allergens.
3. Food service employees will wear non-latex gloves.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF BUS TRANSPORTATION:**

All school bus drivers shall be informed that he/she is transporting a child with a Life-Threatening Allergy.

The school bus drivers shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Provide functioning emergency communication devices (e.g., cell phones, two-way radios, etc.) on each bus.
2. **Maintain and reinforce policy of no food /eating on the bus.**
3. Letters may go home with all bus riders (k-4) who have a child on their bus with a LTA.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONS IN CHARGE ON CONDUCTING AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:**

Person in charge of extracurricular programs shall have the following responsibilities:

1. The Individual Health Care Plan will be available for parents to copy to give to others who assume responsibility for their child. Also, Parent Forms for *Before and After School Activities* are available if the parent would like to share pertinent medical information. Examples of this may include:
  - a. Before or after school activity instructors
  - b. Coaches
  - c. Extracurricular activity advisors or clubs

### **RESPONSIBILITIES DURING RECESS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES:**

During recess and physical education classes (where a child has a Life-Threatening Allergy), the school shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Children will be under the supervision of at least one adult.
2. An Epi-pen will be taken outside if specified in the child's Individual Health Care Plan.
3. Develop building-based procedure whereby emergency communication device (walkie-talkie, cell phone) is accessible and functional.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FIELD TRIPS:**

The school shall have the following responsibilities when Life-Threatening Food Allergy students go on field trips:

1. Field trips need to take into consideration the risk for food allergen exposure, and parents must evaluate potential risks when determining whether their child should attend a field trip.
2. Lunches should be held in a safe place, so that children cannot access them until the appropriate time. Lunches of children with food allergies should be stored separately to minimize cross contamination.
3. A registered nurse will accompany the class on field trips and will maintain an Epi-pen and a copy of the child's ICP.
4. If a nurse is unable to go on the trip, she may delegate to a classroom teacher who is willing to accept the responsibility for the Epi-pen. The school nurse will review the procedure and the child's IHCP with the teacher.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS OF STUDENTS WITH LIFE-THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES:**

Each parent of a student with a Life-Threatening Allergy shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Inform the school nurse of your child's allergies prior to the opening of school (or as soon as possible after diagnosis).
2. Parent(s) must arrange to meet with the school nurse to develop an Individual Health Care Plan for the student and provide medical information from the child's treating physician as needed to write the Plans. Parents must arrange for school health professionals to be able to communicate with student's physician.
3. May choose to provide the school a list of foods and ingredients to be avoided, and provide a list of safe or acceptable foods that can be served to your child. We cannot eliminate every allergen from ALL FOODS served in the cafeterias but we will have all labels available for a parent to view prior to meals being served.
4. Provide the school nurse with enough up-to-date emergency medications (including Epi-pens) so they can be placed in all required locations for the current school year.
5. Complete and submit all required medication forms.
6. Provide a MEDIC ALERT ID for your child if possible.
7. Provide Epi-pen to be taken on field trips as stated in the field trip policy.
8. Teach your child to
  - a. Recognize the first symptoms of a food allergic/anaphylactic reaction.
  - b. Know where the epinephrine auto-injector is kept and who has access to the epinephrine.
  - c. Communicate clearly as soon as he/she feels a reaction is starting.
  - d. Carry his/her own epinephrine auto-injector when appropriate.

- e. Not share snacks, lunches, or drinks.
  - f. Understand the importance of hand washing before and after eating.
  - g. Report teasing and/or bullying that may relate to the child's disability.
  - h. Take as much responsibility as possible for his/her own safety.
9. As children get older, teach them to:
    - a. Communicate the seriousness of the allergy.
    - b. Communicate symptoms as they appear.
    - c. Read labels.
    - d. Administer own epinephrine auto-injector and be able to train others in its use.
  10. Inform the school of any changes in the child's Life-threatening Food Allergy status.
  11. Provide the school with the licensed provider's statement if the student no longer has food allergies.
  12. Go on field trips and out-of-school activities with your child, whenever possible.
  13. Sign a release for school personnel to consult with family physician/allergist and all medical providers.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS:**

Each student with a Life-Threatening Food Allergy shall be responsible for the following:

1. Take responsibility for avoiding food allergens.
2. Do not trade or share food.
3. Wash hands before and after eating.
4. Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic food reaction.
5. Promptly inform an adult as soon as accidental exposure occurs or symptoms appear.
6. Develop a relationship with the school nurse and/or another trusted adult in the school to assist in identifying issues related to the management of the food allergy in the school.