

POTTGROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT
GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING FOOD ALLERGIES

Food allergies are potentially life threatening. The goal of effective food allergy management is to reduce and/or eliminate potential reactions. The keys to meeting this goal are prevention, education, awareness, communication, and emergency response.

There are some general considerations for students with food allergies:

1. **School Policies and Procedures** must be consistent with state laws and regulations and with the standards of nursing and medical practice. In addition, there are federal laws including ADA, IDEA, Chapter 15, Section 504, and FERPA that may apply.

2. **It is important for families to notify school personnel about their child's food allergies and severity of reaction.** Individual reactions vary. While general precautions can be taken for all students, it is essential to have individual physician orders and plans to implement for applicable students.

3. **Communication about food allergies is essential.** Allergy awareness letter will be sent home each year in the first day packet. The purpose of the letter is to provide some general guidelines to prevent a reaction.

4. **Parties and Special Events require planning.** Due to the many students with allergies and food reactions, we are requesting that all birthday recognitions be non-food based. No birthday food treats should be sent to school. We do want to acknowledge student birthdays, but encourage parents to do so in other ways. For example, pencils or stickers for classmates, or a donation of a book or game to the school library or classroom in honor of a child's birthday would be appropriate. Birthday celebrations are held randomly and do not allow for parent awareness prior to the event which contributed to the decision for birthday recognitions to be non-food based. Food items for holiday parties will be announced in advance in order for parents to determine if their child is able to participate. Food served at special events will be store bought and contain a complete list of ingredients.

5. **Daily snacks should be allergen free.** A letter will be sent home to all classmates of a student with a known food allergy in an attempt to keep the classroom allergen free.

6. **Field trips require advance planning.** Adherence to the school district field trip policy is essential for students with food allergies. Careful consideration of the student's needs, ability to manage the food allergy, allergens present at the trip location, and access to medical facilities must be taken when planning a field trip. Appropriate plans should be implemented. Invite parents to accompany the student on the field trip or consider sending a nurse.

7. **After School Activities** may provide benefits for students. The range of activities offered at all levels and the various developmental stages of students necessitate advance planning for students with food allergies. After school activity coordinators and coaches will need to be aware of medical concerns and should consult with parents regarding the student's food allergy prior to enrollment or participation in the activity.

a. **Elementary After School Activities:** A nurse is not available for extracurricular activities. Parents should be notified in writing of this by the activity

director, and plans should be developed to meet the child's health care needs when enrolled in an after school activity.

b. High School and Middle School After School Activities: A nurse is not available for extracurricular activities. Athletic trainers and coaches should develop plans for the management of students with food allergies who take part in their program.

8. Emergencies or Natural Disasters: It is recommended that parents/guardians provide the school with an emergency supply kit so schools are prepared to care for students with food allergies in the event of natural disasters or emergencies. The emergency supply kit should contain enough supplies for 72 hours.

9. Emotional and Social Concerns: Healthcare providers and school personnel must be aware of emotional and behavioral issues related to food allergy care and management and refer students and their families for counseling and support as needed.

10. Hand Washing: All school personnel and students should wash their hands with soap and water before and after eating to reduce the risk of accidental exposure due to cross contamination. Hand wipes should be used if soap and water is not available.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS, ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES

Addressing Student Needs:

Job Specific "Food Allergy Actions" and "Cleaning Research" (Appendix C, pg. 64) from the PA Guidelines for Management of Food Allergies in Schools, 2011 (www.pears.ed.state.pa.us/forms/files/PDE032i.pdf) shall be used as a reference and made available to the following:

- Administrators (pg. 14, 15, 16 & 17)
- Principals (pg. 18)
- Teachers (pg. 22 & 23)
- Counselors (pg. 24)
- Custodians (pg. 25)
- Coaches, PE Instructors, Playground Staff & After School Activity Staff (pg. 26)
- Food Service Managers and Lunchroom Staff (pg. 27 & 28)
- Bus Drivers (pg. 29)

FOOD ALLERGY ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

Nurse's Responsibility:

School nurses coordinate the provision of healthcare services for students with food allergies at school and school-related activities. When notified that a student with food allergies is enrolled in the school, annually, or as necessary, the school nurse will take further action. It is recommended the following actions be taken:

1. Mail or send the Food Allergy Inquiry Packet to the Parent or Guardian. Packet will include Food Allergy Inquiry Letter, Medication Administration Request, Self Administration Checklist, Emergency Care Plan, and Food Allergy Roles and Responsibility Form.

2. Once the information has been returned to the school nurse, a plan for the student will be developed which may include an Individual Healthcare Plan/ Emergency Action Plan.
3. If the food allergy is severe and it is warranted, a Ch. 15 Agreement will be developed. The guidance counselors, teachers and necessary school personnel will be informed via email and/or Chapter 15 meeting. See Chapter 15 template PA Guidelines for Management of Food Allergies in Schools. (2011, pg. 40-44)
4. Teachers, cafeteria workers and transportation administrator will be notified of students with life threatening food allergies.
5. Teachers will be provided with educational information about food allergies from a nationally recognized source such as Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network.
6. A letter will be sent home to all classmates of a student with a known food allergy in an attempt to keep the classroom allergen free.
7. Allergy free tables will be made available in the cafeteria when necessary.
8. Train appropriate staff in the administration of Epinephrine Auto Injectors.

School's Responsibility:

*Be knowledgeable about, and follow applicable laws including ADA, IDEA, Chapter 15, Section 504, FERPA, and any state laws or district policies that apply.

*Review the health record/emergency card submitted by parent/guardian and physician.

*Assure that all staff who interact with the student on a regular basis understands food allergy, can recognize symptoms, knows how to react in an emergency, and works with other school staff to eliminate the use of food allergens in the allergic student's meals, educational tools, arts and crafts projects, or incentives.

*Designate school personnel who are properly trained to administer medications in accordance with the State Nursing and Good Samaritan Laws governing the administration of emergency medications.

*Be prepared to handle a reaction and ensure there is a staff member available who is properly trained to administer medications during the school day.

*Review policies/preventive plan with the core team members, parent/guardians, student (age appropriate) and consult a physician if necessary.

*Consider limiting the presence of animals in school buildings. Attention must be paid to the ingredients in their food as it often contains peanuts or other common allergens.

*Discuss with custodians ways to avoid cross-contamination by washing eating surfaces between lunches and following after-school events in the cafeteria.

*Work with the district's transportation administrator to assure that school bus driver training includes symptom awareness and what to do if a reaction occurs.

*Recommend that all buses have communicative devices in case of an emergency.

*Enforce a "No Eating" policy on school buses with exceptions made only to accommodate special needs under federal or similar laws, or school district policy.

- *Discuss field trips with the family of the food-allergic child to decide appropriate strategies for managing the food allergy.
- *Follow federal, state, and district regulations when sharing student medical information.

Family's Responsibility

- *Notify the school of your child's allergy.
- *Work with school personnel to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school including the classroom, cafeteria, school-sponsored activities, field trips, and on the school bus.
- *Provide written medical documentation of the following: Diagnosis and physicians order for required medications.
- *Request a Food Allergy Action Plan from your child's doctor.
- *Provide properly labeled medications in the original package.
- *Replace medications after use or upon expiration.
- *Educate your child in the self-management of his/her food allergy:
 - Safe and unsafe food items
 - Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods
 - Symptoms of allergic reactions
 - How and when to notify an adult that they are having an allergic reaction
 - How to read and understand food labels
- *Review procedures with school personnel, your child's physician, and your child in the event that a reaction occurs.
- *Provide the school with emergency contact information. Update as needed.**

Student's Responsibility

- *Should not share or trade food, utensils, or beverage containers with others.
- *Should not eat food items with unknown ingredients or foods containing the allergen.
- *Should be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions based on their developmental level.
- *Should notify an adult immediately if he/she eats something that is believed to contain the allergen or if they are experiencing any signs of an allergic reaction.
- *Should always wear their medical alert ID.
- *Should always wash their hands with soap and water before and after eating.