

# ALLERGY GUIDELINES

Cross Reference: JHK, Wellness Policy; JHK-R, Wellness Policy Implementation; JHCD-R, Procedure for Administering Prescription/Non-Prescription Medication ( ? Number ) Allergy Management

Legal Ref: 118.29 (administration of drugs to students by school personnel and emergency care); 118.292 (student possession and use of epinephrine auto-injectors)

## A. **Background:**

Life-threatening allergies may occur when the allergic person accidentally ingests or is exposed to the offending allergen. The most common cause of life-threatening allergies is food. Food allergies affect an estimated 4-6% of U.S. Children. Allergic reactions can be life threatening and have far-reaching effects on children and their families. Eight-food items account for 90% of reactions, they include: peanuts, shellfish, fish, tree nuts, eggs, milk, soy and wheat. Other examples of potentially life-threatening allergies may include: stinging insects, latex, or medication. The goal of this guideline is to support students with life-threatening allergies (LTA), help prevent accidental exposure to allergens, and have a plan to recognize and treat allergic reactions and anaphylaxis at school.

## B. **Signs and Symptoms of allergic reaction**

1. Allergies can affect almost any part of the body and cause various symptoms. Anaphylaxis includes the most dangerous symptoms, including, but not limited to: breathing difficulties, drop in blood pressure, and shock.

Other signs of allergic reaction may include:

Mouth: itching, tingling, or swelling of the lips, tongue, or mouth

Throat: itching and/or tightening of throat, hoarseness, trouble breathing/swallowing

Skin: hives, itchy rash, and/or swelling of the face or extremities

Gut: nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting, and/or diarrhea

Lung: shortness of breath, repetitive coughing, and/or wheezing

Heart: weak or thready pulse, low blood pressure, fainting, pale, blueness, dizzy, confused

2. Symptoms usually occur within a half hour of exposure to allergen, but can occur two or more hours later. Approximately 20%-30% of people having an anaphylactic reaction will have a “rebound” reaction, meaning after initial treatment, they are symptom free for a period of time (up to 3 hours) then have a second, often more severe, reaction.
3. Persons with asthma are at a higher risk of having a severe anaphylactic reaction.

**C. Treatment of allergic reaction**

1. Students with a severe allergy, potentially requiring the use of medication, will have an emergency action plan updated annually at the start of school year. In the event of exposure to allergen, or symptoms of an allergic reaction, individualized student action plans should be followed using the student specific medication.
2. In the event of an anaphylactic reaction with no student specific plan and/or medication, the district will have non-student specific orders for the administration of epinephrine signed by the medical advisor.
3. In the event that Epinephrine is administered at school, 911 will be called and the student should be transported via ambulance to a hospital. This is for the safety and well being of the student in the event that they may have a “rebound” reaction.

**D. Latex Allergies**

1. Latex can occur in many different products, three of the products that are highest risk for persons with latex allergy are gloves, band-aids, and balloons. The district will purchase only latex free gloves and bandaids. Latex balloons are not allowed in the school environment. Mylar balloons are acceptable.

**Responsibilities for Life Threatening Food Allergies**

**E. Guidelines for Parent/Guardian:**

1. Notify the school nurse of child’s allergies as soon as possible
2. Participate in developing an Emergency Action Plan prior to school starting.
3. Provide necessary medical documentation regarding allergies and required medical treatment including: medication orders with signatures from parent and licensed health care provider at the start of each school year; nutrition form for any meal accommodations through school nutrition
4. Provide current (non-expired) medication at the start of each school year and as needed for replacement or expiration.
5. Provide school with current phone numbers and emergency contacts
6. Provide annual updates on your child’s allergy status
7. Consider use of medic alert bracelet for your child
8. Notify staff for any School Activities or Athletics outside of school hours about your child’s allergy and provide medication
9. Teach your child to recognize safe and unsafe food items, and advise them not to share snacks, lunches, or drinks with others
10. Teach your child to report any symptoms of an allergic reaction to their teacher and/or supervising adult immediately

If your child carries their own Epi-pen on them (i.e. backpack or purse), notify school staff of its location. Parents are encouraged to keep a “back-up” Epi-pen in the school nurse office as well. Epi-pens should not be stored in cars or lockers where they are not easily accessible and exposed to cold/heat.

11. Introduce your child to the bus driver if appropriate and explain the allergy
12. Provide alternate, labeled snacks as needed to be kept at school
13. Decide if your child will sit at an “allergen aware table” in the cafeteria.

**F. Guidelines for Students**

1. Do not trade or share food
2. Do not eat anything with unknown ingredients
3. Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction
4. Notify an adult immediately in an allergic reaction occurs
5. Wear a medic alert bracelet if provided by your parent
6. Wash hands or use hand wipes before and after eating
7. Know how to administer own Epi-pen (if age appropriate)
8. If carry own medication, keep in the designated location. Do not share medication with other students.

**G. Guidelines for School Nurse staff (District Nurse (DN) & Health Care Assistant (HCA)**

1. Meet either in person or by phone to develop an Emergency Action Plan. written plan will be shared with all staff that interacts on a regular basis with the individual student as well as members of the school’s Code Blue Team. (DN)
2. Discuss specific plan with classroom teacher (DN and/or HCA)
3. Train appropriate staff annually on emergency care, including the administration of an Epi-Pen. (DN or HCA)
4. Train appropriate staff how to recognize and respond to allergic reactions (DN or HCA)
5. Provide lunchroom staff with a list of students with food allergies (DN and HCA)
6. Monitor expiration dates of emergency medications at school (HCA)
7. If any episode of a food allergy reaction at school, review school response with team within one school day. (DN)
8. Provide classroom education to peers about food allergies upon request from student and parent/guardian and classroom teacher (DN and/or HCA)

**H. Guidelines for Field Trips**

1. Consider the allergic student’s level of exposure when planning a field trip
2. Ensure that all Epi-pens and emergency action plans are taken along on field trip
3. Ensure a functioning cell phone or other communication device is taken on trip
4. Consider eating situations on field trips and plan for prevention of exposure to the student’s allergy. A disposable tablecloth may be used to cover a picnic table to minimize exposure to allergen.
5. If offering the option of school bag lunch on field trip, the option of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches can be removed. Food Services must be

notified 2 weeks in advance. Encourage students bringing their own lunch to not bring a peanut butter sandwich on day of field trip.

6. Require hand washing before and after eating (Use hand wipes if no access to sink)
7. Invite parents of students with allergies to accompany their child on school trips. Parent's presence is not required.
8. Plan for ensuring that the student's emergency medication is with the student and a staff member trained on the EAP is accessible to administer the plan. This may mean that student with LTA needs to be in the teacher's group. Middle and high school students may carry their own medication if appropriate based on destination and comfort level of the student.

#### **I. Guidelines for Classroom/Teacher**

1. Post allergy alert signs in entrance of designated classroom doors if requested.
2. Review the health concerns, including Emergency Action Plan, of any students with life-threatening allergies as soon as it is available.
3. Keep the EAP in a confidential, but easily accessible location, and a copy in the Sub folder. Any additional staff, such as teacher aides, or specialists, that works in the classroom on a regular basis should also be notified of any student's with LTA.
4. Be educated in recognizing signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and know the steps in managing the emergency.
5. Inform parents of student with LTA in advance of any class events where food will be served.
6. At the elementary level, introduce student to lunchroom staff.
7. Use allergen free products for classroom activities (i.e. arts and crafts, cooking, science). Modify class materials as needed.
8. Consider the use of non-food items as rewards, i.e. stickers, pencils, free time
9. Do not use soaps or lotions that may have nut oil/scent (i.e. almond) in the classroom
10. Look for ways to add information about food allergies into curriculum
11. At the secondary level, students switch classrooms/desks throughout the day. Limit food items with peanuts/nuts in the classroom if any student with LTA will be in that classroom. May need to clean or wipe down desk and chair before the start of class for a student with LTA.
12. Meet with parent/guardian and student (if age appropriate) to develop individual plan for the management of allergies in the classroom. District Nurse is available upon request of either staff or parent. Some *possible options* include:
  - a. Student will only eat foods from home or on a pre-approved list from parent. Other students may bring in whatever food item they want. Student will keep back-up treats in classroom in the event something is brought in that they are not able to eat.

- b. Allergen- aware classroom (no students may eat this food item in the classroom). See guidelines below for more information on allergen aware classrooms.
- c. Send letters or newsletter home informing other parents of a student with a food allergy with parental permission. See sample letter.
- d. Have a classroom discussion, book, or movie about food allergies if requested. Books are available for checkout from the nurse's office.

**J. Guidelines for Snacks**

- 1. Standardized Testing—snacks provided by the school or parent groups for testing should be peanut/nut free to avoid potential for student with LTA to ingest. See peanut/nut free snack list on school website for possible snacks.
- 2. Encourage handwashing before and after snacks.
- 3. Plan for daily snack and specials snacks should be individualized to that student as determined by the student, parent, and teachers. Some *possible* plans:
  - a. Student will only eat snacks from home
  - b. Student will only eat snacks from pre-approved list
  - c. Peanut/nuts are not allowed in classroom (a peanut/nut aware classroom)
  - d. Class snacks sent in must be from pre-approved list

**K. Guidelines for Cafeteria**

- 1. Allergen free table will be available in lunchroom as an option upon request. These tables should be designated with a sign or symbol indicating allergen free.
- 2. Use a separate, labeled, wash bucket and cloth with district-approved cleaning agents solely for the cleaning of allergen-safe zones.

**L. Guidelines for Nutrition Services**

- 1. Provide in-service to nutritional service employees regarding safe food handling practices to avoid cross contamination with potential food allergens
- 2. Food service employees will wear non-latex gloves. Gloved hands will be washed or changed during extended use to avoid cross contamination with potential food allergens.
- 3. Maintain a list of students with food allergies within the food service area with a photo of the student, when available (not for public viewing)
- 4. Have teacher, nurse, or parent introduce the student with LTA to nutrition staff.
- 5. Maintain knowledge of which food products contain allergens
- 6. Provide allergen free tables when requested

7. Wipe down allergen free tables in the morning before breakfast using the separate, labeled wash bucket.
8. Participate in in-service training for students with LTA, including a demonstration of Epinephrine.
9. All documented food allergy information will be entered into the student's automated scanning system.
10. USDA requires a health care provider's statement that a child has a food allergy disability in order for meal accommodations to be made. Sample form can be found on school website at, <http://www.sunprairie.k12.wi.us/Nutrition/SpecialNeedsform.pdf>
11. Prepared to share information about ingredients served through school nutrition to parents of students with food allergies.

**M. Guidelines for Bus**

1. Train bus drivers on recognition of allergy symptoms and what to do if student has symptoms
2. All busses will have communication device for use in the case of an emergency
3. Enforce no eating on the bus except in the case of medical need (i.e. student with diabetes having a low blood sugar reaction)
4. Bus company will be provided a list annually of all students with known life-threatening allergies that ride the bus

**N. Guidelines for Substitutes and Volunteers**

1. Short-term substitute staff and volunteers should never hand out extra food items as a reward without verifying that there are no students with a LTA.
2. Substitute staff should always check for EAP in the sub folder at the start of their assignment. If they have questions about the plan, they should contact either the HCA or building principal.
3. Any staff, volunteers, or visitors should be encouraged to wash their hands prior to coming into the classroom to help reduce potential for allergen protein on their hands and possibly contaminating shared surfaces.

## Reference section

### **Peanut/Nut Aware Classroom**

1. Meet with parent/guardian and student (if age appropriate) as soon as possible upon student starting in the classroom
2. No food eaten in a peanut/nut aware classroom may contain peanut or nuts.
3. Letters will be sent home to all parents/guardians in the classroom explaining the need for and guidelines for a peanut/nut aware classroom at the start of the school year. Reminder notices should be sent before holidays or celebrations such as Halloween, Valentine's Day, field trips, etc.
4. Post sign: "(allergen name) Aware Classroom—No (allergen name)!"
5. Any food brought into the classroom must have a complete ingredient label, or it will not be served to any students in the classroom. Home baked or bakery bought foods will not be allowed due to potential for cross contamination. Encourage only snacks from pre-approved list.
6. Ensure no items with the allergen are in the classroom, including; arts and crafts, counting, science projects, parties, celebrations, cooking and other projects.
7. No bird or animal food is allowed in classroom as it may contain unlabeled peanut/nut products.
8. No lotions or soap with allergen (especially nut extracts such as almond)
9. No food items, either for daily snack or for special events may contain the allergen. If such a food item is brought in, may not be handed out in the classroom.
10. All students will be encouraged to wash hands with soap and water before entering classroom at start of day and after lunch to reduce potential for allergen protein on their hands and possibly contaminating shared surface.
11. This does not apply to lunch in the cafeteria. Other students may eat peanut/nut products at lunch. All students should wash hands before coming back in to the classroom.

## Sample Letter for a peanut/nut aware classroom

Dear Parent/Guardian of students in \_\_\_\_\_ class.

One or more children in this class have a severe, life-threatening allergy to peanuts and/or nuts.

We need your help to provide the safest learning environment for all of our students. No food items that contain peanuts and/or nuts, (including foods labeled as “may contain trace amounts” or “manufactured in the same facility as”) are allowed in the classroom. Daily snacks and special treats that are brought into the classroom must be peanut/nut free. See the attached list for some suggestions on food items that are considered safe to bring in to the classroom.

Please note that no homemade or bakery treats will be allowed into the classroom due to the chance of cross-contamination with peanuts and/or nuts and as per the district wellness policy. Any items with peanuts and/or nuts will be sent back home. You may also want to consider a non-food item to share on your child’s birthday or special day, such as pencils, erasers, stickers.

Note: This does not mean that your own child cannot pack these items in their school lunch. It is only for food that is eaten in the classroom.

If you have any questions, please contact the District Nurse at 834-6583 or [dlbrown@spasd.k12.wi.us](mailto:dlbrown@spasd.k12.wi.us) Thank you for your help in keeping all of our students safe!

Sincerely,

Debbie Brown  
District Nurse  
Sun Prairie Area School District

(Letter for teacher with student with LTA in their classroom,)

To: \_\_\_\_\_

You have one (or more) student(s) in your classroom with a life-threatening food allergy in your classroom. Below are the Guidelines for Classroom/Teacher, a portion of the Sun Prairie Area School District Food Allergy Guidelines. This is meant to be a quick reference, for more information on our school guidelines for food allergies talk to the District Nurse or your building Health Care Assistant.

**Every child and the management of their food allergy are different. Never make assumptions on how the child and his/her parents want the allergy to be handled. Talk with the parents and/or child to come up with the plan that will work best for that child and your classroom.**

Sample letters, classroom signs, and nut-free snack lists are also available at the nurse office.

If you have any questions about food allergies please contact the District Nurse or your school nurse. Thank you for your help in keeping all of our students healthy and safe!

Debbie Brown  
District Nurse  
(608)834-6583  
dlbrown@sunprairieschools.org

## **Guidelines for Classroom/Teacher**

- Post allergy alert signs in entrance of designated classroom doors if requested.
- Review the health concerns including Emergency Action Plan of any students with life-threatening allergies as soon as it is available.
- Keep the EAP in a confidential, but easily accessible location and a copy in the Sub folder. Any additional staff, such as teacher aides, or specialists, that work in the classroom on a regular basis should also be notified of any student's with LTA.
- Be educated in recognizing signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and know the steps in managing the emergency.
- Inform parents of student with LTA in advance of any class events where food will be served.
- At the elementary level, introduce student to lunchroom staff.
- Use allergen free products for classroom activities (i.e. arts and crafts, cooking, science) Modify class materials as needed.
- Consider the use of non-food items as rewards, i.e. stickers, pencils, free time
- Do not use soaps or lotions that may have nut oil/scent (i.e. almond) in the classroom
- Look for ways to add information about food allergies into curriculum.
- At the secondary level, students switch classrooms/desks throughout the day. Limit food items with peanuts/nuts eaten in the classroom if any student with LTA will be in that classroom. May need to clean or wipe down desk and chair before the start of class for student with LTA.
- Meet with parent/guardian and student (if age appropriate) to develop individual plan for management of allergies in the classroom. District Nurse is available upon request of either staff or parent. Some *possible options* include:
  - Student will only eat foods from home or on a pre-approved list from parent. Other students may bring in whatever food item they want. Student will keep back-up treats in classroom in the event something is brought in that they are not able to eat.
  - Allergen aware classroom (no students may eat this food item in the classroom). See guidelines below for more information on allergen aware classrooms.
  - Send letters or newsletter home informing other parents of student with food allergy with parental permission. See sample letter.
  - Classroom discussion, book, or movie about food allergies if requested. Books are available for checkout from nurse office.

## References and Resources

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Educational Programs*, Washington, DC: Us Department of Health and Human Services, 2013.**

**National School Board Association, *Safe at School and Ready to Learn: A Comprehensive Policy Guide for Protecting Students with Life-Threatening Food Allergies, Second Edition*, 2012.**

**Wisconsin School Health Services Project, *Food Allergies: Manage and Preventing Acute Reactions in the School Setting*, 2013.**

**Snack Safe Guide peanut/nut free snack list. <http://snacksafely.com/snacklist.pdf>**

**<http://www.sunprairie.k12.wi.us/Nutrition/SpecialNeedsform.pdf>**

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Maintained by Student Services