

**Community Unit School District 95**  
**Guide to Supporting Students with Life Threatening Food Allergies**  
**Administrative Procedure**

The goal of District 95 is to provide a safe environment for all children including those with life-threatening food allergies. Although the risk to students with these allergies in the schools cannot be completely eliminated it can be greatly reduced. AVOIDANCE IS THE KEY TO PREVENTING A REACTION.

## **I. Background Information About Food Allergies**

### **Allergic Reactions**

- Every food-allergic reaction has the possibility of developing into a life-threatening reaction and even with proper treatment can be fatal. A life-threatening reaction can occur within minutes or hours after exposure to the allergen. Some individuals may react to just touching or inhaling the allergen while for others consumption of a miniscule amount of an allergenic food can cause death.
- Protecting a student from exposure to offending allergens is the most important way to prevent life-threatening reactions. Most reactions occur when a child is accidentally exposed to a food to which he/she is allergic.
- Allergic reactions to foods vary among people and can range from mild to severe, life-threatening reactions.
- Food allergens are NOT removed by hand sanitizers.
- Hand washing is the best prevention for removing food allergens.
- The amount of food needed to trigger a reaction depends on multiple variables.
- Each food allergic person's level of sensitivity may fluctuate over time.
- Symptoms of a food allergy reaction are specific to each individual.

### **High Risk Areas for Allergic Students**

- Cafeteria
- Arts and crafts projects
- Science projects
- Bus transportation
- Fundraisers, including bake sales
- Celebrations, including parties and ethnic feasts (as part of curriculum)
- Field trips
- Food/beverages brought into the classroom by teachers/parents/guardians
- Goodie bags sent home with children
- Any item ingested or put on the skin

Much more information is available regarding food allergies at: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Food-Allergy-Guidelines.aspx> . Consult this guide for further background on life threatening food allergies.

## II. Prevention - ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

It is important to develop an awareness of food allergens within our schools in order to protect students with life-threatening food allergies. With that said, it is necessary for staff, students, and parents/guardians to understand that an allergy-free environment is impossible to achieve and to expect it is to have a false sense of security where allergic substances are concerned.

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- ***Parents/guardians of students with life threatening food allergies are required to provide an Emergency Action Plan for all life-threatening food allergies that require an EpiPen. This plan is reviewed annually and requires physician documentation. Parents/guardians may also work with District 95 staff to establish a 504 plan which can customize accommodations to ensure specific measures to help keep the student safe (see guidelines in Section V below).***
- In elementary school parents/guardians and staff must work together to help advocate for the students needs in regards to his/her allergies. The goal is to assist the elementary school student to manage his/her individual food allergies in the school setting and to begin to encourage individual student responsibility as is reasonable.
- In the building cafeteria there are no restrictions about what foods may or may not be consumed.
- Classroom snacks are allowed at teacher/principal discretion.
- Bake sales are not allowed during school hours.
- Beginning with the 2012-13 school year, all birthday treats are to be non-consumable. For the 2011-12 school year, birthday treats are encouraged to be non-consumable. If not, they must follow the district wellness plan.
- In general, teachers should not use food as an incentive in the classroom.
- The elementary school classroom teacher will notify parents/guardians of severe food allergy students of an event that involves food consumption or food-based activity. The family can then make a choice to provide a safe food for the student. A student's grade will not reflect lack of attendance or participation. If necessary, alternative activities will be provided upon parental/guardian request.
- Elementary schools will encourage a "food allergen awareness" environment:
  - Students should not share food.
  - Nut-free tables will be provided in the cafeteria.
  - Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide nut-free classroom snacks.
  - Food at holiday parties must be nut-free and store bought, with labels intact.
  - Food allergens are NOT removed by hand sanitizers. Hand washing is the best prevention for removing food allergens.
    - Students should wash/wipe their hands following a snack in classrooms. The district will provide wipes if a sink is not readily available for classrooms with a child with food allergies.
    - Students should wash hands after eating lunch.

### III. Prevention - MIDDLE SCHOOLS

It is important to develop an awareness of food allergens within our schools in order to protect students with life-threatening food allergies. With that said, it is necessary for staff, students, and parents/guardians to understand that an allergy-free environment is impossible to achieve and to expect it is to have a false sense of security where allergic substances are concerned.

#### MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- ***Parents/guardians of students with life threatening food allergies are required to provide an Emergency Action Plan for all life-threatening food allergies that require an EpiPen. This plan is reviewed annually and requires physician documentation. Parents/guardians may also work with District 95 staff to establish a 504 plan which can customize accommodations to ensure specific measures to help keep the student safe (see guidelines in Section V below).***
- In Middle School the student should begin to self-advocate where allergies of any sort are concerned. The goal is to assist the middle school student to manage their individual food allergies in the school setting and encourage individual student responsibility.
- Bake sales are not allowed during school hours.
- In general, teachers should not use food as an incentive in the classroom.
- The middle school classroom teacher will notify parents/guardians of severe food allergy students of an event that involves food consumption or food-based activity. The family can then make a choice to provide a safe food for the student. A student's grade will not reflect lack of attendance or participation. If necessary, alternative activities will be provided upon parental/guardian request.
- Middle schools will encourage a "food allergen awareness" environment:
  - Students should not share food.
  - Nut-free tables will be provided in the cafeteria upon parental/guardian request.
  - Food allergens are NOT removed by hand sanitizers. Hand washing is the best prevention for removing food allergens.
    - Students should wash hands after eating lunch.

### IV. Prevention - HIGH SCHOOL

It is important to develop an awareness of food allergens within our schools in order to protect students with life-threatening food allergies. With that said, it is necessary for staff, students, and parents/guardians to understand that an allergy-free environment is impossible to achieve and to expect it is to have a false sense of security where allergic substances are concerned.

#### HIGH SCHOOL

- ***Parents/guardians of students with life threatening food allergies are required to provide an Emergency Action Plan for all life-threatening food allergies that require an EpiPen. This plan is reviewed annually and requires physician documentation annually. Parents/guardians may also work with District 95 staff to establish a 504 plan which can customize accommodations to ensure specific measures to help keep the student safe (see guidelines in Section V below).***

- In High School the student is to self-advocate where allergies of any sort are concerned. What this means is:
  1. The student is to be knowledgeable of precautions that should be taken to avoid exposure to any allergens.
  2. The student is to be knowledgeable of the signs and symptoms of a potential allergic reaction.
  3. The student is to be knowledgeable of what to do in case of an accidental exposure to the allergen.
  4. EpiPen guidelines (see Section VI below) will be followed.
- Bake sales are not allowed during school hours.
- In general, teachers should not use food as an incentive in the classroom.
- The High School will encourage a “food allergen awareness” environment:
  - Food allergens are NOT removed by hand sanitizers. Hand washing is the best prevention for removing food allergens.
    - Students should wash hands after eating lunch.

#### V. Emergency Action Plan and 504 Plans

##### RECOMMENDED TO INCLUDE:

- All staff that supervise or instruct a student with life-threatening allergies should be informed of the student’s allergies and restrictions.
  - Staff should be informed of precautions that should be taken to avoid exposure to any allergens.
  - Staff should be informed of the signs and symptoms of a potential allergic reaction.
  - Staff should be informed of what to do in case of an accidental exposure to the allergen.
- EpiPens should be provided by parents/guardians. Use of EpiPens should follow the guidelines in Section VI, below.
- Students with life-threatening food allergies are encouraged to wear an allergy alert bracelet.

#### VI. EpiPen GUIDELINES:

- Students should be knowledgeable on how to use their EpiPens (if age appropriate, and with parental/guardian and medical permission and instruction).
- Students will be allowed to carry their EpiPens with proper documentation.
- The parent/guardian will provide the EpiPen along with an Emergency Action Plan.
- **In middle school and high school,**
  - The student is responsible for knowing how to administer the EpiPen.
  - It is the student’s responsibility to carry their EpiPen at all times while at school or on school related activities.