

## Food Allergy Guidelines

Food allergies can be life-threatening. The eight most common food allergies are peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, eggs, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish. The purpose of Westtown School's Food Allergy Guidelines is to maintain a safe environment at Westtown for students with food allergies and to support parents, students, teachers, and all community members regarding food allergies.

See food allergy guidelines and recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or your own physician or medical professional. This information is only meant to be a summary as we do not purport to provide medical advice for your child.

Westtown is committed to best efforts for safety's sake when it comes to food allergies. We maintain protocols as described in the Guidelines for communication, awareness, education, and food preparation, in order to do our best to ensure that affected individuals are not exposed to allergens. We are not able to guarantee that a child may not be exposed to a food allergen while on campus or involved in a school activity. While we maintain safe allergen practices in the Westtown kitchen at all times, including review of food ingredients and labels of all food items, caution in food preparation to avoid cross-contamination, communication through menu signage, a "Peanut/Tree Nut Allergy Aware" snack program in all three divisions and a "Shellfish Allergy Aware" program in Lower School, our kitchen is not an allergen-free facility. Our kitchen facility contains peanuts, tree nuts, wheat products, dairy products, eggs, fish, shellfish, and soy. Furthermore, parents/visitors are always welcome at Westtown, and children themselves are unpredictable. In the event of exposure or reaction, we maintain protocols regarding information, supply, and use of emergency medications as well as other safety measures.

The Guidelines describe the school's training commitments regarding food allergy education, strategies to identify students with life-threatening food allergies, measures designed to avoid food allergic reactions, and protocols concerning awareness of typical symptoms and implementation of medications and other emergency procedures. Because management of food allergies is a partnership, the Guidelines also identify certain responsibilities for Westtown parents/guardians, students, faculty, and Staff.

### Parent/Guardian Responsibility

Notify Westtown of your child's medical diagnosis and prescribed medical treatments for severe allergies by completing the Individual Allergy Action Plan (IAAP), which is included in the Magnus Health Portal. The IAAP must be completed and signed by both the parent and physician by the first day of the academic year or immediately after a new diagnosis.

Deliver all emergency medications to Westtown's Health Center in original packaging. Be careful to provide medications before the established expiration dates. The medication consent form must be completed for each medication. If your child has permission from a physician to carry either an EpiPen or an inhaler for self-administration, you must provide the Health Center with sufficient medications and supplies prior to the beginning of the school year or immediately upon the occurrence of a new diagnosis. Parents/guardians must also agree to replace any medication after it has been used or upon expiration so that Westtown is never without sufficient usable medication.

Set up an appointment with the Health Center ([health\\_center@westtown.edu](mailto:health_center@westtown.edu) ; 610-399-7974) prior to the first day of the school year to deliver prescribed medications and to discuss any dietary modifications necessary in the dining room and/or classroom. Ensure your child's IAAP and applicable medication forms are completed in their health record. Should a reaction occur, review and update the IAAP with the Health Center staff and your child's physician, and discuss with your child (age-appropriate) and other relevant individuals.

Communicate all information about triggers and treatment surrounding the student's life threatening allergies to the Transportation Manager ([Kirstie.Wills@westtown.edu](mailto:Kirstie.Wills@westtown.edu); 610-399-7433), so that bus drivers are alerted to potential allergies.

**Educate your child in the self-management of his or her food allergy, including:**

- Safe and unsafe foods;
- Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods;
- Symptoms of allergic reactions;
- How and when to tell an adult when an allergy-related problem occurs; and,
- How to read food labels (age-appropriate).

If your child feels they have experienced any bullying or other inappropriate behavior in connection with their allergy, we urge you and/or your child to report the incident promptly to a teacher, principal, dean, or other trusted Westtown adult.

Westtown cannot ensure that your child will not come in contact with the foods that trigger an allergy. We do request that all parents of Westtown students do not bring snacks that include peanuts or tree nuts, but we cannot provide any assurance that none will come into contact with your child. Westtown will endeavor to put pertinent individuals on notice of your child's allergy. Westtown faculty, coaches, and all after-school activity coordinators will be instructed that as the parent/guardian, you will provide alternate snacks or treats as you feel necessary to be used in the classroom during regular snack time, class parties/celebrations, or during school-sponsored, after-school activities.

**Student's Responsibility**

Talk to your parents/guardians about your food allergy, including:

- Safe and unsafe foods;

- Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods;
- Symptoms of allergic reactions;
- How and when to tell an adult when an allergy-related problem occurs; and
- How to read food labels (age-appropriate).

Do not eat anything known to contain any allergen. Do not eat anything with unknown ingredients. Do not trade food with others. Carry emergency medication responsibly. (Written medication order from physician must be on file). Be able to demonstrate proper administration of EpiPen/Auvi-Q, Inhaler, or other prescribed emergency medication to the nurse. Notify an adult immediately if you eat something you believe may contain the food to which you are allergic.

## General School Procedures

**Cultural enrichment:** Food is a part of cultural diversity. As we work to expand students' awareness of the world and uniqueness of culture, food can provide a developmentally-appropriate way to enter into discussion. Westtown will make best efforts that no peanut or tree nut products are allowed in enrichment activities. Faculty and staff using food for enrichment activities will make their best efforts to comply with preparation protocols. Faculty and staff will work to avoid excluding students from school activities based on their food allergy by providing an alternate option or plan for a student with food allergies, but there can be no assurance that a similar experience can be created.

**Snacks:** Daily school prepared snacks will be distributed. Westtown will make best efforts that no peanut or tree nuts are present in snacks, but due to constant changes in food processing facilities we cannot guarantee that snacks will not be "manufactured in a facility" or "processed on shared equipment" with peanut or tree nut items. As a result, alternate snacks should be provided for impacted children by their parents/guardians.

**Lower School "Peanut-Free" tables:** Each Lower School classroom will have a labeled "peanut free" table during lunch and snacks. Our procedures indicate that this table will be cleaned with sanitizing solution after each lunch, although there can be no assurance that sanitizing will remove all allergens. Children with allergies will make a decision with their parents as to whether or not they will sit at this table prior to the start of each school year.

**Field Trips:** Faculty and staff will notify Health Center personnel about all field trip dates and locations. Parents will be notified through the normal permission slip process. The Health Center will prepare all emergency medications for field trips. Faculty and staff will pick up the prepared medications needed to treat an allergic reaction the morning of the planned field trip, and ask the Health Center staff any questions about the medications including what to administer, when to administer and how to use an Epi-Pen/Auvi-Q if unfamiliar. Westtown will

make best efforts to meet these procedures, but there is no guarantee that a student will not come in contact with food items that may cause an allergic reaction.

**Athletics:** Athletic staff will obtain from the Health Center medical information for all student athletes. Coaches will be notified of athletes with food allergies. Many snacks and team dinners sponsored by the Athletic Department are provided by Westtown Food Services in accordance with their allergy protocols (see below). Parents providing snacks and team dinners are urged to ensure that food is nut-free. Otherwise, athletic staff will make best efforts so that snacks and team meals do not include potentially offending ingredients. As in all cases, there can be no assurance that all allergens will be removed from contact with the student.

**Medications:** Medications will be kept in an easily accessible secure location. Students should be allowed to carry their own epinephrine, if age-appropriate, and with approval from their physician, parent, and nurse.

**All school personnel who teach or supervise students at Westtown will be advised of:**

- Which students in their care are at risk of allergic reactions;
- The signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction as available in the student's Individual Allergy Action Plan (IAAP); and
- When to implement emergency steps, in accordance with the student's IAAP.

**Faculty and staff are expected to:**

- Promptly inform the Health Center of any allergy-related incident, but not to delay intervention in an emergency when attempting to contact a nurse.
- Provide substitute teachers with relevant and specific allergy information pertinent to individual students.
- Reduce the likelihood of accidental allergen ingestion by exercising due diligence in monitoring food policies, including no sharing of food.
- Reinforce safe health practices such as hand washing before eating and washing desk/table surfaces before and after eating.
- Restrict the use of any outside food in curriculum enrichment that has not been prepared in accordance with best practices of food selection and preparation with attention to allergens.

**Health Center Staff Responsibilities**

The Health Center staff will include names of students whose allergies have been disclosed on their Individual Allergy Action Plan (IAAP) on the Confidential Medical Conditions list. Health Center staff will share the Confidential Medical Conditions list, Independent Medication Carry, Emergency Use forms, and Permission to Treat forms with relevant staff, including athletic coaches, and will provide a copy of the IAAP to those who might be called upon to administer emergency care during the regular school day or on sanctioned school field trips. The Health Center will make best efforts to educate all faculty and staff who regularly interact with

students with known allergies. Health Center staff will help relevant faculty and staff understand food allergies and anaphylaxis, recognize symptoms, and understand steps to take in an emergency. Health Center staff will provide guidance on how to use an epinephrine injector.

At the beginning of the year, and whenever a parent/guardian has completed or updated an IAAP following a new diagnosis during the year, the Health Center Director will meet with the Nutritionist and Director of Food Services to provide a copy of all IAAPs and discuss the location of required medications. In addition to confidentially informing relevant faculty/staff about specific students with food allergies (above), on a regular basis, Health Center and Security staff will provide all faculty and staff with instruction on allergies. The instruction will include:

- Signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and how to respond to a food allergic reaction and emergency including administration of EPI with an auto-injector & Avi-Q;
- Instruction on dialing 911 after EPI administration;
- Instruction to report the reaction to the Health Center;
- Effects of food allergies on children's behavior and ability to learn;
- How to provide emotional support for children with allergies;
- Identifying risk factors, triggers, and areas of exposure to food allergens in schools, including food-allergic students in school activities; and,
- Specific strategies for integrating children with food allergies into school activities while reducing risk of exposure to allergens.

After a reaction has been reported, the Health Center will review the IAAP with the advisor, division principal, and other relevant faculty/staff members, as well as parents/guardians, the student (age-appropriate), and the student's physician.

### **Food Services Responsibilities**

At Westtown, the philosophy behind our Food Services program prioritizes using fresh ingredients and avoids the use of processed foods whenever possible. All food ingredients, including labels of all food items, will be reviewed prior to menu preparation. While we maintain safe allergen practices in the Westtown kitchen at all times, our kitchen is not an allergen-free facility. Our kitchen facility contains peanuts, tree nuts, wheat products, dairy products, eggs, fish, shellfish, and soy. While we are extremely cautious in our preparation and cooking methods to avoid cross-contact or cross-contamination, it must be known that these allergen items are in our facility. Therefore, for example, while we endeavor to create snacks that are peanut/tree nut free, they are made in a kitchen that contains both tree nuts and peanuts.

Westtown School operates a "Peanut/Tree Nut Allergy Aware" snack program in Lower, Middle, and Upper School. Under this program, the Food Services staff will make its best efforts not to use products that contain peanuts or tree nuts, and will make best efforts to

avoid using products that have labels stating that the product may have come into contact with nuts during production, but there can be no assurance that no contamination may exist.

In the Lower School, our Food Services program also operates a “Shellfish Allergy Aware” program and will make best efforts to avoid products that contain shellfish as an ingredient or any product that has a warning statement that it may have come into contact with shellfish during production. However, there can be no assurance that no contamination may exist.

Upon request, the Food Services staff will provide ingredient information for items served at Westtown School. Ingredient information regarding allergens will be provided to the best of our knowledge when requested. We cannot, however, ensure the labeling accuracy of all allergens. If the exact ingredients of an item cannot be determined, students with food allergies will be advised that the ingredients are not fully known and they should make another selection.

Students with food allergies are encouraged to notify our Food Services Director or school Nutritionist about the student’s specific allergies. In the Upper and Middle School, the Food Services Director or Nutritionist will assist students with known food allergies in the students’ efforts to refrain from consuming allergen(s), by providing requested ingredient information (if available). In the Lower School setting, a trained Food Services employee in the kitchen will have knowledge of which food products contain allergens. Upon request, the school Nutritionist is available to meet with any student who has a documented food allergy concern, and/or their parents/guardians, to discuss the student’s dietary needs. In some instances, a child’s medical safety and well-being may warrant the creation of an individual nutrition plan in partnership with the school Nutritionist and Health Center staff. No assurance can be given that the Food Services staff is aware of all allergens impacting the students. The responsibility for selecting safe foods must remain with the student and their parent(s) .

The Food Services staff will make best efforts to communicate allergen information on a daily allergen checklist or on daily menu signage. These postings will identify foods with allergens which should be avoided by affected students. No assurance can be given that foods offered are free of allergens impacting students with allergies.

#### **Westtown School Administration Responsibilities**

The Westtown Administration will review these Guidelines on an annual basis, and make updates as needed. Any changes to the Guidelines will be communicated to all employees and families in a timely manner.