

**COHASSET PUBLIC SCHOOLS DRAFT  
HEALTH SERVICES  
LIFE THREATENING ALLERGY PROTOCOL**

**Objective**

This Protocol is designed to protect students, staff, and visitors with Life Threatening Allergies while at school, at all school-related activities, and on the school bus. The key to safety with Life Threatening Allergies is awareness and prevention. Allergic reactions can span a wide range of severity of symptoms. The most severe and potentially life threatening reaction is anaphylaxis. Allergy Aware Classrooms will be designated by the building administrators and be clearly labeled with appropriate signs to identify them. Informational notices will be sent home to parents/guardians of all students in Allergy Aware Classrooms identifying restricted food items and requiring a parent/guardian signature confirming acknowledgment.

Anaphylaxis is a potentially life-threatening medical condition occurring in allergic individuals after exposure to their specific 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 bees, latex, and food including dairy products, eggs, fish/shellfish, peanuts/tree nuts, soy, and wheat. Anaphylaxis can occur immediately or up to two hours after exposure, therefore it is important to identify student(s) at risk, have appropriate preventative measures, and be prepared to respond to an emergency.

**Planning**

Prior to entry into Cohasset Public Schools all student health records must be reviewed by the school nurse to:

- Ensure compliance with Massachusetts State Law for school entry
- Identify any life-threatening allergies or health concerns and document on the Student Health Record
- Student Information System (SIS) Medic Alert listing at Cohasset Middle High School

**Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan (FARE)**

Prior to entry the parent/guardian may arrange a meeting with the school nurse to develop an emergency care plan for management of their child's allergy. The following must be provided to the school nurse by August 15 and reviewed before the child's first day of school:

- Physician documentation of allergy.
- Physician order for emergency medications is required. All medication orders must be renewed annually.
- Parent/guardian signed consent to administer all emergency medications.
- Completed FARE with parent approval and signature.
- Emergency medication with a current expiration date.
- All students with life-threatening allergies will be encouraged to wear an appropriate medical identification bracelet.

## Prevention Strategies

Protecting a student from exposure to offending allergens is the most important way to prevent life-threatening anaphylaxis. The following measures will take place in each area to prevent exposure and respond to emergencies:

### **District/Administrator:**

- Annually review and update a system-wide emergency plan for addressing life-threatening food based allergic reactions.
- Provide in-service training and education for staff regarding life-threatening allergies, symptoms, risk reduction procedures, and emergency procedures including epinephrine auto-injector training.
- Emergency Medical Response Teams will be created and updated annually in September.
  - a. Building Emergency Response Teams will meet once prior to the start of the school year to review Emergency Medical Response protocol.
  - b. Building Emergency Response Team members may include the Principal, Assistant Principal, School Nurse, guidance staff, counseling staff, custodial staff, and any other staff members designated by the building principal.
  - c. Emergency Medical Response drills will be conducted in coordination with school evacuation and fire drill in September and periodically throughout the school year.

### **School Nurse:**

- Annually develop a Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan (FARE) with the parent and physician.
- Obtain from the parent/guardian at the start of every school year by August 15th
  - a) Medical documentations of Life Threatening Allergy.
  - b) Physician order for medication.
  - c) Parental consent to administer medication.
  - d) Prescribed medication
- Parent/guardian to contact the Director of Food Services at 781-383-6107 if they are interested in having their child purchase food at the school.
- Parent/guardian to contact the Director of Transportation if special provisions are required during transport to and from school at 781-706-7072. (Carrying the epinephrine auto-injector)
- Identify the students with food allergies. Share information with staff members, protecting the confidentiality and privacy of student information.
- Provide and record yearly attendance of in-service training and education to school staff regarding life-threatening allergies. Training to include:
  - a) Signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction.
  - b) Risk reduction procedures to prevent exposure.
  - c) Location of stock epinephrine auto-injector within the building.
  - d) Return demonstration of administration of a trainer epinephrine auto-injector.

- e) Clear understanding that after the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector, then EMS must be activated by calling 911.
- Responsible for following all Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) regulations governing the administration of prescription medication in the public schools, including those regulations permitting non-licensed personnel to be trained and administer the epinephrine auto- injector.
- Establish Allergy Aware Classrooms for PK through 5. In these classrooms the following steps will be taken to minimize exposure:
  - a) All student snacks will be placed in a bin outside of the classroom.
  - b) The nurse will check and remove snacks that contain potential allergens.
  - c) The nurse with building principal will develop list of approved celebration food and check food that will come into the building, if applicable.
  - d) No food will be brought into PK- 5th grade classrooms for projects.
- In the cafeteria, for PK-5, nut free tables and other allergy-free tables will be provided:
  - a) Nut free and allergy-free lunch tables will be distinguished from others with a placard indicating that the table is nut free or allergy-free.
  - b) Lunches will be checked by the school nurse prior to the student sitting at the nut free or allergy free table.
  - c) Elementary students with life threatening allergies may be allowed to sit with the general population in the cafeteria, AFTER providing a release signed by their physician and parents.
- Provide the appropriate medication and identify the need for supervision for field trips, as directed by the physician orders (FARE). If a student has a known allergy and has not provided an epinephrine auto-injector and accompanying physician orders (FARE), the student will be excluded from the field trip.
- Maintain expiration dates of epinephrine auto-injector and seek replacements from the parents when needed.
- In the event that an epinephrine auto-injector was administered, complete the MDPH administration form.
- Evaluate post epinephrine auto-injector administration response with administration, staff, parents and if appropriate student, in order to minimize future exposure to the allergen and to improve medical response.

**Classroom/Teacher/ESP:**

- All Teachers/staff will complete Allergy Awareness Education and Epinephrine Auto-Injector Training.
- Teachers will be familiar with the FARE of students in their classroom and the emergency protocol in the Medical Emergency Response Plan. Student Medical Emergency Response Plans will be included in Substitute Folders.
- In the event of an allergic reaction (with no known allergic history), the school nurse will be called immediately and the school's Medical Emergency Response Plan will be initiated. The school nurse will assess the student and determine if Emergency Medical Services (911) should be called. If the nurse is not available the building administration will be notified immediately.

- In the event of an allergic reaction (with known allergic history), the student's FARE will be followed. The Medical Emergency Response Plan will be initiated. If applicable, the student's epinephrine auto-injector will be administered by a trained staff member and Emergency Medical Services (911) will be called requesting an Advanced Life Support Ambulance. The building administration will be notified immediately of an allergic reaction.
- The classroom will be able to communicate with the school nurse by telephone.
- Information will be kept about students' allergies in the classroom in a confidential manner. In the case of a food allergy, the identified foods will not be used for projects, arts, crafts, science experiments, cooking, or other purposes.
- Sharing and trading of food is prohibited in PK-5<sup>th</sup> grade and strongly discouraged in grades 6-12.
- Restricted foods are prohibited in the classroom.
- Teachers will check each day to be sure all epinephrine auto-injectors are in designated locations unless the student self-carries an epinephrine auto-injector.
- All adults and children will wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after food handling and consumption.
- If an animal is present in the classroom, care will be taken to identify the ingredients in their food as some animal feeds contain peanuts.

#### **Classroom Snack and Celebration Procedures:**

- Parents/Guardians of students in Allergy Aware Classrooms will receive a letter stating the prohibited food items for the classroom. A parent/guardian signature will be required to confirm acknowledgement of this request.
- Nurses will check all snacks in Allergy Aware Classrooms prior to snack time to determine safety. If a student has a snack that may contain a potential allergen, the snack will be removed and an alternative snack will be provided.
- Reminder letters may be sent home to parents/guardians as needed and teachers are encouraged to educate their students regarding food allergies.
- Celebrations- Joseph Osgood School - Celebrations for birthdays and holidays will not include food items in all pre K- 2 grade classes. Deer Hill School - 2 celebrations per year with food items limited to list of approved allergen free snacks. Parents to receive notice two days prior.

#### **Substitute Staff Members:**

- All substitute staff will complete Allergy Awareness Education and participate in Epinephrine Auto-injector Training when completing their hiring packet at Central Office and annually thereafter. Signature to verify completion.
- Substitutes will review the substitute folder and FARE, if applicable, for all students in their classroom prior to the start of school.
- Substitutes will contact the school nurse with any questions/concerns regarding the medical needs of the students in the class if necessary.
- Substitute staff will follow "classroom/teacher/ESP" steps listed above.

### **Field Trips:**

- For students with life-threatening food allergies, the school nurse will coordinate safety measures.
- Parents/Guardians of students at risk for life-threatening food allergies will be offered to accompany their children on school trips when appropriate and in compliance with school policy for volunteers.
- Adequate notice will be given to the school nurse and parents/guardians of students with life threatening allergies for all planned field trips. Cohasset Public Schools Field Trip Protocol will be followed.
- Emergency medications and a copy of the student's medication orders and FARE will accompany the student.
- A cell phone or other communication device will be available on the trip for emergency calls.
- In the absence of parent/guardians or the school nurse, a trained staff member will accompany the field trip and be identified to the student.
- Field trips will be planned to be inclusive.
- Reminder notices will be sent home to parents/guardians regarding food safety and bag lunches.
- Students and staff will be reminded to wash hands after eating and encouraged to bring hand wipes along.
- Lunches will be checked by nurse or teacher in grades PK-2.

### **School Bus:**

- School bus drivers will complete Allergy Awareness Education and Epinephrine Auto-injector training.
- Eating on school busses is prohibited on routes to and from school unless medically necessary.
- School bus drivers will radio the dispatch center in the event of an emergency and activate the 911 system.
- School busses will have a means of communication for emergency calls.
- Parents/guardians are responsible to inform the transportation coordinator at 781-706-7072 annually if their child had a medical concern.
- The school nurse will send home a reminder notice annually encouraging parents/guardians to inform the transportation coordinator (as part of the back to school medical information packet) if their child has a life threatening allergy or any reported medical condition that is of concern. The parent/guardian is responsible to inform the transportation coordinator about any medication the student is carrying (i.e.: epinephrine auto-injector, inhaler, insulin).

**Gym/Recess/Lunch:**

- Teachers and staff responsible for gym/recess will complete Allergy Awareness Education and Epinephrine Auto-Injector Training.
- Staff in the gym, lunch room, on the playground, or other sites used for recess will have a walkie-talkie or cell phone for emergency communication.
- A current epinephrine auto-injector will be available and a trained staff member will be onsite.

**School Sanctioned After School Activities:**

- All Staff will know how to access emergency services – 911.
- All District funded school activities will implement Cohasset Public Schools procedures regarding life-threatening allergies and follow their schools Medical Emergency Response Plan in the event of a medical emergency.
- With written parental/guardian permission, coaches or other adult staff will be provided with student FARE when a life-threatening allergy exists.
- A current epinephrine auto-injector will be available, and a trained staff member onsite.

**Food Services Director/Cafeteria:**

- At the beginning of each year, provide in-service training to nutritional service employees regarding safe food handling practices to avoid cross contamination with potential food allergens.
- Food service employees will wear non-latex gloves. Gloves will be changed during extended use and hands will be washed frequently to avoid cross contamination with potential food allergens.
- All school menu items will be peanut and nut free.
- Cafeteria staff will be made aware of each individual student's allergies and flagged in the POS computer system.
- Custodial staff will distinguish nut free and milk free tables.
- Custodians will be trained to clean tables following proper procedures to avoid cross-contact.
- Director will have all food labels on file for food being served.
- All cafeteria staff will be trained to recognize symptoms of allergic reaction and the use of epinephrine auto-injector.
- Will have knowledge of the laws protecting students with food allergies as they relate to food services.
- In schools where there are students with peanut allergies, a peanut free table will be available in the cafeteria and clearly identified as such.
- Students will be encouraged to wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after eating.

## **Parent /Guardian Responsibilities:**

- Inform the school nurse of your child's allergies as soon as possible after diagnosis and annually by August 15<sup>th</sup> thereafter.
- Provide physician orders annually by August 15<sup>th</sup> of each year which include child's allergy diagnosis and treatment. (Food Allergy Research and Education form preferred, FARE).
- Annually provide physician ordered up-to-date emergency medication to the school nurse by August 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Work with school personnel to minimize your child's exposure to known allergens.
- Notify the Transportation Director for Cohasset Public Schools of your child's allergies and any special provisions required during transport to and from school at the start of each year.
- Contact the Director of Food Services in regards to your child's allergy at the start of each year.
- Provide the school with current emergency contact numbers.
- Inform the school nurse of any changes in your child's life threatening allergy status.
- Provide the school nurse with a physician's statement if your child no longer has a life threatening allergy.
- Consider having your child wear a medical alert bracelet.
- Annually provide signed Medical Release Form, allowing the nurse to share your child's allergy information with appropriate staff members.
- Teach your child to:
  - Recognize the first symptoms of an allergic/anaphylactic reaction.
  - Notify an adult as soon as they feel a reaction starting. Encourage self-advocacy.
  - Know the location of epinephrine auto injectors in the school. If age appropriate, have your child self-carry and train to self-administer epinephrine auto-injector.
  - Not share food, drinks or utensils.
  - Understand the importance of hand washing before and after eating.
  - Perform age appropriate label reading.

## Emergency Response

### **Mild Reaction:**

- School nurse will contact parent.
- School nurse will meet with student and parent to re-examine the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan (FARE).

### **Moderate to Severe Reaction:**

- School nurse will obtain as much accurate information as possible about the allergic reaction.
- School nurse will identify those involved in the medical intervention and all witnesses.
- Factual information that does not identify the student may be provided to the school community to reassure students and staff that the crisis is resolved.
- If the allergic reaction is thought to be from a food provided by the school food service, assistance will be sought from the School Food Service Director to determine what potential food was served or consumed.
- Review the student's FARE.
- Amend the FARE to address any changes that need to be made.
- Review with everyone involved any changes that need to be made to prevent another reaction.
- Provide reassurance to student, parents/guardians, staff members, and other students that necessary changes have been implemented to prevent another reaction.
- School psychologists and/or school counselors will be available for students, staff, etc. who may experience anxiety and provide services as needed.

### **Fatal Reaction:**

- In the rare, but possible instance that a fatal allergic reaction occurs, the school's crisis plan for dealing with the death of a student will be implemented.



## Definitions

**Advanced Life Support Ambulance** - An ambulance that is staffed with a paramedic.

**Allergy Aware Classroom** is defined as all staff, students, parents/guardians, and visitors to the classroom will be aware of the known allergies in the classroom. To be allergy aware one must understand the basic information about allergies, how to avoid allergens to avoid reactions, the symptoms of a reaction, and what to do when symptoms of a reaction are observed. Notification will be in the form of signs, letters home, staff meetings, class discussion, and volunteer orientation.

**Allergy Awareness Education**- Training and materials that provide clear, actionable information to schools staff to help them support students with food allergies.

**Emergency Medical Response Team**- Building-based team identified to respond to medical emergencies

**Epinephrine Auto-Injector** - a medical device used for injecting a measured dose or doses of epinephrine (adrenaline) by means of auto-injector technology. It is most often used for the treatment of anaphylaxis.

**Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan –FARE** - A written plan of steps to take if the individual is exposed to their food allergen.

**Life Threatening Allergy**- Exposure to an allergen that may cause anaphylaxis and potentially death.

**Medical Emergency Response Plan** - A written plan of action that the staff is expected to follow in the event of a medical emergency.

**Student Health Record**- An individual health record (both paper and computerized) is maintained for each student throughout his/her school career. The paper record contains medical information submitted to the school nurse, such as physicals, immunization records and completed health history from when the student entered the school system.

**Student Information System- SIS**- Cohasset Public Schools currently uses iPASS for SIS. It is a browser-based student administrative software program that manages all student information.