

# **DISTRICT 65 RESOURCE GUIDE:**

## **SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES**

The purpose of this manual is to provide a guideline for supporting children with life-threatening allergies in school. This resource is to assist teams in developing individual plans for children.

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## How to Use This Guide

1. Review general information about allergies, anaphylaxis, Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization (EAP) and 504 Plan.
2. Review Guidelines for specific School Staff, Parents and the Student and give copies of the appropriate guidelines to the designated persons (teachers/coach/ principal/parent/student/etc).
3. Give the parent/guardian a copy of the State of Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization form (**Appendix A-1 and A-2**). The student's physician must complete the form annually. The form must be dated and requires both the physician and parent/guardian signature to be accepted.
4. Once the EAP is returned to school it will be distributed to staff on a need-to-know basis. The appropriate staff and parent may meet to discuss whether or not a 504 Plan is needed.
5. Some students who may have additional needs during the school day can request a 504 plan. 504 accommodations are individualized and are discussed with the school team. 504 plans are reviewed annually and can be updated as needed.
6. In addition to the Principal, Health Clerk or Nurse, Teachers and other appropriate school staff, copies of student care plans should be shared with:
  - a. Health Services Secretary (at the Joseph E. Hill Early Childhood Center)
  - b. Director of Health Services (at the Joseph E. Hill Early Childhood Center)

The goal of Evanston/Skokie School District 65 is to provide a safe environment for all children, including those with life-threatening allergies. Although the risk to students with these allergies in the schools cannot be completely eliminated, it can be greatly reduced. This plan addresses the identification of individual needs, staff awareness, necessary curricular and procedural modifications, and emergency plans. Protecting students with life-threatening allergies is the shared responsibility of families, schools, and the community. Although the focus of this document is on life-threatening food allergies, other life-threatening allergies can include bee/insect stings, medications, and latex. Therefore, some of this document will also apply to these situations.

**Evanston/Skokie School District 65 cautions that it is necessary for staff, students, and parents to understand that an allergen-free environment is impossible to achieve, but that the District is committed to reducing the risk of exposure to allergen as much as possible and providing a safe environment for all children.**

The purpose of this manual is to reduce unintended allergic reactions by outlining the problem, providing education on allergen avoidance strategies, establishing emergency response procedures, and outlining the responsibilities for the student, families, and the school system. Evanston/Skokie School District 65 will continue to monitor and evaluate this area to ensure the proper implementation of these guidelines across our jurisdiction.

# **General Overview of Allergies: Information about Life-Threatening Allergies**

## **Food Allergy Facts**

Food allergies are presenting increasing challenges for schools. Because of the life-threatening nature of these allergies and the increasing prevalence, school districts and individual schools need to be ready for the entry of students with food allergies. Even in schools with comprehensive prevention plans, students may be subject to accidental exposure to the allergen due to the large number of students, accidental ingestion, cross-contamination of tables, desks, and other surfaces. Environments and activities that may result in increased risk for the student with food allergies include: the cafeteria, food sharing, hidden ingredients, craft, art and science projects, bus transportation, fundraisers, bake sales, parties and holiday celebrations, and field trips.

Allergic reactions vary among students and can range from mild to severe, life-threatening anaphylactic reactions. There are nine foods that cause the majority of reactions: peanut, tree nut (walnut, cashew, pecan, hazelnut, almond, etc.), milk, egg, fish, shellfish, soy, wheat, and sesame. Ingestion of the food allergen is the principal route of exposure; however, it is possible for a reaction due to tactile (touch) exposure or, in rare cases, inhalation exposure. The amount of food needed to trigger a reaction depends on multiple variables. The level of sensitivity of an allergy may fluctuate or diminish over time. The symptoms of an allergic reaction are specific to each individual and each individual should be medically evaluated.

Bee/insect stings, as well as medications and latex, also have the potential of causing a life-threatening allergic reaction.

## **Anaphylaxis**

Anaphylaxis typically occurs immediately or up to two hours following exposure to the allergen exposure. Anaphylaxis should be treated with the administration of epinephrine (EpiPen), a prescribed medication that immediately counteracts the life-threatening symptoms. Treatment should take place immediately following exposure to a known allergen. Epinephrine may be ineffective if treatment is delayed. Epinephrine is an easily administered injection. Call 911 when an EpiPen is used.

In about one-third of anaphylactic reactions, the initial symptoms are followed by a late phase of symptoms two to four hours later. It is imperative that following the administration of epinephrine, the student be transported by emergency medical services to the nearest hospital emergency department even if the symptoms appear to have been resolved. When in doubt, medical advice indicates that it is better to administer the student's prescribed EpiPen and seek medical attention. Remember that in a crisis, a student may not be able to self-administer medication, even if they have been given permission to do so.

## **Allergy Emergency Action Plan (EAP)**

The Emergency Action Plan details the specific steps school staff must take in the event of an emergency and is to be completed annually by the student's physician. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure completion and submit this form to their child's school health office.

## **504 Plan**

If additional individualized accommodations are needed for a particular student, then a 504 Plan should be considered. If a student is suspected of having a qualifying disability under Section 504, the school will convene a Section 504 team to determine eligibility and as needed, appropriate support and services to address the student's individual needs. Under Section 504, a student with a physical impairment which substantially limits a major life activity, such as caring for oneself, may meet the definition of a student with a disability. If the student has a qualifying disability, the 504 team will determine how the disability limits access to school programs and whether the student is eligible for protection from discrimination under Section 504. If the student is protected under Section 504, an individualized Section 504 Plan will be developed and implemented to provide the needed support so that the student can access his or her education as effectively as students without disabilities.

Please see the provided glossary for explanations of additional commonly used terms.

## **General Guidelines**

### **Guidelines for Students with Life-Threatening Allergies**

The long-term goal is for the student with life threatening allergies to be independent in the prevention, care, and management of their food allergies and reactions based on their developmental level. To this end students with life-threatening allergies are asked to follow these guidelines.

- Do not trade or share foods.
- Wash hands or use hand wipes before and after eating.
- Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction and notify an adult immediately if a reaction is suspected.
- Promptly inform an adult as soon as suspected exposure occurs or symptoms appear.
- Develop a relationship with the Health Office Personnel in your building and at least one other trusted adult in the school to assist in identifying issues related to handling your food allergy in school.
- Do not eat anything with unknown ingredients or ingredients known to contain an allergen.
- If able to do so, develop a habit of always reading ingredients before eating food.
- Never board the bus if you are experiencing any symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- Wear a Medic Alert bracelet if appropriate.
- Self-advocate in situations that you may view as potentially harmful.

### **Guidelines for Parents/Guardians**

Parents are asked to assist the school in the prevention, care, and management of their child's food allergies and reactions. Additionally, parents are encouraged to foster independence on the part of their child, based on her/his developmental level. To achieve this goal, parents are asked to follow these guidelines.

- Contact the health office personnel in your child's school regarding our child's allergies prior to the opening of school (or immediately after a diagnosis or any changes in your child's medical status).
- Indicate your child's allergy on the medical page through the annual registration process.
- Complete the district's [Allergy Packet\\_2024.docx.pdf](#) . Care plans are to be renewed annually.

- Provide annual updates on your child's allergy status through the parent questionnaire.
- Review District 65 Medication Policy and provide unexpired epinephrine and other necessary medication(s).
- Provide a Medic Alert bracelet for your child if appropriate.
- Notify supervisors and coaches of before and after school activities, regarding your child's allergy and provide necessary medication and a copy of your child's Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Medication Treatment Authorization.
- Introduce your child to the health office personnel, teacher, bus driver, lunchroom supervisor and playground supervisor, if appropriate, to explain your child's allergy.
- Consider attending your child's field trip, if requested.

Provide the following *completed and signed* documents:

- Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization with a *current* picture of your child;
- D65 Medication Request Form;
- Self-Carry/Self-Administration Authorization (*completed by both parent and physician*), if age-appropriate;

Parents are also asked to follow the following guidelines regarding food at school:

- If applicable, remind your child to sit at the designated allergy table (if available) in the cafeteria and discourage them from eating other children's food.
- Provide safe classroom snacks for your own child.
- For lunch at school review menus and then reconfirm daily food choices.

**It is important that children take increased responsibility for their allergies as they grow older and as they become developmentally ready. Consider teaching your child to:**

- Understand the seriousness and recognize the first symptoms of an allergic/anaphylactic reaction and notify an adult immediately.
- Carry their own EpiPen when appropriate and be trained in how to administer their own EpiPen, if age appropriate, and the self-carry/self-administration forms are completed and submitted to the school health office.
- Recognize safe and unsafe foods and do not share snacks, lunches, or drinks.
- Encourage the habit of reading ingredient labels before eating food.
- Understand the importance of hand washing before and after eating.
- Report teasing, bullying, and threats to an adult authority.
- Inform others of their allergies and specific needs.

### **Guidelines for School Administration**

Administrators are asked to assist the school team in the prevention, care, and management of children with food allergies and reactions. Educators are encouraged to foster independence on the part of children, based on her/his developmental level.

- Review and be familiar with the D65 Resource Guide for Supporting Students with Life-Threatening Allergies.

- Participate in in-service training on the identification of anaphylaxis, risk-reduction and emergency response procedures annually.
- Offer and arrange training & education for faculty and staff regarding:
  - Allergies, insect stings, medications, latex, *etc.*
  - Emergency and Risk reduction procedures.
  - How to administer an EpiPen for an emergency.
  - Special training for food service personnel and lunch/recess monitors.
- Provide emergency communication devices or procedures for all school activities, including PE, lunch recess and transportation that involve a student with life-threatening allergies.
- Remind staff to post the Health Office and Main Office phone numbers on or near their room phone and remind them how to call 911 from their room phone.
- Inform staff members to include student health information in their subfolder and emergency response procedures.
- Ensure that substitutes are made aware of the following: ***“If this is the first-time in their assigned classroom, see the Health Office Person for training in implementing the Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization and how to administer an EpiPen. Do not eat lunch in the classroom, when there is a known allergy.”***
- If medically necessitated in a 504 Plan, arrange for a designated allergy aware table in the lunchroom and/or provide an allergy free lunch substitute.
- Have hand washing available for student use next to or in the lunchroom.
- Ensure staff communicate upcoming field trips in a timely manner to families and health office personnel.
- Provide district approved cleaning products to faculty and staff.
- Provide training for custodians on proper cleaning and sanitation pertaining to food allergies throughout the classroom.
- Ensure that an administrator accompanies the child to the hospital in the event that 911 has been called.
- Plan for student transitions each spring for the next school year.

### **Guidelines for Health Office Personnel (HOP)**

When it comes to the school care of children with life-threatening allergies, HOP are actively involved. HOP are asked to assist the school team in both prevention and emergency care of children with food allergies and reactions. It is the responsibility of the school health office personnel:

- Review the District 65 Resource Guide for Supporting Students with Life-Threatening Allergies.
- Contact parents/guardians to obtain the required allergy information and completed forms. Confirm all emergency contact information with parent/guardian.
- Meet with the student at the beginning of the school year (or upon diagnosis) to review procedures in the event of an emergency.
- Work with the building 504 coordinator, parents and school staff to create a 504 plan if determined that the allergy has a significantly adverse impact on several educational domains.
- Distribute final copies of student emergency actions plans to staff on a need-to-know basis.
- Participate in in-service training on the identification of anaphylaxis, risk-reduction and emergency response procedures annually.
- Conduct and track attendance of Epinephrine, “EpiPen” Administration training for staff that work with students with life-threatening allergies at beginning of school and after mid-year break.

- In the Health Office identify and label location of emergency medication
- Ensure that EpiPens are NOT kept in a locked area but are kept in an easily identifiable and accessible area; and
- Periodically check medications including, EpiPens and Benadryl, for expiration dates and arrange for them to be current.
- Ensure that the Health Office Sub Instructions clearly designate where the EpiPens are kept and that all Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorizations are properly filed in the Health Office Medication Log Book.
- Be able to communicate with playground staff and Physical Education teachers via a communication device.
- Ensure that the student's medication and emergency care plan are provided to the student's teachers for all field trips.

### **Guidelines for the Classroom Teacher**

Teachers are asked to assist the school team in the prevention, care, and management of children with food allergies and reactions. Educators are encouraged to foster independence on the part of children, based on her/his developmental level. Prior to the start of school or as soon as possible, teachers will receive a copy of your child's Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization and if warranted the 504 Plan of any student(s) in the classroom with life-threatening allergies.

- Review the District 65 Resource Guide for Supporting Students with Life-Threatening Allergies.
- Participate in in-service training on the identification of anaphylaxis, risk-reduction and emergency response procedures annually.
- Participate in any team meetings for the student with life-threatening allergies when invited.
- Keep the student's Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization with student photo accessible in the classroom.
- Be sure both student teacher and classroom aides are informed of the student's food allergies. (Seek training and information from Health Office Personnel and the D65 online training tutorial program on food allergies).
- Leave information for substitute teachers in an organized, prominent, and accessible format. Follow building guidelines for subfolders.
- Reinforce school guidelines on bullying and teasing to avoid stigmatizing or harassing students with food allergies.
- Inform parents of the students with a life-threatening allergy in advance of any in-class events where food will be served.
- Never question or hesitate to immediately initiate the Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization if a student reports signs of an allergic reaction.
- Contact HOP and administrators in the event a student exhibits signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction. Do not wait.
- Students with food allergies should not be sent home on the bus if they report any symptoms of an allergic reaction, even if the symptoms may be considered "minor".
- Designate times for hand washing anytime students come into contact with food in the classroom.



### **Snacks/Lunch Time**

- Work with parent/guardian to provide alternative snacks if necessary. Create alternate snack locations for students with known food allergies.
- If contamination of foods is suspected, have the students wipe down their own individual desk with paper towels and the Sani-Master IV spray bottle (to be provided by custodian or Health Office Personnel)
- Reinforce hand washing before and after eating.

### **Classroom Activities**

- Consider the presence of allergenic foods in classroom activities (e.g., arts and crafts, science projects, or other projects and celebrations). Modify class materials as needed.
- If a food event has been held in an allergic child's classroom(s), have the custodian wash the tables and chairs.
- Try not to isolate or exclude a child because of allergies e.g., using candy as part of a math lesson.
- Encourage the use of stickers, pencils, or other non-food items as rewards instead of food.
- If an animal is invited to the classroom, special attention must be paid to other allergies children may have (e.g., dander) and to the animal's food (peanuts, soy milk).

### **Field Trips**

- Consider the student when planning a field trip due to a risk of allergen exposure.
- Notify parents and HOP of field trips at least 10 school days prior to the event.
- Collaborate with the building Health Office Personnel prior to planning a field trip. Ensure prescribed medications like EpiPen and/or Benadryl as well as the Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization are taken on field trips.
- Consider eating situations on field trips and plan for prevention of exposure to the student's life-threatening foods.
- Consider inviting parents of the student at risk for anaphylaxis to accompany their child on school trips, in addition to the chaperone(s). However, the parents' presence on a field trip is not required.
- If a parent cannot accompany their child on a field trip, that student must be in the teacher's group, not that of a volunteer.
- Consider ways to clean your hands before and after eating (e.g. provision of hand wipes, etc.)
- Identify one staff member who will be assigned the task of watching out for the student's welfare and handling any emergency.
- Plan for the availability of a communication device.

## **Lunchroom Guidelines**

Because the Food & Nutrition Services Department cannot guarantee that food served in the general lunch program is allergen free, parents or students have access to reading food labels to identify these ingredients in the products used by a school's cafeteria. If medically necessitated through a 504 Plan, the Coordinator of Food & Nutrition Services will make available an allergy free lunch substitute. It is ultimately the responsibility of the parent to decide whether the child will buy the allergy free lunch substitute or bring lunch to school.

### **Guidelines for Coordinator of Food & Nutrition Services**

- Provide sound food handling practices to avoid cross-contamination with potential food allergens.
- Have Food Services Personnel trained annually on safe food handling procedures pertaining to food allergies, e.g., cross-contamination.
- Provide information about reading product food labels and food allergens.
- If requested, meet with the parent/guardian to discuss the student's allergy.
- Instruct your staff to review the Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization and photograph of the student with life-threatening allergies (per parent permission).
- Maintain contact information for manufacturers of food products.
- If applicable, create specific kitchen areas that will be allergen safe e.g. allergen-free prep tables, serving counters.
- Make appropriate substitutions or modifications for meals served to students with food allergies per Medical Authority Modified Meal Request form completed by a medical provider.
- Make available advanced copies of the menu to parents/guardians when requested.
- If requested, have safe meals for field trips.
- Do not use Latex gloves.

### **Guidelines for Recess/Lunchroom Monitors**

- Teachers and staff responsible for lunch and/or recess need to be trained by the school Health Office Personnel to recognize and respond to a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis.
- Take all complaints seriously from any student with a life-threatening allergy by immediately contacting the building Health Office Personnel.
- Encourage hand washing or use of hand wipes for students after eating.
- Ensure that all tables and chairs are thoroughly cleaned after lunch.
- Reinforce that only children with “safe lunches” eat at the allergy free table.
- A Medic Alert bracelet should not be removed but may be covered.
- Adult supervisors may be asked to hold an EpiPen for a child.

## **Transportation Department Guidelines**

The Manager of Transportation will ensure that the Bus Company has a procedure in place for their drivers to know when and how to call 911 in case of an emergency. This includes sharing with bus drivers the allergy guidelines for bus drivers and, when provided, a photograph of the student with life-threatening allergies (with parent permission).

### **Guidelines for the School Bus Driver**

- A student with a suspected allergic reaction, **already in progress**, should not board the bus.
- Call 911 when an allergic reaction is suspected.
- Maintain a policy of no food eating allowed on school buses.
- Clean off seat or move student to clean seat if there are any apparent signs of food contamination.
- If provided, review the photograph of the student with life-threatening allergies (per parent permission).

## **Guidelines for Coaches and Supervisors of School Funded Activities**

- Review the Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization with building Health Office Personnel.
- Make certain that an emergency communication device (e.g., walkie-talkie, intercom, cell phone, etc.) is always present.
- Call 911 if you suspect an allergic reaction.
- Clearly identify who is responsible for keeping the EpiPen and emergency medication and where it will be kept.
- Consider the presence of allergenic foods in classroom or gym activities (e.g., arts and crafts, and celebrations, or other projects). Modify class materials as needed.
- Medic Alert identifications may be covered or taped but must not be removed for activities.

## **Guidelines for Undesignated Epinephrine**

Schools may maintain undesignated prescription epinephrine injectors, and standing protocol for the administration of such medications, for emergency use. No one, including without limitation, parents/guardians of students, should rely on the school or district for the availability of undesignated medication. This does not guarantee the availability of undesignated medications. Students and their parents/guardians should consult their own physician regarding these medication(s). The district, its employees and agents, including a physician, physician assistant or advance practice nurse providing the prescription and/or standing protocol will incur no liability, except for willful or wanton conduct, as a result of an injury arising from the administration of undesignated medications, regardless of whether authorization was given by the student's parent/guardian or the student's health care provider. If you choose to exclude your child from the administration of any of the undesignated medication, you will need to submit a written request indicating such to your Building Principal.

## Sample Food Allergy Letter

Re: Attention—Food Allergy Alert

Dear Parents,

One of the children in our classroom has a severe, life-threatening allergy to \_\_\_\_\_. This means that any accidental exposure could ultimately cause death within a short period of time if not treated promptly. We all need to work together to ensure a safe school environment for this child.

In an effort to allow this student to participate fully in all class activities, we ask that you help us ensure that the classroom is a “\_\_\_\_\_” environment. Strict avoidance of these foods and all foods with these ingredients as products, by-products, and residue is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction. Please do not send any foods or food products, which contain these items to be eaten in the classroom—we will not be able to serve them. This policy includes the daily snack as well as any special class treats you may send for birthdays, holidays, parties or other special events. In the school cafeteria we have designated a specific table that is a “\_\_\_\_\_ Free Zone” for the entire school year. Our special table is in the same area of the cafeteria where the class eats its lunch. The child with food allergies will be seated at this table, as will any classmates who have a “safe lunch”—one that is “\_\_\_\_\_”. We encourage all parents to pack \_\_\_\_\_ free lunches so this child will not have to eat alone and can socialize with other classmates.

Any efforts in this regard are greatly appreciated! Please feel free to contact our school principal or me, with any questions or concerns and we thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Classroom Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Principal

cc: Classroom Sub Folder

For Peanuts and/or Nut Allergies Only: Parents, please take an extra minute to carefully read the food ingredients label of any snack or treat BEFORE your child brings it to school. Also, some packages state that the food item —mayll contain peanuts or nuts. These items need also to be avoided because they are made on the same production line as another food that does contain peanuts or nuts and cross-contamination can occur (example, plain M&Ms are made on the same line as peanut M&Ms).

## Carta sobre alergia alimenticia

Asunto: Atención—Alerta de alergia alimenticia

Estimados padres de familia,

Uno de los niños en nuestro salón de clases tiene una alergia **hacia \_\_\_\_\_ la cual es severa y que pone en peligro la vida**. Esto significa que toda exposición accidental podría ocasionar la muerte en un periodo de tiempo corto si es que no se atiende rápido. Necesitamos trabajar de manera conjunta para garantizar un ambiente seguro para este niño.

En un esfuerzo para permitir a este estudiante el participar de manera integral en todas las actividades de su clase, les pedimos que nos ayuden a asegurarnos de que el salón es un ambiente “\_\_\_\_\_”. El evitar de manera estricta estas comidas y de todas las comidas que contengan estos ingredientes, tanto en los productos como en los productos derivados o en residuos, es la única manera de prevenir una reacción alérgica. **Por favor, no mande al salón de clases ningún producto o alimentos** que contengan estos ingredientes – no podremos servirlos. Esta política incluye los bocadillos diarios así como cualquier postre o golosina que manden en los cumpleaños, días de fiesta, celebraciones u en otros eventos especiales.

Hemos designado una **mesa específica que será una —zona libre de “\_\_\_\_\_”** en la cafetería de la escuela, durante todo el año escolar. Nuestra mesa especial está en la misma área de la cafetería en donde la clase toma su almuerzo. El niño que tenga alergias alimenticias se sentará ahí al igual que todos sus compañeros que tengan un **“almuerzo seguro”**—uno que sea “\_\_\_\_\_”. Invitamos a todos los padres de familia a que manden en la bolsa del almuerzo de sus hijos, almuerzos que no contengan \_\_\_\_\_ para que este niño no tenga que comer solo y pueda socializar con otros compañeros. ¡De antemano se agradece cualquier esfuerzo relacionado con este asunto!

Por favor, comuníquense con confianza con el/la directora(a) de nuestra escuela o conmigo acerca de cualquier pregunta o preocupación que tengan. Les agradecemos su comprensión y su cooperación.

Atentamente,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Maestro(a) del salón de clases

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director(a) de la escuela

ccp: Sub-Expediente del salón de clases

Sólo para alergias relacionadas con cacahuates y/o nueces: Padres de familia, por favor tomen un minuto extra de su tiempo para leer cuidadosamente la etiqueta de los ingredientes en todos los alimentos o bocadillos ANTES de que sus hijos los traigan a la escuela. Así mismo, algunos empaques dicen que los alimentos —puedenll contener cacahuates o nueces. También estos artículos deben evitarse porque están elaborados en la misma línea de producción de otros alimentos que contienen cacahuates o nueces y puede haber una contaminación indirecta (ejemplo: las —lunetasll de chocolate confitado = M&Ms, se producen en la misma línea donde se producen los cacahuates marca M&Ms).

## GLOSSARY

**Acute-** Symptoms that occur suddenly and have a short and severe course.

**Adrenaline-** Synonym for epinephrine.

**Allergen-** A substance that can cause an allergic reaction. For some students, milk is an allergen.

**Allergic Reaction-** An immune system response to a substance that itself is not harmful but that the body interprets as harmful. When an allergen is eaten, the food allergic student produces histamine. Once the histamine is released in the body it causes chemical reactions which trigger inflammatory reactions in the skin (itching, hives, rash), the respiratory system (cough, difficulty breathing, wheezing) the gastrointestinal tract (vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain), and the cardiovascular system (lowered blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, shock) Each person with a food allergy reacts to the allergy differently. Each reaction by a food allergic student may differ in symptoms.

**Allergy Warning Label-** A bright colored label placed on the substitute teacher's folder in the classroom alerting the substitute to look for information in the folder regarding the food allergic student.

**Anaphylactic Reaction-** Syn. for Anaphylaxis

**Anaphylaxis-** It is an immediate potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. The most dangerous symptoms include breathing difficulties, and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which can be fatal. Asthmatic students are at an increased risk for anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis often involves various areas of the body at once such as the skin (itching, hives, rash), the respiratory system (cough, difficulty breathing, wheezing) the gastrointestinal tract (vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain), and the cardiovascular system (lowered blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, shock). The drug to immediately use to abate anaphylaxis is Epinephrine (contained in an EpiPen or EpiPen Jr.).

**Antihistamine-** A drug that stops histamine from being released in the body during an allergic reaction. Benadryl is an example of an antihistamine.

**Asthma-** A disease of the lungs in which there is widespread narrowing of airways. The airways become clogged with mucus. Students with asthma and food allergies appear to be at an increased risk for fatal anaphylaxis. Epinephrine is the first-line of defense for an anaphylactic reaction even with a child with asthma medicine.

**Chronic-** Symptoms that occur frequently or last a long time.

**Consumer Hotline** (for food staff)- Major food distributors toll-free numbers usually found on packaging. Can be used to check for additional information on ingredients in a food or the foods processing procedures. (e.g., cross-contamination)

**Cross Contamination-** When a pan, utensil, or food that is a known allergen comes in contact with a food that is allergen free it contaminates it. The allergen free food is now unsafe for a student allergic to the food it was contaminated with.

**Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization** - A plan developed annually by the student's physician which explains exactly what steps are taken if a child has an allergic reaction. It usually has the student's recent photograph on the plan.

**EpiPen**- By prescription only. It is a device that, once activated, will automatically inject one measured dose of epinephrine when jabbed into the thigh. The EpiPen is contained in an orange cylindrical container as the medicine is light sensitive. Once out of the container, the EpiPen's blue (or gray) cap is removed, and it is activated and ready to use. It is firmly jabbed, with orange (or black) tip, on the allergic student's outer thigh. After a 10 second hold, the EpiPen is removed, and the area is massaged. If the orange tip has elongated (or the needle is projecting from the thick black tip), then the medicine has been injected. If you do not see one of these signs, then jab again. An EpiPen simply abates allergic symptoms for 15-20 minutes. Symptoms may reappear if prompt medical attention is not given to the allergic student. Always call for emergency personnel when epinephrine is given.

**EpiPen Jr.**- It operates the same as the EpiPen. It has the same medicine as in the EpiPen but at a lower dose for lighter weight children. Like the EpiPen, it delivers one dose only. The newer EpiPen Jr. has green packaging which distinguishes it from the yellow EpiPen. Always call for emergency personnel when epinephrine is given.

**Epinephrine**- The medicine contained in the EpiPen and EpiPen Jr.; the drug of choice for anaphylaxis. It is the first medicine that should be used in the emergency management of a child having a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. It is synonymous with adrenaline. There are no contraindications to the use of epinephrine for a life-threatening allergic reaction. Always call for emergency personnel when epinephrine is given.

**FAAN**- Acronym for the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network that has educational material on food allergies. Each school nurse has FAAN's School Food Allergy Program.

**504 Plan**- Refers to a section in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which prohibits discrimination against a qualified handicapped individual by any program that receives federal funds. It is a legal document. It confers rights upon the parents by establishing a grievance procedure if the parents and school team do not agree on an issue in the Plan or if the Plan is violated. The parents are entitled to a due process hearing if the grievance cannot be eliminated through the school channels. There are administrative and federal court procedures. A 504 Plan encompasses the student's Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization, and any other documents the parents and school deem relevant.

**Food Allergy**- An immune system response to a certain food. Upon ingestion, the body creates antibodies to that food. When the antibodies react with the food, histamine and other chemicals are released from cells. The release of those chemicals may cause hives, difficulty breathing, or other symptoms of an allergic reaction. See Allergic Reaction, above.

**Histamine**- A chemical released by the body during an allergic reaction. It causes the symptoms listed above in Allergic Reaction.

**Hives**- Itchy, red, mosquito-like bumps that may appear anywhere on the skin. Often a symptom of an allergic reaction.

**Latex-** A synthetic rubber. It is an allergen for some people. It is commonly found in rubber gloves and balloons.

**Life Threatening Food Allergy-** Students with allergies have over-reactive immune systems. The immune system produces chemicals and histamine which cause severe symptoms in the body (e.g., swelling, breathing difficulty or shock). See Allergic Reaction, above. Epinephrine found in the EpiPen is the recommended treatment.

**Medic Alert Bracelet/Necklace-** A necklace or bracelet worn by an allergic student that states the allergens and gives a telephone number for additional information.

**Periodic Anaphylaxis Drill-** Practice in procedures that would be carried out if there were an anaphylactic emergency. The drill may include but is not limited to: who helps the student, who retrieves the EpiPen or administers it, who calls 9-1-1, and who directs the paramedics to the child.

### **Resources:**

Centers for Disease Control - Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies In Schools and Early Care and Education Programs

Illinois State Board of Education. Anaphylaxis Response Policy for Illinois Schools.

FARE Food Allergy Research & Education

District 25 (Arlington Heights) Resource Guide

District 39 (Wilmette) Resource Guide

District 64 (Park Ridge-Niles) Guidelines