

Policy

FOOD ALLERGIES

The Chester Board of Education strives to provide a safe environment for students in the district. The Board recognizes that some students may have food allergies and/or potentially suffer food-induced anaphylaxis - a sudden, severe, potentially fatal, systemic allergic reaction that may be a threat to the student's safety.

The Board and the families of allergic students acknowledge that despite our best efforts, we cannot guarantee an environment absolutely free of allergens. The goal of this policy is to create an allergy aware school which will reduce the risks to all children with life-threatening food allergies.

The Board recognizes that to maximize the safety of students with life threatening food allergies, communication and cooperation between the school and parents/guardians is essential. It is the responsibility of parents to notify the principal and the school nurse of students with medically documented food allergies and to provide a written Emergency Medical Protocol (EMP) developed by the student's physician as soon as the student is diagnosed with a food allergy or anaphylaxis to food. The school does not have diagnostic ability or responsibility.

The principal and the school nurse will then notify the pertinent school staff and will work with the parent/guardian to develop an Individual Health Plan (IHP), and to implement appropriate accommodations and safety protocols for each food allergic or anaphylactic student in accordance with their medical needs and level of maturity.

The Board of Education understands that the most common allergy affecting students of this age is allergies to peanuts and/or tree nuts. Therefore, the building principal and the school nurse will take appropriate precautions for the safety of students with food allergies and anaphylaxis to food. Whenever possible, peanut and/or nut-free classrooms will be established where peanut and/or foods that contain nuts will be prohibited from being consumed in all district classrooms. Snack time exceptions will only be made when deemed medically necessary. This prohibition will be extended and followed by all outside and extra-curricular groups using the district's classrooms.

Examples of the precautions and protocols implemented by the building principal and school nurse may include, but are not limited to:

- A. Development of an IHP and an EMP for all food allergic children.
- B. All food allergic children should wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace provided by their parents.
- C. Upon parental approval, students' names, pictures and their allergies will be discreetly posted in the kitchen, cafeteria, nurses' office and classroom.
- D. Epi-pens and other medical interventions for children with food allergies will be placed in strategic locations throughout the school and will travel with the child when off of school property (i.e. the cafeteria and with a lunchtime supervisor at recess.)

FOOD ALLERGIES (continued)

- E. Educating the school community including the students, faculty, staff, lunch aides, bus drivers, substitute teachers, custodians, and all parents about food allergies and the school's food allergy policy (i.e., letters from principal or school nurse to parents; written policy in school handbook; classroom education, and presentations at Back to School Night, faculty meetings and parent/teacher conferences).
- F. For all classroom parties and school-wide parties, any food to be served must be ordered from the district's food service provider, Sodexo, who will ensure that it is peanut/nut-free and safe for students with those food allergies to consume.
- G. Food sharing amongst students in the classroom and cafeteria will be strongly discouraged.

More information on procedures and protocols can be found in the Food Allergies Regulations 5141.23.

Response during Allergic Reaction

The Board of Education recognizes a student's health and safety may be contingent upon the timely administration of medication duly prescribed by a physician, and that the Board of Education must follow the physician mandated, written EMP provided to the school by the student's physician through the parents. Any administration of medications to students in school will be in accordance with policy 5141.21 Administering Medication and applicable laws.

The EMP will dictate necessary accommodations for field trips and other school activities. If necessary accommodations cannot be provided according to the EMP plan, alternate accommodations may be provided.

All emergency medications and a copy of the EMP for each student must be brought on every trip. In addition, a cell phone must be available on each trip in case of emergency. The district's field trip request forms will include the provision of the above along with a copy of the district's 911 protocol for all emergencies.

The school nurse or trained designee will provide training to all school staff on allergies and allergic reactions including but not limited to: recognizing symptoms and procedures for intervention in an emergency situation. The school nurse or trained designee will also work with other staff as appropriate or required to reduce the risk of allergic reactions.

Grade Level/Whole School Celebrations

The district shall rely upon our food services management company to offer food and beverage items that are peanut/tree nut free, and/or allergen free dependent upon the circumstances in that particular classroom. However, the district recognizes that the risk of cross contamination cannot be entirely eliminated.

At times food may be provided to students by outside vendors, and served as part of a classroom experience, field trip and/or grade level/whole school celebration. The district cannot ensure that the ingredients used in the preparation of all food and beverage items served within the school are allergen free. Therefore, the parents/guardians of the student with food allergies or anaphylaxis to food must be responsible for ensuring that the food consumed by their child is safe and peanut and/or nut free under these circumstances. The teacher will provide the parents/guardians with advance notice of the classroom experience, field trip and/or grade level/whole school celebration in order to discuss effective and efficient alternatives or substitutions for the student.

FOOD ALLERGIES (continued)

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Key Words

Allergy, Anaphylaxis, Food Induced Anaphylaxis, Emergency Medical Protocol (EMP), Individual Health Plan (IHP), Allergic Reaction, Cross Contamination of Food, Epi-Pen

Legal References: N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 General and mandatory duties of the Board
 N.J.S.A. 18A:16-6, -6.1 Indemnity of officers and employees against civil actions ...
 N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.3 Self-administration of medication
 N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.6 Policy requirements

Cross References: *3542 Food service
 *4112.4 Employee health
 *4212.4 Employee health
 *5141 Health
 *5141.2 Illness
 *5141.3 Health examinations and immunizations
 *5141.21 Administering medication
 *5142 Student safety

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.