Rights and Responsibilities for Managing Students with Food Allergies

In order to provide a safe environment for students with food allergies at risk for anaphylaxis, school personnel should work closely with parents and students to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment.

Family's Responsibility

- Notify the school of the child's allergies.
- Work with the school team to develop a Food Allergy Action Plan (FAAP) that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school day, including the classroom, cafeteria, in after-care programs, during school sponsored programs, and on the school bus.
- Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by the physician.
- Provide properly labeled medications and replace medications upon use or expiration.
- Educate the child in self-management of their 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 they may be having an allergy-related problem.
  - How to read food labels (age appropriate).
  - If age appropriate, the importance of carrying and administering their personal asthma and anaphylaxis medications as prescribed.
- Review policies/procedures with the school staff, the child's physician, and the child (if age appropriate) after a reaction has occurred.
- Provide emergency contact information and update as needed.

Student's Responsibility

- Should not trade food with others.
- Should not eat anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen.
- Be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions based upon their developmental level.
- Notify an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic.

School's Responsibility

- Be knowledgeable about and follow applicable federal laws, including ADA, IDEA, Section 504, and FERPA, and any state laws or district policies that apply.
- Review the health records submitted by parents and physicians.
- Include food-allergic students in school activities. Students should not be excluded from school activities solely based on the food allergy.
- Identify a core team of, but not limited to, the school nurse/nurse aide, district lead nurse, teacher, principal, food service personnel, and counselor to work with parents and the student (age appropriate) to establish a prevention plan. Changes to the FAAP to promote management should be made with core team participation.
- Assure that all staff who interact with the student on a regular basis understand food allergy, can recognize symptoms, know what to do in an emergency, and work with other school staff to eliminate the use of food allergens in the allergic student's meals, educational tools, arts and crafts projects, or incentives.
- Practice the FAAP before an allergic reaction occurs to assure the efficiency and effectiveness of the plan.
- Coordinate with school personnel to be sure medications are appropriately stored and be sure that an emergency kit is available that contains a physician's order for epinephrine. Medications should be kept in an easily accessible, centrally located area, not in locked cabinets or drawers. Students should be allowed to carry their own epinephrine, if age appropriate, after approval from the student's physician, parent and school nurse as allowed by state regulations.
- Designate school personnel who are properly trained to administer medications in accordance with state law and district policy.
- Be prepared to handle an allergic reaction and ensure that there is a staff member available who is properly trained to administer medications during the school day regardless of location or time.
- Review policies/FAAP with the core team members, parents/guardians, student (age appropriate), and physician after a reaction has occurred.
- Work with the district transportation administrator to assure that school bus driver training includes symptom awareness and what to do if a reaction occurs.
- Encourage a "no eating" policy on school buses with exceptions made only to accommodate special needs under federal or similar laws, or school district policy.
- Discuss field trips with the family of the food-allergic child to decide appropriate strategies for managing the food allergy.
- Follow federal/state/district laws and regulations regarding sharing medical information about the student.
- Take threats or harassment against an allergic student seriously.