

Life - Threatening Food and Other Allergy - Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Wilmington School Committee to set age-appropriate guidelines for students and schools within the Wilmington system that minimize the risk for children with life-threatening food allergies (LTA) to be exposed to offending allergens that may trigger a life-threatening reaction. Such guidelines shall include: building-based general medical emergency plans, life-threatening food allergy emergency plans, individual healthcare plans for all students diagnosed with LTA, appropriate training of staff, availability of medical equipment on site for quick response to life-threatening allergic reactions, and such other guidelines that will ensure that students with LTA can participate fully in school activities without undue fear of harm from exposure to life-threatening food allergens.

It is the School Committee's expectation that specific building-based guidelines/actions will take into account the health needs and well-being of all children without discrimination or isolation of any child. It is the School Committee's belief that education and open and informative communication are vital for the creation of an environment with reduced risks for all students and their families. In order to assist children with LTA to assume more individual responsibility for maintaining their safety as they grow, it is the policy of the School Committee that the guidelines shift as children advance through the primary grades and through secondary school.

Food Allergy Administrative Guidelines For The Wilmington Public Schools Elementary only

Guidelines and Procedures

In order to minimize the incidence of life-threatening allergic reactions, the Wilmington Public Schools (WPS) will implement the following guidelines and procedures. Guidelines will be implemented in the elementary schools for all school activities during the school day, including the CARES Program before and after school.

School Nurses

1. Food-allergies are a health issue, potentially requiring the administration of prescription medicine (Epinephrine). In the event of an allergic reaction, the presence of a full-time nurse in each school is critical.
2. Each school Principal/school nurse will serve as the lead resource in the school regarding the implementation of the guidelines in that school. The School Nurse will serve as an invaluable medical and guideline resource for other school personnel who are responsible for various aspects of the guidelines, not only in emergency situations but also on an ongoing basis.
3. Every effort will be made to use latex free gloves and latex free medical equipment in the nurse's office.

Allergy Action Plans, Individualized Health Care Plans & 504 Plans

1. An Allergy Action Plan (AAP) is a document containing physician orders and treatment plan for anaphylaxis. It contains the student's name, allergen(s), signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and contact information. Per the WPS medication policy, parent and physician signatures are required. The document may also serve as the student's Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP).
2. If the plan of care involves additional information, an Individualized Health Care Plan may be written. The school nurse is responsible for coordinating and developing the IHCP as indicated by physician orders.

3. A 504 Plan is an accommodation plan for any student who has a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such or is regarded as having such an impairment” so that s/he may access FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education).
4. Upon the request of a physician, the school nurse and school principal/designee in conjunction with the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) and the primary care provider/allergist, will prepare a 504 Accommodation Plan. It will include an AAP and IHCP as indicated.
5. At the elementary level, photographs of students with life threatening allergies (LTA) should be provided by parent/guardian and attached to the AAP.
6. A student’s AAP will be provided to the school nurse annually by a parent/guardian and will always accompany his/her personal Auto-injectable epinephrine. The AAP and Epinephrine will be provided to the school nurse on or before the first day of school annually. Changes in life-threatening food allergy status must be provided by the parent and physician in writing.

Training/Education for School Personnel

1. The Wilmington Public Schools, in collaboration with Health Services, will provide and offer training and education on the food allergy guidelines and procedures for Wilmington Public School educational support personnel, including, but not limited to staff, student teachers, and substitutes.
2. WPS will provide the training which will include, but not be limited to
 - A description/definition of severe allergies and a discussion of the most common food, medication, latex and stinging insect allergies;
 - The signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis;
 - The correct use of an Auto-injectable epinephrine;
 - Specific steps to follow in the event of an emergency;
 - The storage and placement of individual Auto-injectable epinephrines and AAPs;
 - The purpose and contents of the AAP and/or 504 plans;
 - The importance of handwashing with soap and water &/or wipes (notes: hand sanitizer does not remove peanut protein and therefore is not considered an alternative when soap and water aren’t readily available).
3. The Nurse Leader, Principal, School Nurse and/or their designees will schedule the training and implement training for all appropriate employees annually.
4. At the parent/guardian request, an orientation meeting will be held between the food-allergic child, the child’s teacher, the school nurse, and parents to discuss the various aspects of the child’s allergy and action plan. All efforts will be made to complete this meeting at the end of the school year or prior to the next school year.
5. Staff will be made aware of all students with life-threatening allergies. As a means of sharing information with substitute teachers, student’s individual life-threatening allergy information will remain current in the sub folder, i.e. IHCP, AAP, 504 plans.

Student and Parent Education

1. Our goal with building-based education will be to raise the level of awareness about the problem of life-threatening allergies, in order that we might create a safe environment for learning for children with serious allergies. Building-based education might include, but is not limited to the following:
 - PAC workshop on Food Allergies; On-line Anaphylaxis & EpiPen Training
 - Integrating Food Allergies into the health curriculum
 - Including the Wilmington Schools Food Allergies Guidelines in all student handbooks;
 - Promoting alternatives to foods (ex: pencils and stickers) for birthday and holiday celebrations;

- Delivering a classroom segment on allergy education/awareness.
2. If appropriate and indicated in a 504 accommodation plan by a board certified allergist, a classroom letter from the school nurse/principal &/or designee will be sent to all students in the classroom at the beginning of the school year notifying them of the life-threatening allergy concern. The letter will include the protocol for the classroom and cafeteria based on the needs of the children with the LTAs in the class. All parents will be required to return the letter with their signature indicating that they have read and agree to the classroom and cafeteria protocol for that particular year. See Acknowledgement Letter attached.
 3. All activities and celebrations will be food-free.
 4. It is highly recommended that students with known life-threatening allergies wear medical alert identification.
 5. Life-threatening Food Allergy transition programs will be offered for students entering grades 1 & 4
 6. Upon availability, life-threatening Food Allergy health curriculum will be implemented for students in grade 1 and 5; and will include a food bullying unit

Cafeteria Protocol

Cafeteria protocols should include, but are not be limited to the following:

- Allergy identification in the POS system for students purchasing food items in the cafeteria
- For Early Childhood schools (preK/K), all students with peanut and/or tree nut allergies will be required to sit at peanut/tree nut-free table, unless otherwise indicated in writing by a parent
- For Grades 1-5, on or before the first day of school, parents will notify the school nurse in writing regarding their child's seating preference, i.e. peanut/nut-free table or general population. If written notification is not received by the school nurse, students will automatically be placed at the peanut/tree nut free lunch table.
- Serve lunches that are peanut and tree nut safe in grades Prek to 5 (peanut butter sandwiches will be not be served).
- Students without life-threatening food allergies are not restricted as to what they bring from home for lunch.
- For Grades 1-5, products/vendors with disclaimers that state "manufactured in a facility or may contain" will be identified by food services

1. Cafeteria Tables and Seating

Examples of Cafeteria tables/seating protocols in the Elementary schools currently

- Upon parent/guardian request in writing, peanut/tree nut free table(s) will be available for students.
 - These tables will be designated by a unique universal symbol. (Example: FARE Food Allergy Research and Education sign, see example.)
 - These peanut/tree nut free tables will be cleaned by an adult prior to the beginning of each lunch session and again at the end of the lunch session.
2. WPS will promote "NO FOOD TRADING" and "NO UTENSIL SHARING" PRACTICES in all schools with particular focus at the elementary school level.
 3. Food service employees will only use latex free gloves.

4. The Director of Food Service and all food service personnel will be trained how to read product labels to recognize food allergens.
5. The Director of Food Service will contact manufacturers to ensure that all food sold in the schools have ingredient labels. Ingredient labels will be accumulated by the Director of Food Service to maintain on file.
6. For Grades PreK/K, the Director of Food Service will not purchase and distribute foods containing peanuts and tree-nuts since they are the most life-threatening allergens.
7. For Grades 1-5, the Director of Food Service will limit the purchase and distribution of foods containing peanuts and tree-nuts since they are the most life-threatening allergens.
8. Wilmington Public School employees cannot be held responsible for companies that change ingredients or manufacturing without notification or proper labeling

Classroom protocol

1. School buildings are public buildings and as such are considered an environment that cannot be guaranteed free from allergens. Every parent is encouraged to independently review ingredient labels and make sure of its accuracy. Wilmington Public School employees cannot be held responsible for companies that change ingredients or manufacturing without notification or proper labeling. This is based on the best information available to the Wilmington Public Schools. Handwashing will be strongly encouraged throughout the school day and staff will be reminded that hand sanitizer does not remove peanut protein. The following age-appropriate Allergen Safe protocols will be implemented:
 - a. **Preschool/Kindergarten:**
 - i. All snacks sent in from home will be peanut/tree nut-free and will contain an ingredient label or a list of ingredients. It is preferred that snacks from home be pre-packaged with an ingredient label when sent into school.
 - ii. A suggested peanut/nut-free snack list will be provided.
 - b. **Grade 1-5:**
 - i. All snacks sent in from home will be peanut/tree nut-free. Parents are strongly encouraged to carefully read labels when selecting snacks.
 - ii. A suggested peanut/nut-free snack list will be provided.
2. The school will promote "NO FOOD TRADING" and "NO UTENSIL SHARING" policies.
3. There will be no food-related activities, i.e. popsicles, hoodies, lollipops, etc. Birthdays can be celebrated with non-food products.
4. Class projects and manipulatives will remain free of major allergens. For example, any organic materials, such as birdseed, play dough; clay, etc. should be pre-approved by parents of allergic children to avoid accidental exposure to allergens, i.e. nuts that may be included in the birdseed, or wheat that may be included in the clay, etc. Special care should be taken when using recycled materials such as milk containers or egg containers, etc. since trace amounts of food previously contained in these materials may be present. The classroom teacher is responsible for consulting with the school nurse prior to implementing class projects and manipulatives.
5. In addition to the AAP & Epinephrine on hand in the nurse's office, if applicable and ordered by the physician, an extra Auto-injectable Epinephrine and copy of the child's AAP will be made available to the school. This will be provided by the parent/guardian in a labeled bag. Storage will be in accordance with MDPH.
6. In certain circumstances, an Auto-injectable epinephrine and AAP will travel with the child between classes, to the playground, to the gym, at the physician's request if part of the IHCP plan.

Custodial Protocol

1. The Director of Business and Finance will work with the Superintendent of Public Buildings to establish a procedure to instruct the custodial staff, cafeteria staff and/or responsible adult to:

- a. thoroughly clean allergen-free tables and chairs between lunches, and
- b. sweep the floors under and around allergen-free tables and chairs
2. Separate disposable cloths and cleaning solution should be used on the Peanut/Nut free tables.
3. All soaps and cleaning solutions need to be allergen-free and approved by the school district.
4. Student with food allergies will not be assigned as table washers, where applicable.
5. All schools will only use latex free gloves.

Field Trip Management

1. Whenever students travel on field trips for school, a clear plan to activate Emergency Medical Services (911) will be developed and reviewed by administration and his/her designee.
2. Field trips need to be chosen carefully; no child should be excluded from a field trip due to the potential of unavoidable allergen exposure.
3. The AAP and Auto-injectable epinephrine will accompany the allergic student on all field trips.
4. All students with Auto-injectable Epinephrine will automatically be placed with an Epinephrine trained teacher or staff member. In some circumstances, a parent of the LTA student may be asked to attend the field trip.
5. If applicable, there will be a designated area for students with allergens to eat. Teachers will encourage students to wash hands with soap and water. If soap and water is not readily available, hand wipes may be used by students after eating and/or if needed, prior to boarding the bus for the return trip to the school. Reminder: hand sanitizer does not remove peanut protein.
6. Per the district policy, No Eating is allowed on the bus.
7. No Food Trading and No Utensil Sharing will be allowed.

Transportation

1. Transportation emergency cards are available for children with medical alert conditions, i.e. life-threatening allergy. A parent/guardian is responsible for completing the card and attaching a picture of their child in the space provided. All transportation cards are to be mailed or delivered directly to the transportation department prior to the first day of school annually. See card for Transportation Department address. For safety reasons, parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to verbally report life-threatening allergies directly to the bus driver.
2. Bus/minibus drivers will strictly enforce No Eating on the bus, per the district policy.
3. In the event of an emergency:
 - a. the contracted bus driver (yellow school bus) will follow the protocol of the bus company
 - b. the WPS minibus driver will follow the district protocol.

Emergency Response Protocol

1. WPS administrators are responsible for creating a system-wide emergency plan for addressing life-threatening allergic reactions. This plan will be included in all life-threatening allergy training for employees, including substitutes. Per MDPH protocol, this plan shall identify personnel who will:
 - a. Remain with the student
 - b. Assess the emergency at hand
 - c. Refer to the student's AAP
 - d. Administer the Auto-injectable epinephrine
 - e. Contact Emergency Response personnel (ex: 9-1-1, EMS); when placing the call, specify the problem: Student is in Anaphylaxis and was given Epinephrine.
 - f. Specify entrance and indicate the number on the school's outside door closest to the student

- g. Send someone to meet the Emergency Response personnel
 - h. Note time of Epinephrine administration & hand over to EMS upon arrival
 - i. Notify school administration
 - j. Attend to student's classmates
 - k. Accompany student to emergency care facility (designated school official, not the school nurse) Note: may not be necessary if parent/guardian accompanies student
 - l. Notify the parent or guardian of which hospital facility the student is being transported to for further evaluation.
2. Identify a plan for the student's re-entry into school.
 3. All **cell phones** owned by the school will be pre-programmed with the phone number for the Wilmington Police Department **978-658-3331** and the Wilmington Fire Department **978-658-3346** to ensure speedy response.

Auto-injectable epinephrine Protocol – See WPS Medication Policy

1. Whenever an Auto-injectable Epinephrine is administered, an Emergency Response unit (ex: 911) must be notified and called to the scene. Emergency personnel will evaluate the student and determine the appropriate action. Per MDPH protocol, the student must be transported to the closest medical facility for further evaluation.
2. Auto-injectable Epinephrine (school-supplied stock Epinephrine and student prescribed Epinephrine) will be available in the nurse's office in clearly designated locations. Per MDPH protocol, all Epinephrine will be safely stored in an unlocked location for easy access in an emergency.
3. All auto-injectable Epinephrine will be stored in the nurse's office, except in the case of a second Epinephrine. (See classroom protocol #5-6). Note: for easy access and safety reasons, the CARES program requires separate medication to be provided for the before and after-school program.
4. All Auto-injectable Epinephrine management and training will be the responsibility of the building school nurse. Parents/guardians are primarily responsible for monitoring and replacing expired Auto-Injectable Epinephrine.

Resources:

Comprehensive School Health Manual, MA Department of Public Health, 2007

MDPH Data Report for Epinephrine Administration

Managing Life-threatening Food Allergies in School, MA DESE, 2002

Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs, CDC, 2013

Young, Michael C, Peanut Allergy Answer Book, 2006

Allergy Home: www.allergyhome.org

Food Allergy Research and Education: www.fare.org