



## **Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston**

### **Guidelines for the Management of Life Threatening Food Allergies in the School Setting**

In accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's **Guidelines on Managing Life Threatening Food Allergies in Schools**, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston (RCAB) recommends the following **Guidelines for the Management of Life Threatening Food Allergies in the School Setting**. The purposes of the guidelines are to:

- Provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all students;
- Reduce the occurrence of severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reactions during school hours; and
- Provide as rapid and effective response as possible in the case of a severe or potentially life- threatening allergic reaction.

While RCAB cannot ensure a completely allergen-free environment for students with food allergies, we can – through education and compassion – create a safe and respectful place of learning for all students. We follow an inclusive approach, allowing students with food allergies to participate safely in all school activities. In understanding the complexities of Catholic school environments, there may be limitations on the types of reasonable accommodations any school can make.

#### **Overview**

Current recommendations from Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE) do not include using school-wide bans of any specific allergens (peanut or other), because this may provide a false sense of security. In addition, there are many common allergens that may be present in the food children bring to school, such as tree nuts, milk and eggs, and it is impossible to guarantee a school environment free of all allergens. For these reasons, RCAB does not recommend a school-wide food ban. Instead, developmentally appropriate allergen avoidance strategies may be developed and documented in the applicable student's individualized health care plan (IHCP). The best way to protect the safety of a child with food allergies is to encourage allergen awareness and to avoid ingesting foods known to contain allergens.

RCAB recognizes that effective food allergy awareness depends on a cooperative effort among parents/guardians, school nurses, school administrators, primary care physicians, extracurricular advisors, bus/transportation personnel, and any staff members who might be present where children can be exposed to the food allergens that can trigger an allergic reaction. Schools should provide all staff entrusted with the care of students' basic education with training in the prevention and management of allergic conditions.

Based on the individual student needs, the school nurse, with administrative support and authority from the school principal, will generally be the person charged with creating and implementing the applicable plan for the management of a particular students' allergies and the overall allergy awareness program at the school. [If the school does not have a nurse on staff, the Principal or the Principal's designee will generally be the appropriate person in this regard, to the extent the school can reasonably accommodate such a plan.](#)

### **Principal/Designee Guidelines**

- Support training for school staff;
- Require adherence to the guidelines for all school-based personnel; and
- Post signage in the office/front entrance that the facility is an allergy-aware school.

### **School Nurse Guidelines**

- Initiate and coordinate the Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) with the parent/guardian;
- Provide a copy of the IHCP to all pertinent school staff;
- Maintain permitted emergency medication to the extent provided by the parent//guardian and ensure that such medication is available in a designated area in the nurse's office;
- Train staff in EpiPen® administration annually and provide basic education concerning life-threatening allergies including prevention and management of exposure to allergens (those trained in EpiPen® administration should be noted on the student's IHCP);
- Provide a Life Threatening Allergy Packet to parents/guardians which contains: a copy of said policy, a Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan, a Medication Order form to be completed by a Licensed Prescriber, and Parents/Guardians consent for medication administration form, including an authorization to release medical record information;
- Teach hand-washing techniques to students on IHCP for before and after eating (hand-washing with soap and water and/or hand wipes are acceptable means of removing allergens; hand sanitizer is not acceptable);
- Provide Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plans for all known life-threatening allergic students to cafeteria staff;
- Provide the School Bus Emergency Medical Information Form to the bus driver and bus monitors; and
- In the case of a planned field trip, identify known at-risk students, ensure that at least two adults attending the field trip have been trained in EpiPen® administration and life-threatening allergies and ensure that EpiPen® is taken on field trips, or require that the child's parent/guardian attend the field trip.

### **In the Event Your School Does Not Have a Nurse on Staff**

- Volunteer school nurses must have a current license and are subject to all applicable laws and regulations.

### **Parent/Guardian Guidelines**

- Obtain the Life Threatening Allergy Packet from the school nurse;
- Ensure that all forms are completed by the student's health care provider and returned to the school nurse;
- Consider providing the child with a medic alert bracelet or chain for identification;
- Provide all necessary medications to the school nurse and replace used and expired medications;
- Provide the school nurse with current and complete contact information;
- Inform the bus driver and bus monitors of the student's allergy and parents/guardians may provide an EpiPen® to be kept in the student's bag with instructions for use and emergency contact information for those students who are age appropriate as determined by parents/guardians and nurse;
- Together with student's physician, determine if the student can self-medicate and self-carry medication (parents/guardians' consent for medication administration will reflect this self-administration);
- Provide safe snacks for special occasions;
- Inform their child not to share food in school, at recess or on the bus; and
- Make safe and appropriate meal choices for their child from the lunch menu.

### **Cafeteria Guidelines**

- Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plans for all known life-threatening allergic students should be provided by the nurse and kept in the cafeteria/kitchen.
- If the school contracts with a food service vendor, school should ensure the vendor abides by Massachusetts Law and that at least one person present during food service is certified in safe food handling and allergen awareness.
- If the school serves meals and does not use a vendor; i.e., school uses staff or volunteers, school should ensure at least one staff member or volunteer is present at all times who has been certified in safe food handling and allergen awareness. Contact the Office of Risk Management for training: [ormlosscontrol@rcab.org](mailto:ormlosscontrol@rcab.org)
- In consultation with the school nurse, provide cafeteria staff and volunteer lunchroom monitors with training on food allergy safety, specifically on how to (a) minimize the risk of exposure to food allergens, (b) recognize the symptoms of a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction; and (c) enact emergency protocols for administration of epinephrine and summoning emergency medical personnel.
- An allergen aware table may be designated in the cafeteria.

- Custodial and food service staff will be trained in cleaning tables.
- Food services staff should provide a menu well in advance so that parents/guardians and students can select appropriate foods.
- Allergy reminders should be added to point of sales for students with allergies.

### **Teacher/Paraprofessional Classroom Guidelines**

- All teachers, including substitute teachers and paraprofessionals, should attend annual EpiPen® and life-threatening allergy training provided by the school nurse or designated personnel.
- Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plans should be kept in an accessible location and prominent format for substitute teachers.
- In elementary schools, allergy aware desks and/or tables are recommended in all classrooms with known life-threatening allergic children.
- The school nurse will teach hand-washing techniques to students on IHCP for before and after eating in elementary schools. Additional training for the students within the classroom should be provided as appropriate. Hand washing with soap and water are acceptable means of removing allergens. Hand sanitizer is not acceptable.
- Teachers should encourage all students not to share food.
- The teacher should consult with the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of the child with the life-threatening food allergy to determine best options if food is to be offered as part of a celebration. If there is any question regarding any food being served or eaten in the classroom, the student will eat only the snack or treat provided for them by their parent/guardian.
- The teacher will send the life-threatening allergic child to the school nurse's office with an adult if exposure is suspected. If no adult is available to accompany the child to the school nurse's office or a reaction has begun, the nurse will be called to the student's location.
- Latex and all nut products should not be used in any projects in classrooms.

### **Classroom Parent/Volunteer Guidelines**

As an important liaison between the school and parents, volunteers should be informed about the rules regarding food allergy safety. It is the responsibility of classroom parents/volunteers to:

- Familiarize themselves with the school's food allergy policy and procedures.
- Familiarize themselves with any classroom-specific rules regarding food allergy safety.

### **After-Care Program Guidelines**

In order to ensure continuity of care for all students, the Director of After-Care programs should do the following:

- Identify all food-allergic students enrolled in the program.

- Receive copies of student's Individualized Emergency Healthcare Plan.
- Consult with the school nurse on location of epinephrine auto-injectors and other medication.
- Have immediate access to epinephrine auto-injector.
- In consultation with the school nurse, ensure that after-care staff is trained on food allergy safety, specifically on how to (a) minimize the risk of exposure to food allergens (b) recognize the symptoms of a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction; and (c) enact emergency protocols for administration of epinephrine and summoning emergency medical personnel.
- Develop a written plan to provide continuity of care for students with food allergies, with particular emphasis placed on execution of emergency medical protocols.

### **Field Trip Guidelines**

- Teachers should notify the school nurse at least two weeks in advance of a field trip.
- The school nurse will ensure that at least two adults attending the field trip have been trained in EpiPen® administration and life-threatening allergies and ensure that EpiPen® is taken on field trips, or require that the child's parent/guardian attend the field trip.
- The school nurse will ensure that an EpiPen® is taken on field trips.
- A functioning cell-phone will be brought on field trips to call emergency medical services if exposure to allergen is suspected or student experiences an allergic reaction.
- School staff will identify the first aid office or emergency response procedures at the field trip site.

### **Bus Guidelines**

- In accordance with Massachusetts Law [Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 90 § 8(a) (2013)], all new bus drivers are required to receive training in EpiPen® administration. If contracting with a bus company, ask if the designated bus driver has received this training.
- Food and beverages are prohibited from being consumed on school buses. School bus drivers and monitors will re-enforce this policy.
- School bus drivers and monitors will attend EpiPen® and life-threatening food allergy training annually.
- The school bus will be equipped with a functioning cell phone or other device to call 911 in the event of a suspected exposure or allergic reaction.

### **Additional Resources**

The National Association of School Nurses offers a Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis toolkit:

<https://www.nasn.org/ToolsResources/FoodAllergyandAnaphylaxis>

Mylan, the EpiPen® manufacturer, offers savings and in some cases, free EpiPens, for families who qualify. For more information, go to: <https://www.epipen.com/resources/paying-for-epipen>

# **School Staff Emergency Response Procedures for Students Showing Symptoms of Anaphylaxis**

If a student is showing symptoms of anaphylaxis then:

1. School nurse or delegate should immediately administer adrenaline auto-injector (an EpiPen®).
2. If the EpiPen® is administered, the time of administration should be noted.
3. If the student has been diagnosed with asthma as well as anaphylaxis and has been prescribed asthma reliever medication, the EpiPen® should be administered before the student is given asthma reliever medication.
4. Call 911 – the student must be transported to the hospital via an ambulance. Even if the student or the child's parent refuses, you must call 9-1-1.
5. If the student gets worse or shows no signs of improvement after 5 minutes, a second EpiPen® should be administered to the student if available.
6. Another student's EpiPen® can be used for this purpose if required.