



**City of Lowell Health Department
School Health Unit, Lowell Public Schools**

Life Threatening Allergic Reactions and Epi-Pen Policy

Policy

In accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Guidelines for Managing Life Threatening Food Allergies in Schools and Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidance on addressing allergies/anaphylaxis in schools, the Lowell Public School District has adopted a Life Threatening Allergy Policy to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals with life threatening allergies. The purpose of these Administrative Procedures and Guidelines included in the policy are to:

- Provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all students;
- Protect the rights of allergic students to participate in all school activities;
- Reduce the likelihood of severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reactions during school; and
- Ensure a rapid and effective response in the case of severe or potentially life threatening allergic reaction.

The Lowell Public School District recognizes the increasing prevalence of allergies and the life-threatening nature of these allergies for many students. While the Lowell Public Schools cannot guarantee to provide an allergen-free environment for all students with life threatening allergies, the district's goals are to minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to students, to educate the community and to maintain and regularly update a system-wide protocol for responding to students' needs. The Lowell Public School District shall maintain a system-wide procedure for addressing life threatening allergic reactions by incorporating measures to reduce the exposure to allergens and procedures to treat allergic reactions.

The district recognizes that an effective allergy program depends on a cooperative effort amongst district and school staff, parents/guardians and the school nurse. Parents/guardians have the responsibility to inform the school district when a child's medical condition might affect the child's welfare or safety. Upon notification and identification of a student with life-threatening allergies by parents/guardians and with complete written documentation from a physician, the following practices/procedures shall be implemented by said personnel when a student is found to have life threatening allergies.

Principal Guidelines

- Principal/designee will support training for school staff;
- Ensure adherence to Administrative Procedures and Guidelines for all school-based personnel;
- Direct questions from parents of allergic students to the school nurse;
- Establish a multidisciplinary 504/allergy team (the multidisciplinary team will determine if the life-threatening allergy requires additional accommodations beyond the IHCP and

may refer the student to the Section 504 Team to determine eligibility for accommodations);

- Post signage in the office/front entrance that the facility is an allergy aware school; and
- Ensure that parents of all students in a classroom (in grades pre-K through 8) with a life-threatening food allergic child will be notified via letter of the presence and nature of the life-threatening allergy.
- IHCPs for students with diagnosed allergy/anaphylaxis other than food will be addressed on an individual basis.

School Nurse Guidelines

- The school nurse will initiate and maintain the Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) with the parent/guardian and participate in a multi-disciplinary 504/allergy team in order to reduce exposure to allergens and establish procedures to treat exposure to allergens and allergic reactions;
- Provide a copy of the IHCP to all pertinent school staff;
- Maintain emergency medication and ensure medication is available in a designated area in the nurse's office;
- Train staff in Epi-pen administration annually at every school and provide basic education concerning life-threatening allergies including prevention and management of exposure to allergens
- Provide a Life Threatening Allergy Packet to parents/guardians which contains: a copy of said policy, an 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;

Note: The Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan and Medication Authorizations must be updated yearly and as needed for changes. The school nurse will provide blank Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan and Medication Authorizations to parents upon request. The process/procedures of the annual meeting for the IHCP include:

- ✓ The school nurse will update student profiles in X2 Aspen to reflect a life-threatening allergy alert on the student's record.
- ✓ The school nurse will review the IHCPs with the team/pertinent staff.
- ✓ The school nurse will provide all relevant information and training to any individuals unable to attend the IHCP meeting.
- ✓ The school nurse will immediately share any changes to the IHCP with the team/pertinent staff.
- 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 while hand sanitizer is not acceptable);
- Provide Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plans for all life-threatening allergic students to cafeteria staff;
- Provide the School Bus Emergency Medical Information Form to the bus driver and bus monitors on Special Education buses; and
- In the case of a planned field trip, the school nurse will ensure that at least two adults attending the field trip have been trained in Epi-pen administration and life-threatening allergies and ensure that Epi-pens are taken on field trips.

Parent/Guardian Guidelines

- The parents/guardians will 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 may provide an Epi-pen to be kept in the student's bag with instructions for use and emergency contact information, for those students who are age appropriate as deemed by parents/guardians and nurse;
- Together with the nurse will 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 for students with food allergies;
- Encouraged to inform their child not to share food in school, at recess or on the bus; and
- Encouraged to make safe and appropriate meal choices for their child from the lunch menu for students with food allergies.

Cafeteria Guidelines for Students with Food Allergies

- Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plans for all life-threatening food allergic students will be provided by the nurse and kept in the cafeteria/kitchen.
- An allergen aware table may be designated in the cafeteria.
- Custodial and food service staff will be trained in cleaning tables.
- Food service staff will provide a monthly menu so that parents/guardians and students can select appropriate foods.
- Allergy reminders will be added to point of sales for students with food allergies.

Teacher/Paraprofessional Classroom Guidelines

- All teachers including substitute teachers and paraprofessionals will attend annual Epi-pen and life-threatening allergy training provided by the school nurse.
- Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plans will 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 life-threatening food 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 will be provided as appropriate. Hand-washing with soap and water are acceptable means of removing allergens. Hand sanitizer is not acceptable.
- Teachers will encourage all students not to share food.
- Teachers will remind all parents that only foods that do not contain the known allergens will be allowed into the classroom. The teacher will 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(s) and/or guardian(s).

- 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 may not be used in any projects in classrooms.
- IHCPs for students with diagnosed allergy/anaphylaxis other than food will be addressed in the classroom on an individual basis.

Field Trip Guidelines

- Teachers will 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 Epi-pen administration and life-threatening allergies.
- The school nurse will ensure that Epi-pens are taken on field trips.
- A functioning cellphone 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

- 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 Epi-pen and life-threatening 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.

For additional information about addressing food allergies in schools, please refer to **Managing Life Threatening Food Allergies in Schools** by the Massachusetts Department of Education which can be found online at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/allergy.pdf> (OR) <http://www.allergyhome.org>.

Elementary School Template
Insert School Letterhead

Dear Parents/Guardians;

This letter is to inform you that a student in your child's classroom has a life-threatening allergy to _____. Strict avoidance of this allergen is the only way to prevent a life threatening allergic reaction. We are asking your assistance in providing the student with a safe learning environment.

To reduce the risk of exposure, the classroom will be _____ aware. Please do not send any product containing this allergen for your child to eat during snack time in the classroom. Any exposure to the allergen through contact or ingestion can cause a severe reaction. If your child has eaten anything containing the allergen prior to coming to school, please be sure your child's hands have been thoroughly washed prior to entering the school. If exposed to the allergen, the student may develop a life threatening allergic reaction that requires emergency medical treatment.

Since lunch is eaten in the cafeteria, your child may bring a lunch that contains the allergen. In the cafeteria, there will be a designated allergen-free table where any classmate without the allergen may sit. If a child sits at this table and has a lunch containing the allergen, the child will be asked to move to another table. Following lunch, children are encouraged to wash their hands and the tables are cleaned after each lunch.

This plan will help to maintain safety in the classroom while allowing non-allergic classmates to enjoy their preferred lunches in a controlled environment in the cafeteria. We appreciate your support of these procedures. Please complete and return this form so that we are certain that every family has received this information. If you have any questions, please contact either of us.

Classroom Teacher

School Nurse

I have read and understand the allergen free classroom procedures. I agree to do my part in keeping the classroom allergen free.

Child's Name: _____ Date _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date _____

*Middle School Template
Insert School Letterhead*

Dear Parents/Guardians;

This letter is to inform you that all staff at the _____ school have reviewed the Lowell School District's Life Threatening Allergy Policy. Since most of our students do not remain in the same class throughout the school day, we are sending this letter to all families to ensure that our students with severe allergies are afforded a safe learning environment. We are asking your assistance in providing our students with a safe learning environment by helping us to reduce the risk of exposure to food allergens. For your convenience, we have attached a list of the known food allergies in our building.

To reduce the risk of exposure, our school and classrooms will be food allergy aware. Please do not send any product containing known food allergens (related to those on the attached food allergy list) with your child to eat during class time. Any exposure to the allergens through contact or ingestion can cause a severe reaction. If your child has eaten anything containing the allergen prior to coming to school, please be sure your child's hands have been thoroughly washed prior to entering the school. If exposed to the allergens, students with severe allergies may develop a life threatening allergic reaction that requires emergency medical treatment.

Since lunch is eaten in the cafeteria, your child may bring a lunch that contains the allergen. In the cafeteria, there will be a designated allergen-free table where any classmate without the allergen may sit. If a child sits at this table and has a lunch containing the allergen, the child will be asked to move to another table. Following lunch, children are encouraged to wash their hands and the tables are cleaned after each lunch. This plan will help to maintain safety in the school and classroom while allowing non-allergic classmates to enjoy their preferred lunches in a controlled environment in the cafeteria. We appreciate your support of these procedures.

Please complete and return this form so that we are certain that every family has received this information. If you have any questions, please contact _____.

Classroom Teacher

School Nurse

I have read and understand the allergen free classroom procedures. I agree to do my part in keeping the classroom allergen free.

Child's

Name: _____

Date

Parent's

Signature: _____