



## ALLERGY SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENT GUIDELINES

In the Cedar Falls Community School District we recognize that students with life threatening allergies attend our schools. In order to create a safe and nurturing environment for our students, the district will maintain guidelines to address the needs of students with life threatening allergies that have been clearly documented by the primary care physician or a board certified allergist. The Cedar Falls Community School District staff and professional partners will work in cooperation with the parents and students to create an Individual Health Plan, promote self-advocacy and competence in self-care, and provide appropriate educational opportunities to meet the needs of all of our students.

The Cedar Falls Community School District is implementing a comprehensive plan to reduce the risks associated with allergy exposure; however, it is impossible to create an environment that eliminates all such risks. A District committee has worked together to establish the following guidelines to provide a safe educational environment and minimize the risk of a student experiencing a life threatening allergy:

### **School Administrators:**

- Have the appropriate allergy forms available for parents of students with life threatening allergies (LTA's) and explain that the required forms must be returned and approved by the school nurse prior to the child attending school.
  - A release of information form will be presented to parents for signature to provide needed communication between the supervising physician and school for effective implementation of the Allergy Action Plan (AAP) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP).
- Establish a core team which could include: parent, principal, teacher, student, nurse, transportation department staff, cafeteria staff, and such other parties as may be necessary to make decisions about food allergies.
  - Teams will develop and implement a school-wide plan for promoting an inclusive, sensitive, and responsive school climate when responding to students with LTA's.
  - Teams will work together to ensure continued safety of students with LTA's in all areas of the building, including special area classrooms, cafeteria, playground, etc.
  - Teams will designate allergy-safe zones throughout the building (cafeteria, classroom(s), commons, etc.). These zones will be identified by an agreed upon universal symbol and are to be cleaned & sanitized as per district protocol.
  - The school's emergency protocol on life-threatening allergies will be posted in appropriate locations, i.e. nurse's office, main office, lunch room, and other areas as designated by the building principal.

- Teams will create a contingency plan using designated building staff in the event the nurse is not immediately available. Teams will ensure that this plan is shared with all staff and students.
- Staff will call 911 in all instances of epinephrine administration.
- Create an Emergency Action Plan for addressing life-threatening food based allergic reactions in conjunction with the school nurse, student's parent(s)/guardian(s), and physician.
  - Building administrators
    - will support an initial meeting between the school nurse and student's family in order to complete the Allergy Action Plan.
    - will ensure that the school nurse, in consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s) and the physician will prepare the Individual Health Plan (IHP). Administrators will support the school nurse in making a request for the physician to review and sign off on each student's Allergy Action Plan.
    - will ensure the IHP is available in the nurse's office and student's homeroom at the elementary levels and in the nurse's office at secondary schools. Administrators will ascertain that nurses are educating all persons who may come into contact with the affected student on a need-to-know basis.
    - will ensure that substitute vacancies are clearly noted for substitutes who have been fully trained, or are willing to be trained, and have no reservations about administering emergency medical procedures.
    - will establish procedures for making sure that upon arrival the substitute is aware the student has allergies and has the epi-pen training.
    - will ensure that all paraeducators and/or student teachers assigned to the classroom have also been trained in administering emergency medical procedures and are aware of students in their assigned classrooms with LTA's.
    - will ensure that information is kept in an organized, prominent and accessible format for a substitute teacher with the universal symbol displayed for ease of access. A bright colored label will be on the outside of sub folders. (MEDICAL ALERT: STUDENT WITH LIFE THREATENING FOOD ALLERGY. PLEASE SEE THE NOTES IN THE SUBSTITUTE FOLDER. )
    - will recommend that the parent(s)/guardian(s) attach a photograph of their child to their IHP. When appropriate, student's photo will also be placed in the food prep area for food service staff to view as an extra protective measure.
    - will enlist the help of parent(s)/guardian(s) of affected students when determining what foods are "safe" for classroom consumption.
    - will allow students with LTA's to carry their epinephrine on them at all times, in accordance with parent/guardian permissions and student capability, when appropriate.

- Ensure that building-wide mandatory training and education on reducing life-threatening allergy risks, recognizing food allergy symptoms, and emergency procedures for appropriate staff will include the following topics:
  - A description/definition of severe allergies and a discussion of the most common foods causing allergic reactions; also include information on insect stings, medications, and latex allergies.
  - Risk-reduction procedures including the development of a cleaning protocol to ensure the threat of allergens is minimized.
  - The importance of reinforcing a no-food and no-utensil trading/sharing policy.
  - The signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis.
  - Locations of epi-pens in the school as well as correct administration of such in the event of an emergency.
  - Specific steps to follow in the event of an emergency involving an allergic reaction.
- Ensure that a letter is sent to all parents of children assigned to a classroom where one of the students has been identified as having a life-threatening allergy (K-6) and school-wide for secondary students. This will be carried out in accordance with patient confidentiality regulations.
  - Building administrators will assist in educating the school community on issues having to do with LTA's (e.g. PAL program materials, parent/guardian information letters, school newsletters, school website, bulletins).
  - Building administrators will continue to provide information about students with LTA's and their photos (if consent given by parent/guardian) to all staff on a need-to-know basis (including bus drivers).
  - Some classrooms may have more restrictions on items to be brought in (i.e. prepackaged food items with ingredient list).
- Include their building's Parent Teacher Organization in the LTA educational process, specifically when scheduling all-school events and fundraisers.
  - Building administrators will carefully complete all overnight field trip permission requests to reflect food allergy concerns.
- Consider doing a medical emergency drill or tabletop exercise.
- Review guidelines periodically.

### **School Nurse:**

Before School Starts (or as soon as possible after diagnosis):

- Set up meeting with parent/guardian and develop an IHP.
- Discuss possibility of keeping an epi-pen in the classroom containing necessary instructions and help to arrange if appropriate. The epi-pen **MUST** be taken on field trips.

- Have available the appropriate allergy forms for parents of students with LTA's and explain that the required forms must be returned and approved by the school nurse prior to the child attending school.
- Present to parents for signature a release of information to provide needed communication between the supervising physician and school for effective implementation of the Allergy Action Plan (AAP) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP).
- Monitor IHP implementation and arrange and convene a team meeting to develop a plan with all staff who come in contact with the affected student, including principal, school nurse, teachers, specialists, food service personnel, paraeducators, physical education teacher, custodian, bus driver, etc.
- Remind parents to review prevention plans, symptoms, and emergency procedures with their child, after the team meeting.
- Assure that the AAP includes the student's name, photo, allergens, symptoms of allergic reactions, risk reduction procedures, emergency procedures, and required signatures.
- Familiarize teachers with the IHP's and AAP's of their students, as well as other staff members who have contact with students who have LTA's so they are aware (need-to-know basis).

**When School Starts (or as soon as possible after diagnosis):**

- Introduce herself/himself to the student and show him/her how to get to the nurse's office.
- Review the AAP and update information as needed: student's photo, allergens, symptoms of allergic reactions, risk reduction procedures, emergency procedures, and required signatures.
- Arrange periodic follow-up on a semi-annual basis, or as often as necessary, with parents, staff, etc. to review effectiveness of the IHP and any needed changes.
- Periodically check medications for expiration dates and arrange for them to be current.

**During the School Year:**

- Continue to provide information about students with LTA's and their photos (if consent given by parent/guardian) to all staff on a need-to-know basis (including bus drivers).
- Educate new personnel as necessary.
- Track inservice attendance of all involved parties to ensure they have been trained.
- Maintain appropriate documentation of allergic reactions and follow up as necessary.
- Educate appropriate staff of proper storage procedures.
- Maintain periodic contact with student's treating physician in order to learn of changes in diagnosis or treatment.
- Obtain approval from student's parent and treating physician when making change to AAP.

**Teachers:**

- Will be aware of student(s) with LTA's.
  - Receive training in how to recognize signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction.
  - Be familiar with each child's IHP and procedures to follow in an emergency.
  - Receive training in how to use an epi-pen.

- Meet with parent(s)/guardian(s) to get information about students with LTA's and to make a classroom plan together.
  - Educate all students in the classroom of a student with an LTA, with parent permission.
  - Teach students the difference between life threatening allergies and food intolerance, with the help of the school nurse, if applicable.
- Set classroom rules regarding food in the classroom.
  - Review rules with students and parent(s) about snacks & bringing food into the classroom.
  - Contact parents before any school activities involving food at the elementary level, and if developmentally appropriate at the secondary level.
  - Check labels of any food item brought into an allergy sensitive environment classroom, if indicated in the student's AAP, and notify parent with any questions to ensure safety.
  - Ensure that all adults who are in the classroom on a regular basis (volunteers, subs, paras, etc.) are aware of food allergies and what to do in case of an emergency.
  - Document the need for allergy training on AESOP and subfolder. Indicate the following: MEDICAL ALERT: STUDENT WITH LIFE THREATENING FOOD ALLERGY. PLEASE SEE THE NOTES IN THE SUBSTITUTE FOLDER.
  - Encourage hand washing before and after meals and/or snacks.
  - Communicate rules and expectations about bullying.
  - Discourage trading snacks and lunch items.
- Plan ahead for special class activities and field trips.
  - Make sure there is access to a cell phone or two-way communication device.

### **Parents:**

Before School Starts (or as soon as possible after diagnosis):

- Set up a meeting with the building principal, school nurse and other appropriate staff to inform them of your child's allergies.
- Provide the school with a reliable way to reach you (cell phone, beeper, etc.) and provide updated local emergency contacts.
- Participate in team meetings or communicate with all staff that will be in contact with your child.
  - Discuss implementation of Individual Health Plan.
  - Establish a prevention plan.
  - Periodically review prevention and emergency action plans with school team.
  - Help decide upon an "allergy-free" eating area in the classroom and/or cafeteria.
- Provide a list of foods, ingredients, and other allergens to avoid.
- Provide a list of "safe snacks" and leave some safe snacks in your child's classroom so there is always something your child can choose from during an unplanned special event.

Be willing to provide safe foods for special occasions for the entire class so your child can participate.

- Consider providing a medical alert bracelet for your child.
- Provide a non-perishable lunch to keep at school, in case your child forgets lunch one day.
- Be willing to go on your child's field trips if possible, or if requested.
- Sign up to be a room parent.

During the school year:

- Provide school with up-to-date epinephrine auto-injectors, and decide if/where additional epi-pens will be kept in the school.
- Discuss with school nurse a plan for keeping an epi-pen in your child's classroom with instructions for use.
- Provide school nurse with the licensed provider's statement if student no longer has allergies.

Periodically reinforce the student responsibilities with their child.

**Student:**

- Take as much age-appropriate responsibility as possible for avoiding allergens.
- Will not trade or share food/drinks.
- Wash hands before and after eating.
- Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction as listed in his/her IHP.
- Promptly inform an adult as soon as accidental exposure occurs or symptoms appear.
- Take more responsibility for managing their allergies as they get older (refer to parent responsibilities outline).
- Get to know the school nurse, principal, classroom teacher, and other staff in the school to assist in identifying issues related to the management of their allergies in school.
- Say "no thank you" when offered food that did not come from their home.
- Notify an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic.
- Notify an adult if they are being picked on or threatened by other students due to an allergy.

**Food Service Manager:**

- Read all food labels and recheck routinely for potential food allergens.
  - Food service staff and their substitutes will be trained to read product food labels and recognize food allergens.
  - Contact information for manufacturers of food products will be maintained. (Consumer Hotline)
  - All food service staff members will use non-latex gloves.
  - Safe meals will be preplanned and available for field trips.

- Review and follow sound food handling practices to avoid cross-contamination with potential food allergens.
  - Cleaning and sanitation protocol will be followed and enforced to avoid cross-contamination.
  - All tables will be thoroughly cleaned after each lunch shift.
  - Specific areas that will be allergen safe will be created, if needed.
- Make appropriate substitutions or modifications for meals served to students with food allergies, after receiving a doctor's note.
  - Advance copies of the menu will be posted for parents/guardians, and health office staff will be notified if the menu is changed.
- Be prepared to take emergency action in the case of an allergic reaction.
  - Staff members will be trained on how to administer epinephrine by auto-injector and at least two trained people will be in the eating area who can administer epinephrine by auto-injector.
- Attend team meetings with appropriate school team members at the time of the student's registration for entry into school, if necessary.

#### **Custodial Staff:**

The custodial service department shall be under the direction of the building principal.

- Use separate cleaning supplies for allergy-safe zones to avoid cross contamination.
- Receive training on allergy-safe zone maintenance areas. (Custodial service manager will train all custodians.)
- Train on use of epinephrine.
- Be aware of students with IHPs that require more frequent cleaning of tabletops, chairs, desks, etc. Information should be clearly labeled in the IHP and specific to the student's sensitivity (e.g. before assemblies, emergency response to littering or spills).
  - Assist during lunchtimes to thoroughly clean all tables, chairs and floors after each meal.
  - Evaluate and respond to individual requests for specific accommodations.

#### **Transportation Department/Bus Drivers:**

As previously stated, it is impossible to create an environment that eliminates all risks. It may be more difficult to monitor students' exposure to potential allergens on the school bus than in the classroom.

- Ensure that each bus is equipped with functioning emergency communication devices (e.g., cell phones, two-way radios, etc).

- Provide annual training for all school bus drivers on managing life-threatening allergies.
  - Drivers should know local Emergency Medical Services procedure. (Call 911 first and follow the instructions of the Emergency Dispatch. Call the Supervisor of Transportation.)
  - Drivers will not hand out food or treats, even on special occasions.
  - Drivers will maintain a 'no food eating' practice on the bus at all times during the regular route. This practice may change for extracurricular events outside of the typical school day.
  
- Provide a representative from the bus company for team meetings to discuss implementation of student's IHP's, if applicable.
  
- Ensure that students with LTA's are introduced to their bus drivers and that drivers are notified regarding students with LTA's along with who will be carrying and responsible for administering the emergency medications for affected student(s).
  - Driver may inform student(s) with LTA's of where they are to sit on the bus when being transported and ensure adherence to seating arrangement.
  - Student(s) and/or responsible adult(s) are to carry emergency medications at all times since bus drivers do not handle medication.
  
- Inform all drivers/staff of the procedures and products that should be used for wipe downs.
  - Allergy Action Plan strategies should reflect "wipe down" guidelines in preparation for all bus runs, including field trips, whenever possible. This practice cannot guarantee that accidental contamination from previous trips will not occur.
  
- Maintain health concern files separately from those maintained at each school for students with LTA's.
  - Transportation staff will work together with school principals and school nurses to make sure an IHP will include transportation.
  - Transportation staff will obtain a copy of each student's Allergy Action Plan (with parent/guardian permission) and ensure that this document is kept in a safe place (on a secure clipboard) and is shared with drivers who may substitute for primary driver.

**Other Staff - Personnel:**

During Recess and/or Physical Education Classes:

- All recess monitors are to be made aware of student(s) with LTA's and are to be formally trained in emergency procedures.
- All recess monitors should have latex-free gloves and band-aids in their emergency packs.
- Student(s) will be under the supervision of at least one formally trained adult at all times.



- Epinephrine packet will be taken outside if so specified in student(s) Allergy Action Plan/ Individual Health Plan. The epinephrine will be carried by a designated district employee or by the student.
- Emergency communication device(s) will be accessible to recess monitors and functional (cell phone, walkie-talkie, etc) at all times.

Consideration will be given for avoiding food allergen exposure outside of the school building; parental attendance on trips is highly encouraged.

- Meals of student(s) with food allergies will be stored separately to minimize cross contamination.
- A formally trained district employee, such as the classroom teacher, will accompany the class on field trips to maintain the student's epinephrine and to ensure that the student's AAP/IHP is followed. The epinephrine will be carried by a designated district employee or by the student with a completed Epinephrine Self-Administration Packet for Anaphylaxis.
- Copies of student's AAP/IHP will be carried by an adult on all field trips.
- Staff will call 911 in all instances of Epinephrine use. Parents will be notified after emergency responders (911) have been contacted.