

Billerica Public Schools
Protocol and Guidelines for students with
Life-threatening allergies in the Billerica Public Schools

Background

Allergic reactions can span a wide range of severity of symptoms. The most severe and potentially life threatening reaction is anaphylaxis. This protocol is to be used for students who are at risk for anaphylaxis and in circumstances where a previously undiagnosed life-threatening allergic response occurs.

Anaphylaxis is a potentially life-threatening medical condition occurring in allergic individuals after exposure to their specific allergens. Anaphylaxis refers to a collection of symptoms affecting multiple systems in the body, the most dangerous of which are breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which are potentially fatal. The most common causes of anaphylaxis in children include allergies to:

- Foods (most commonly; peanuts, tree nuts, milk, dairy products, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish)
- Insect stings (yellow jackets, bees, wasps, hornets)
- Medications
- Latex

Anaphylaxis can occur immediately or up to two hours following allergen exposure, so it is important to:

- Identify student at risk
- Have appropriate preventative policies
- Be prepared to handle an emergency

Purpose and Goal

The Billerica Public Schools cannot guarantee to provide an allergen-free environment for all students with life threatening allergies, or prevent any harm to students in emergencies. The goal is to minimize the risk of exposure to food allergens that pose a threat to those students educate the community, and to maintain and regularly update a system-wide protocol for responding to their needs. A system-wide effort requires the cooperation of all groups of people within the system.

The sections below highlight the major responsibilities of the various groups, but each child's plan will be individualized and therefore not all responsibilities can be spelled out in this protocol.

The goal of the Billerica Public Schools regarding Life Threatening Allergies is to engage in a system-wide effort to:

- Prevent any occurrence of life threatening allergic reactions
- Prepare for any allergic reactions
- Respond appropriately to any allergy emergencies that arise

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Responsibilities of Students

Each student with a LTA shall be responsible for the following:

1. Take responsibility for avoiding allergens
2. Do not trade or share foods
3. Wash hands before and after eating.
4. Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction
5. Promptly inform an adult as soon as an accidental exposure occurs or symptoms appear
6. Take more responsibility for your allergies as you get older.
7. Receive instruction in self-administration of the epi-pen starting in 5th grade. However, it is recognized that each child matures at a different rate. It is recommended that each student take responsibility at an early age.
8. Develop a relationship with the school nurse and/or another trusted adult in the school to assist in identifying issues related to the management of the allergy in the school.

Responsibilities of Parents

Each parent of a student with an LTA shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Inform the school nurse of your child's allergies prior to the opening of school (or as soon as possible after a diagnosis).
2. Parent(s) must arrange to meet with the school nurse to develop an Allergy Action Plan/Individualized Health Care Plan for the student and provide medical information from the child's treating physician as needed to write the Plans.
3. Provide the school a list of foods and ingredients to be avoided, and provide a list of safe or acceptable foods that can be served to your child.
4. Provide the school nurse with enough up to date emergency medications (including epi-pens) so they can be placed in all required locations for the current school year./
5. Complete and submit all required medication forms.
6. Provide a **MEDIC ALERT BRACELET** for your child.
7. Notify nurse of upcoming field trip as soon as possible and provide Epi-pen to be taken on field trips.
8. Encourage students to wash hands before and after handling food
9. Teach your child to
 - a. Recognize the first symptoms of an allergic/anaphylactic reaction
 - b. Know where the epinephrine auto-injector is kept and who has access to the epinephrine
 - c. Communicate clearly as soon as s/he feels a reaction is starting.
 - d. Carry his/her own epinephrine auto-injector when appropriate
 - e. Not share snacks, lunches or drinks
 - f. Understand the importance of hand-washing before and after eating
 - g. Report teasing, bullying and threats to adult authority.
 - h. Take as much responsibility as possible for his/her own safety
10. As children get older, teach them to:

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- a. Communicate the seriousness of the allergy
 - b. Communicate symptoms as they appear
 - c. Read labels
 - d. Administer own epinephrine auto-injector and be able to train others in its use.
11. Inform the school of any changes in the child's LTA status
 12. Provide the school with the licensed provider's statement if the student no longer has allergies.
 13. Go on field trips and out of school activities with your child, whenever possible
 14. Provide bag of snacks for your child's classroom along with safe foods for special occasions.
 15. If accommodations cannot be made in the cafeteria for the child's allergy, parents will provide appropriate lunches.

Responsibilities of the Billerica Public School Department

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall be responsible for the following:

1. Create a system-wide emergency plan for addressing life threatening allergic reactions
2. Provide annual in-service training and education on reducing LTA exposure and recognition of an LTA response, and emergency procedures for staff.
3. Training shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. A description/definition of severe allergies and a discussion of the most common food, medication, latex and stinging insects.
 - b. The signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis
 - c. The correct use of an Epi-pen
 - d. Specific steps to follow in the event of an emergency
4. Encourage a "NO FOOD TRADING" and "NO UTENSIL SHARING" policy in all schools with particular focus at the elementary school level.
5. School nurses, in conjunction with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and the primary care provider/allergist prepare an Allergy Action Plan/Individual Health Care Plan for any student with a life threatening allergy. The Plans will be reviewed by the school nurse, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and primary care provider and/or the student's allergist, and signed off by the child's physician to indicate that he/she deems it to be adequate.
6. Provide and maintain Life Threatening Allergy free tables in each elementary school cafeteria *as needed* by the Individual Health Care Plan. These tables will be designated by a universal symbol. These tables will be cleaned and sanitized.
7. Make the Allergy Action Plan/Individual Health Care Plan available in the nurse's office and a student's homeroom at the elementary level and in the nurse's office at the middle and high school. Recommend that

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parents/guardians attach a photograph of their student with a Life Threatening Allergy to their Allergy Action Plan.

8. Make Epi-pens (prescribed to the students) available in the nurse's office and in other clearly designated locations as specified in the AAP/IHCP. At the secondary level, students are allowed and encouraged to carry their Epi-Pens on their person as allowed by the medication policy.
9. Familiarize teachers with the AAP/IHCP of their students and any other staff member who has contact with the student on a need to know basis
10. Emergency communication devices (two way radio, intercom, walkie-talkie, cell phone) for all school activities, including transportation that involves a student with life threatening allergies.
11. Provide special training for food service personnel.
12. Require all food service employees to use only latex free gloves.
13. A full time nurse should be available in every school with students with life-threatening allergies.
14. Have a plan in place when there is no school nurse available.

Responsibilities of the School Principal

To the extent possible, the principal of each school shall be responsible for the following:

1. Familiarize teachers with the AAP/IHCP of their students and any other staff member who has contact with student on a need-to know basis.
2. In conjunction with nurses, provide in-service training and education for all staff regarding life-threatening allergies, symptoms, risk reduction procedures and emergency procedures including demonstration on how to use the Epi-pen.
3. In conjunction with nurses and the food services director, provide in-service training and education for noon time aids and custodians regarding life-threatening allergies, symptoms, risk reduction procedures (including proper cleaning techniques for the tables) and emergency procedures including demonstration on how to use the Epi-pen.
4. Send letter to all parents regarding Life Threatening Allergies (K-5).
5. The protocol that explains LTA and the application of the protocol at the school, concerning LTA will be discussed at kindergarten orientation
6. Post the school's emergency protocol on LTAs in appropriate locations.
7. Notify staff the locations of Epi-pens in the school.
8. Make every effort to place the student in a classroom where the teacher is trained to administer an epi-pen, if needed.
9. A contingency plan will be in place and understood by all staff and students in the event the nurse is not in the office or in the building. Call 911.

Responsibilities of the School Nurses

The school nurse is the primary coordinator of each student's plan.

Each school nurse will have the following responsibilities:

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1. Meet with each parent/guardian of a student with an LTA and develop an AAP/IHCP for the student. During meetings with parents/guardians, nurses shall discuss and encourage the use of Medic-alert bracelets and other methods of identification for students with LTAs.
2. Maintain updated AAP/IHCPs in the nurse's office and in student's homeroom at each elementary school and in the nurse's office at the middle and high school.
3. Nurse will assist the principal in providing information about students with LTAs to staff.
4. In conjunction with the principal, provide in-service training and education for staff regarding life-threatening allergies, symptoms, risk reduction procedures and emergency procedures including demonstration on how to use the Epi-Pen.
5. Familiarize teachers with the AAP/IHCP of their student and any other staff member who has contact with student on a need to know basis.
6. The school nurse will be responsible for following Department of Public Health regulations governing the administration of prescription medications. Nurses are also responsible for following the regulations that permit registration of non-licensed personnel to be trained and to administer epi-pens.
7. Discuss with parents the appropriate locations for storing the Epi-pen and the possibility of receiving more than one Epi-pen as necessary.
8. Inform the school principal and parent/guardian if any student experiences an allergic reaction for the first time in school.
9. Emergency protocol will be in place in the event the nurse is not in the building.

Responsibilities of the Teachers

Each teacher shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Receive and review the AAP/IHCP, in collaboration with the nurse and parent(s) of any student(s) in your classroom with LTAs.
2. Leave information in an organized, prominent and accessible format for substitute teachers.
3. Participate in in-service training for students with LTAs.
4. Teacher, in collaboration with the nurse and input from the parents of the allergic child, will set a classroom protocol regarding the management of food in the classroom.
5. Participate in the planning of a student's re-entry to school after an anaphylactic reaction.
6. Inform parents of any school events where food will be served.
7. Coordinate with parent/nurse on a lesson plan about food allergies for the class and discuss anaphylaxis in age appropriate terms, with student's permission
8. Never question or hesitate to act if a student reports signs of an allergic reaction
9. Avoid use of foods for classroom activities
10. Welcome parental involvement in organizing class parties and special events. Consider non-food treats.
11. Use stickers, pencils or other non-food items as rewards instead of food.
12. Prohibit students from sharing or trading snacks
13. Reinforce hand-washing before and after eating.

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Responsibilities for field trips

The school shall have the following responsibilities when LTA students go on field trips.

1. Field trips need to take into consideration the risk for allergen exposure, and parents must evaluate potential risks when determining whether their child should attend a field trip.
2. Ensure epinephrine auto-injectors and instructions are taken on the field trip.
3. One or two people on the field trip should be trained in recognizing symptoms of life-threatening allergic reactions, trained to use an epinephrine auto-injector, and trained in emergency procedures.
4. Ensure that functioning two-way radio, walkie talkie, cell phone or other communication device is taken on the field trip.
5. Invite parents of a student at risk for anaphylaxis to accompany their child on school trips, in addition to the chaperone.
6. Know where the closest medical facilities are located, 911 procedures and whether the ambulance carries epinephrine.
7. Consider ways to wash hands before and after eating
8. Lunches should be held in a safe place so that children cannot access them until the appropriate time. Lunches of children with food allergies should be stored separately to minimize cross contamination.

Responsibilities of food service personnel

The food services department shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To the best of our ability eliminate all peanut/tree nut products in the cafeteria in the elementary and middle school setting and to reduce the area of peanut/tree nut products availability *if needed*.
2. Post the student' Allergy Action Plan with the consent of the parent(s)
3. Read all food labels and recheck routinely for potential food allergens.
4. Train all food service staff and their substitutes to read product food labels and recognize food allergens.
5. Creation of specific areas that will be allergen safe *if needed*.
6. Supply cleaning materials for washing and sanitizing tables
7. Provide in-service to food service employees regarding safe food handling practices to avoid cross-contamination with potential food allergens
8. Avoid use of latex gloves by food service personnel. Use non-latex gloves instead.
9. Have at least one or two voluntary people in the eating area trained to administer epinephrine by auto-injector.
10. Have a functioning intercom, walkie-talkie or other communication device to support emergencies
11. Be prepared to take emergency action

Responsibilities of custodial staff

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1. Participate in in-service training for students with LTAs.
2. Participate in in-service training for cleaning methods in relation to cafeteria clean up.
3. If in the cafeteria, be prepared to take emergency action

Responsibilities of Billerica Schools Transportation

The school bus drivers shall have the following responsibilities:

- Inform each driver that s/he is transporting a child with an LTA
1. Provide emergency communication devices (e.g, cell phones, two-way radios, etc.) on each bus
 2. Provide training for all school bus drivers on managing life-threatening allergies (provide own training or contract with the school).
 3. Know local Emergency Medical Services procedures.
 4. Maintain a policy of no food eating on the bus.

Responsibilities of persons in charge of conducting after school activities

Persons in charge of extracurricular programs shall have the following responsibilities:

1. The allergy Action Plan/Individual Health Care plan will be available for parents to copy and give to others who **assume responsibility** for their child. Examples of this may include: before or after school activity instructors, coaches, babysitters, camp counselors etc.

Responsibilities during recess and physical education classes

During recess and physical education classes, the school shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Children will be under the supervision of at least one adult
2. An Epi-pen will be taken outside if specified in the child's Allergy Action Plan or Individualized health care plan