

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR MANAGEMENT OF LIFE THREATENING ALLERGIES**

### **Policy**

In order to minimize the incidence of life threatening anaphylactic allergic reactions, the Weymouth Public Schools will maintain a system-wide plan for addressing life threatening allergic reactions. This plan shall include: building-based general medical emergency plans, an Individual Epinephrine Emergency Action Plan (EEAP) for students with known life threatening allergies (LTA), appropriate staff training, age appropriate guidelines for students with LTA, and other such guidelines that will ensure that students with LTA can participate fully in school activities without fear of discrimination or isolation. For students and staff who have an anaphylactic allergic reaction for the first time while in school, emergency epinephrine medication is available and would be administered by a registered nurse following the Anaphylactic Reaction Protocol to minimize the incidence of a life-threatening situation.

### **Background**

The number of students with life-threatening allergies has increased substantially over the last five years. As with all children with special health care needs, it is important that students with life-threatening allergies are able to access all education and education related benefits.

Every allergic reaction has the possibility to develop into a life-threatening and potentially fatal anaphylactic reaction. This can occur within minutes of exposure to the allergen. Some students who are very sensitive to their allergen may react to just touching or inhaling the allergen. For others, ingesting even the tiniest portion of their allergen or an insect sting can cause death.

### **Severe Allergic Reaction (Anaphylaxis)**

**Description:** This is a rare and extremely serious form of allergy. It usually develops suddenly and requires rapid management to prevent shock and possible death.

### **Causes of an allergic reaction include:**

- Foods such as peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, spices, milk, food dyes
- Insect bite or sting, usually bee or wasp or fire ants
- Idiopathic
- Medication – oral, injected or immunizations

- An inhaled substance (dust, pollen, or chemicals)
- An absorbed substance (certain chemicals when in contact with the skin such as latex)

### **Signs and Symptoms:**

- Sudden onset
- Hives, itchy red rash, swelling of the face or extremities
- Tightness of chest, shortness of breath, wheezing
- Itchy, tingling sensation or swelling of lips, tongue, throat, difficulty swallowing
- Repetitive throat clearing, change in quality of voice
- Sneezing, runny nose, itchy eyes, cough
- Pallor or flushing, dizziness, feeling of apprehension
- Nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting
- Sweating and weakness
- Weak rapid pulse and low blood pressure
- LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS, SHOCK, COMA

**Injection of Epinephrine or Epi-Pen auto injector is the treatment of choice for allergic emergencies (anaphylactic reactions).** It quickly constricts blood vessels, relaxes smooth muscles in the lungs to improve breathing, stimulates the heartbeat, and works to reverse hives and swelling around the face and lips.

### **Procedures:**

The School Nurse will be responsible for coordinating the management of students with life threatening allergies (LTA) in school. The management of LTA takes a multidisciplinary approach of collaboration between the family, student, principal/administrator, nurse, classroom teacher(s)/specialists, support staff, counselors, food services/cafeteria staff, lunch/recess paraprofessionals, transportation department, and custodial staff. Awareness, prevention and emergency preparedness are crucial elements in the management of a student with LTA. Each student with known LTA will have an Individual Epinephrine Emergency Action Plan (EEAP) on file that is signed by the student's physician, parent/guardian and school nurse. An Individual Health Care/504 Plan will be developed as deemed necessary by the parent, school nurse and building 504 coordinator.

### **Care Team Responsibilities**

#### **Family's Responsibility**

- Notify the school nurse and Principal of the child's allergies.

- Provide written medical documentation and instructions as directed by a physician including completion of the Individual Epinephrine Emergency Action Plan.
- Provide a small photo of the child to be attached to the EEAP.
- Deliver/provide physician ordered medications in proper containers to the school nurse on or before the first day of school.
- Work with the school team to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school, including in the classroom, cafeteria, during field trips and on the bus.
- Parent/Guardian is responsible for sharing all allergy information including a copy of the EEAP with all before and after school programs/activities and with the transportation department.
- Participate in developing an Individual Health Care Plan or Section 504 plan with the school nurse and appropriate school staff as necessary.
- Notify the school nurse of any changes in the EEAP including emergency contact phone numbers.
- Provide a list of foods and ingredients to avoid for those students with food allergies.
- Educate their child in the self-management of their food allergy including:
  - Safe and unsafe foods
  - Strategies to avoid exposure to their allergens
  - Symptoms of an allergic reaction
  - How and when to tell an adult about an allergy related problem
  - How to read food labels (age appropriate)
- Provide safe snacks (to be kept in the classroom at the primary and middle school level) for classroom parties and other special events.
- Provide safe meals from home, if possible. This is the safest option for a child with life-threatening food allergies.
- Obtain a medical alert bracelet/necklace and encourage your child to wear it at all times.
- Provide the school nurse with annual updates on you child's allergy status.
- Work with the food services director and building cafeteria staff to ensure that a safe school meal option is selected if the student will eat food prepared by the school.
- Sign release to share information with staff pertaining to LTA and to post information if appropriate.
- Make a plan with the school nurse as to when the student would be responsible enough to carry his or her own Epi-Pen auto injector.
- Provide the school nurse with the licensed provider's statement if student no longer has allergies.

### **Student's Responsibility**

- Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- Notify an adult immediately if he/she is experiencing signs/symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- Do not share or trade food, drinks or eating utensils with others.
- Avoid eating anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen.
- Be proactive in the care and management of his/her allergies and reactions based on his/her developmental level.
- Report teasing, bullying and threats to an adult immediately.
- Carry his/her own Epi-Pen auto injector when deemed appropriate.
- Understand the importance of hand washing before and after eating.

**The ultimate goal is that children with LTA will eventually learn to keep themselves safe.**

### **Principal/Administrator (or designee) Responsibilities**

- Support faculty, staff and parents in implementing all aspects of the LTA program.
- Provide opportunities for training and education for faculty, staff and substitutes regarding:
  - Life threatening allergies (foods, insect stings, medications, latex)
  - Risk reduction procedures
  - Emergency procedures
  - How to administer an Epi-Pen auto injector in an emergency.

### **School Nurse Responsibilities**

The school nurse is the key resource for medical direction and staff/student training. The school nurse **MUST** be contacted as soon as a student is identified with an allergy.

- Work with the parent/guardian and physician to develop an EEAP and if deemed necessary, an IHCP or section 504 plan prior to the student starting school or immediately after the diagnosis of a LTA condition.
- Assure that the EEAP includes the student's name, photo, allergens, and symptoms of allergic reaction, emergency procedures and required signatures.
- Communicate the EEAP and IHCP/504 plan with school staff that have a "need to know" designation (e.g. principal, classroom teachers, specialists, food service personnel, lunch/recess paraprofessionals, custodian, coaches)

- As necessary, arrange and convene a meeting with the principal, classroom teacher(s), specialists, and building 504 coordinator to explain the EEAP and IHCP/504 and other accommodations that the student may require.
- At the beginning of each school year and in February, provide education and training to all school personnel who have agreed to be trained in the administration of emergency epinephrine. ( See MDPH medication policy for training protocol)
- Maintain open and frequent communications between home and school. Review the EEAP annually and update as needed.
- Monitor emergency medication expirations dates.
- Meet with student and show him/her how to get to the health office and where the Epi-pen medication is stored (unlocked).
- Student education on LTA will be based on individual need within the schools and classrooms. The school nurse will facilitate and conduct programs, as the need is determined. (Video is available)
- Assess the student for his/her ability to self-administer epinephrine and determine the appropriateness of the student carrying his/her Epi-Pen. If the student carries his/her own Epi-Pen, a second Epi-Pen should be left in the health office as backup.
- If an Epi-Pen is administered, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health form must be completed and mailed to the address on the form. A copy is to be sent to the Health Services Coordinator and a copy placed in the student's health record.

### **Classroom Teacher/Specialist Responsibilities**

### **Food Service Manager Responsibilities**

- Participate in a meeting with the school nurse, and other care team members as deemed necessary to develop a plan for the student with LTA.
- Know the ingredients of school food items and recheck labels routinely for potential food allergens.
- Train all food service staff and their substitutes to read product labels and recognize food allergens.
- Label peanut and nut products that are produced by food services.
- Review and follow sound food handling practices to avoid cross contamination.
- Strictly follow cleaning and sanitation protocol to avoid cross contamination.
- Use only non-latex gloves

- Provide advanced copies of menus, food ingredients and menu changes in writing if requested by parent/guardian.

**School Bus Company Responsibilities**

- Inform individual school bus drivers that he/she is transporting a child with a Life Threatening Allergy. Information will be provided by the health services coordinator.
- Provide guidelines supplied by the health services coordinator to all school bus drivers and substitute drivers on managing LTA.
- Provide time for training in emergency response as deemed necessary by the school nurse.
- Review medical emergency procedures.
- Enforce a “no eating” policy on school buses with exceptions made only to accommodate special needs under federal or similar laws.

**Policy Review and Revision**

Review and revision of these policies and procedures shall occur as needed but at least every two years.

Approved by School Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

Approved by Health Services Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

Date approved by the School Committee

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Authorizing Signature:

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Superintendent of School’s Signature

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