

Burlington Public Schools

Allergen Policy for Students with Life Threatening Allergies

The Burlington Public Schools recognize the increasing prevalence of student allergies and the life-threatening nature of the allergy for many students. The Burlington Public Schools cannot guarantee to provide an allergen-free environment for all students with life-threatening allergies, nor 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, to educate the community, and to maintain and regularly update a system-wide protocol for responding to their needs.

The Burlington Public Schools will 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. For any student whose physician (primary care or board certified allergist) has informed the school in writing that the student has a life threatening allergy, the school nurse will oversee the development of an Allergy Action Plan or Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP), which will include an Allergy Action Plan (AAP) that addresses the management of anaphylaxis. Parents/guardians have the responsibility to inform the school district when a child's medical condition might affect the child's welfare or safety. Effective communication is vital among all parties.

The district wide procedure addresses:

1. The training and education for all Burlington Public Schools employees.
The training will include the education on:
 - a. a description of severe allergies;
 - b. the signs of anaphylaxis;
 - c. the proper use of an epipen;
 - d. the specific steps to follow in the event of an emergency.

2. The Burlington Public Schools is making every reasonable accommodation to lessen the possibility of exposure to food allergens by designating that at all schools, during the school day, implement the following: birthday recognition will be food free, classroom snacks will be "known allergy free" in accordance with the Individual Health Care Plans of each child of the students within a given classroom and/or grade level and on holidays or special occasions the students may bring in a second snack that conforms with the snack policy and each student may eat the snack that they brought in as part of the celebration or recognition of the holiday or special occasion. Use of food for curriculum purposes is prohibited unless implemented through the food services department. The use of food as a reward in school will be eliminated. The Principal will implement a No Food or Utensil Sharing practice with particular focus at the elementary level. Teachers may keep a supply of allergen safe snacks in the classroom for use by a student who forgets his/her snack on a given day. During Field Days an allergen safe cold snack may be served to the students. During MCAS tests allergen safe mints and/or gum may be consumed by the students. It was understood that in the event of a conflict, a student's IEP supersedes terms of the policy.

3. The school nurse in conjunction with the parent/guardian and the primary care provider/allergist will prepare either the Allergy Action Plan (AAP) or the Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) which incorporates an Allergy Action plan (AAP) for any student with a life threatening allergy. The IHCP and AAP will be updated annually. The nurse will review the IHCP and AAP with teachers of the students in their classes and respond to emergencies as per the emergency protocol documented in the IHCP or AAP. The teachers will leave pertinent information in a substitute file. Parents or guardians of students registering for pre-K or Kindergarten, or any students new to the school system at any level, shall fill out and file a Food Allergy Parent Questionnaire to be provided by the school department at the time that they register the child. This questionnaire shall become part of the student's health record.
4. Each elementary school will provide an allergen sensitive table(s) in the cafeteria. In the placement of said tables the principals shall attempt to minimize the segregation of students with allergies to the degree reasonably possible. At the middle school and high school appropriate accommodations will be made as needed.
5. The school nurse will recommend to administration the appropriateness of each field trip and consideration of safety of the student with life-threatening allergies. Parents of a student at risk of anaphylaxis will be invited to accompany their child on school trips, in addition to the chaperone. There shall be no food consumption on the bus during field trips.
6. The Principal and Food Services personnel will establish a routine cleaning protocol for all food consumption areas (to include a protocol for hand-washing and table/desk cleaning before and after food/snacks have been consumed). Also, to the degree reasonably possible with respect to food preparation and areas of food preparation all school kitchens shall be peanut free and tree nut free.

The district shall adopt guidelines to address the application of this policy.

First Reading: 8/21/12

Second Reading: 9/11/12

Adopted by the Burlington School Committee: 9/11/12