

## **LIFE- THREATENING FOOD ALLERGY POLICY**

The Board recognizes that many children are being diagnosed with life-threatening food allergies. As such, the Jonesport School Board sets policy guidelines to this emerging challenge. The Board's primary goal is to provide a safe environment for all children. However, because some allergens are so tenacious and pervasive, it is unrealistic to guarantee an allergen-free environment. Rather, this policy aims to minimize the risk by implementing procedures which will reduce the amount of life-threatening food allergens in the schools. Additionally, The Board seeks to increase community awareness and education of food allergies.

This policy does not attempt to address all types of food allergies. Only those allergies which are life-threatening are considered in this policy.

Because research supports the active participation of the allergic person in managing the allergy, this policy outlines safety measures that are the student's responsibility. However, because the children in the Jonesport School Department are of the youngest ages, a greater share of the responsibility must be assumed by the child's parents and school staff, working cooperatively.

### **Student Responsibility**

- To wear a medic alert bracelet at all times, if the situation warrants it.
- To eat only food/snacks brought from home (i.e. no trading or sharing with others)
- To avoid food items with unknown ingredients or known allergens
- To notify school staff immediately if symptoms of a reaction present
- To be proactive in the care and management of the student's food allergy and reaction based on the student's developmental level

### **Parent Responsibility**

- To notify the school of the child's allergies and to work with school staff to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school day
- To provide school staff with updated and complete written medical documentation, instructions, and medication, both periodically and upon request
- To work with the core team(see below) to establish a Food Allergy Action Plan
- To provide updated photographs at the start of each school year for the Food allergy Emergency Action Plan
- To provide complete and updated emergency contact information
- To provide properly-labeled medications and to replace medications after use or upon expiration for both the classroom and school office, if necessary
- To volunteer as a chaperone for field trips or during activities that are outside of the scope of a normal school day (e.g. field day, special events)
- To assist the school in developing safe product lists for distribution in the classrooms

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- To educate the child in the self-management of the food allergy, including but not limited to: safe and unsafe foods, strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods, symptoms, of allergic reactions, how to communicate an allergy-related problem, and not to accept food from other students
- To learn how, if age-appropriate, to administer the Epi-Pen and how to read food labels.

### **School Responsibility**

- To be informed of and to follow all applicable federal laws, including ADA, IDEA, Section 504, and FERPA, as well as any applicable state laws/district policies
- To create a core team to work with parents and student (as age-appropriate) to establish a Food Allergy Action Plan specific to that child. Team members should include, but not be limited to, the principal, the school nurse, the child's teacher, the child's physician, the guidance counselor, and the food services manager.
- To identify, and train (if needed), school personnel to administer medications in accordance with State Nursing and Good Samaritan Laws governing the administration of emergency medications
- To practice the Food Allergy Action Plan as a drill to assure the efficiency/effectiveness of the plan.
- To update emergency protocols as needed with team participation
- To review the Food Allergy Action Plan with core team members and physician as soon as possible following a reaction
- To post signs at all points of entry stating that students with certain life-threatening allergies attend the school
- To notify the parents of an allergic child well in advance of special events, field trips, etc when the parent will be needed to chaperone/assist
- To work with the bus drivers to enforce a strict no-eating policy on buses (even during field trips) and to assure that school bus driver training includes symptoms awareness and what to do if a reaction occurs.
- To notify allergic students' parents of teacher placement prior to the start of the school year, so that parents will have adequate time to contact or meet with their child's future teacher to discuss the child's situation and needs, should either the teacher or the parents desire such a meeting.
- To implement a food-free celebrations policy for all birthdays as well as candy-free Halloween and Valentine's Day celebrations, including Valentine exchange.
- To send home periodic communication to parents (i.e. teachable moments) regarding not sending in Candy for Valentine's Day, Halloween, etc
- To follow federal/state/district laws and regulations regarding sharing medical information about the student (i.e. confidentiality)
- To educate all staff interacting with allergic students so that they understand the severity of the food allergy, can recognize symptoms, and can take emergency action

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- To inform and update all families registered in the district about known life-threatening allergens in order to minimize risk of exposure. Extra-curricular groups using the school facilities should also be notified, and should be excluded from using any area designated as “allergen-free”
- To take threats or harassment against an allergic child seriously and to follow the bullying policy

**WHEN THE ALLERGY HAS A TACTILE COMPONENT, ADDITIONAL STEPS MUST BE OBSERVED**

- To serve only allergen-free products in the school cafeteria, when the allergy has a tactile component
- To provide a method of hand wiping for all home lunch students prior to leaving the cafeteria supervised by staff or volunteers. This shall be in the form of hand wipes or traditional soap and water hand washing; waterless sanitizing gels have proven not to be sufficient in this pursuit. Hand wiping/washing must also be done by all students, regardless of classroom, immediately after morning snack or immediately prior to going to the cafeteria for lunch
- To further reduce potential allergen exposure (depending on the allergen) by holding gym class outside whenever possible

This document was modeled after the document, “School Guidelines for Managing Students with Food Allergies”, which was developed by the following organizations:

- American School Food Service Association
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Association of School Nurses
- National School Boards Association
- The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network

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