

Cardinal Pacelli School Food Allergy Management Policy

Ohio Revised Code Sec. 3313.719: the board of education of each city, local, exempted village and joint vocational school district and the governing authority of each chartered nonpublic school shall establish a written policy with respect to protecting students with peanut and other food allergies. The policy shall be developed in consultation with parents, school nurses and other school employees, school volunteers, students, and community members. Implemented Oct. 16, 2009

Anaphylaxis is a potentially life-threatening medical condition occurring in allergic individuals after exposure to an allergen. People with allergies have over-active immune systems that target otherwise harmless elements in our diet and environment. During an allergic reaction to food, the immune system identifies a specific food protein as a target. This initiates a sequence of events in the cells of the immune system resulting in the release of chemical mediators such as histamine. These chemicals trigger inflammatory reactions in the tissues of the skin, the respiratory system, the gastrointestinal tract, and the cardiovascular system. When the inflammatory symptoms are widespread and systemic, the reaction is termed “anaphylaxis,” a potentially life-threatening event. Anaphylaxis refers to a collection of symptoms affecting all or some of these systems in the body:

- Skin: swelling, hives, rash, itching, itchy lips/mouth
- Respiratory: runny nose, cough, wheezing, shortness of breath, tight throat, difficulty swallowing, change in voice
- Gastrointestinal: itchy tongue/mouth/throat, vomiting, cramping, abdominal pain, nausea, diarrhea
- Cardiovascular: irregular heartbeat, flushed or pale skin, cyanotic (bluish) lips or mouth area, decreased blood pressure, fainting, dizziness, change in mental status
- Other: sense of impending doom, anxiety, itchy/red/watery eyes

The severity and rapid onset of anaphylaxis emphasizes the need for an effective emergency plan that includes early recognition of symptoms, immediate administration of epinephrine, and prompt transfer of the student by EMS to the hospital.

Food allergy is a growing concern in the United States and creates a significant challenge for children in school. Increasing numbers of children are diagnosed with food allergies that may result in a potentially life-threatening condition, anaphylaxis. Currently, there is no cure for life-threatening food allergies. The only prevention is strict avoidance of the identified food allergen. If anaphylaxis occurs, immediate treatment and medical intervention is critical.

The focus of a food allergy management policy and procedure should be prevention, education, awareness, communication, and emergency response. The management plan should strike a balance between the health, social normalcy and safety needs of any individual student with life-threatening food allergies, and the education, health and safety needs of all students.

The goals of the policy are;

1. To maintain the health and to protect the safety of children who have life-threatening food allergies in ways that are developmentally appropriate, promote self-advocacy and competence in self-care, and provide appropriate educational opportunities.
2. To ensure the interventions and individual health care plans for students with life-threatening food allergies are based on medically accurate information and evidence-based practices.

3. To define a formal process for identifying, managing, and ensuring continuity of care for students with life-threatening food allergies throughout their school years in the educational setting and at all school functions.

In order to accomplish these goals, cooperation and shared responsibility are needed.

Family's Responsibility:

- Notify the school of the child's allergies.
- Work with the school to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school including in the classroom, in the cafeteria, in after-care programs, during school-sponsored activities, and on the school bus.
- Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a physician, using the Food Allergy Action Plan as a guide, including a photo on the form as necessary. If the child uses a bus service, inform the bus service of the plan.
- Provide properly labeled medications and replace medications after use or expiration
- Educate the child in the self-management of his/her food allergy including:
 1. Safe and unsafe foods
 2. Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods
 3. Symptoms of allergic reactions
 4. How and when to tell an adult that they may be having an allergy-related problem
 5. How to read food labels (age appropriate)

School's responsibility:

- Be knowledgeable about and follow applicable federal laws including ADA, IDEA, Section 504, and FERPA, and any state laws that apply.
- Review the health records submitted by the parents and physicians, and forwarded records from previous schools.
- Include food-allergic students in school activities, never excluding students from activities based solely on their food allergies.
- Identify a team of school personnel (school nurse, teacher, principal, food service personnel, counselor, bus personnel, e.g.) to work with parents and the student to establish a prevention plan. Changes to the plan to promote management should be made with team participation.
- Ensure that all school staff who interacts with the student understand food allergies, can recognize symptoms, know what to do in an emergency, and work with other staff members to eliminate the use of food allergens in the allergic student's meals, educational tools, arts and crafts projects, or incentives.
- Review the Food Allergy Action Plans before an allergic reaction occurs to assure the efficiency/effectiveness of the plans.
- Coordinate with the school nurse to be sure medications are properly stored in an easily accessible secure location central to designated school personnel. By Ohio law, students are allowed to carry their own epinephrine, if age appropriate and approved by the student's physician, parent, and school nurse.
- Designate and train school personnel to administer medications in accordance with State Nursing and Good Samaritan laws governing the administration of emergency medications.

- Be prepared to handle a reaction and ensure that there is a staff member available who is properly trained to administer medications during the school day, regardless of time or location. Review policies/prevention plans with the core team members, parents/guardians, student (age appropriate), and physician after a reaction has occurred.
- Alert the school transportation system used by the student to assure that they are aware of the allergy and what to do if a reaction occurs. Encourage parents to provide health information/plan to the bus service.
- Discuss appropriate management of food allergy with the family and student during bus transportation, encouraging a “no eating” policy.
- Discuss field trips with the family to decide appropriate strategies for managing the food allergy.
- Follow federal/state, district laws and regulations regarding the sharing of medical information.

Student’s responsibility:

- Do not trade foods with others.
- Do not eat anything with unknown ingredients or that may contain an allergen.
- Be pro-active in the care and management of one’s food allergies and reactions based one’s developmental level, being able to describe symptoms, and when/how to use medications.
- Know to notify an adult immediately if something potentially containing allergens is eaten.

School Policy and Procedure

A procedure for the development of an individual health plan and/or emergency care plan for students at risk of anaphylaxis will include the following elements:

- Review of the Student Emergency Information Card submitted yearly, usually by the school nurse, to determine if there is need for an Individualized Health plan and/or Emergency Care Plan for food allergies.
- Communication with the parents, physician, and appropriate staff, to have IHP/ECP completed.
- Dissemination of information on plan to staff members who have contact with the student, including food service personnel, and transportation services.
- Provision of a procedure addressing emergency response, administration of medication and notification of EMS. (Emergency response team may be notified)
- Provision of training of all school staff in awareness, avoidance prevention, recognition of symptoms of anaphylaxis, and response to anaphylaxis and/or other life-threatening conditions.
- Establish strategies to reduce the risk of anaphylaxis within the school setting through efforts to control the exposure to allergens, such as less use of food for parties and incentives.
- Establish management of food allergies during Shelter-in place emergency. (foods stored, medication availability)
- Establish guidelines for management of food allergies during fieldtrips. (teacher/parent review of plan, provision of food if necessary)
- Provision of allergen-free spaces as deemed necessary in eating areas and proper cleaning techniques in those areas.
- Provision of secure area for medications and plans in main/health office.