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Walla Walla Public Schools
**STAFF AND PARENT GUIDELINES
FOR
STUDENTS WITH LIFE THREATENING
FOOD ALLERGIES**

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LIFE THREATENING ALLERGY INTRODUCTION

Life threatening allergies and the incidence of anaphylactic shock seem to be on the rise. The intent is to maximize the safety of all children in Walla Walla Public Schools.

KEY POINTS

- **You are never alone.** It takes a team to ensure the best for our students. Help is usually a phone call away.
- **Educate, Educate, Educate.** This is an ongoing process that changes with the students' needs and as the staff changes. Food bans do not work because it creates a false sense of security. Today, processed foods contain trace amounts of food items that are not always identified on the food label. The best plan is to educate our school community about the issues that face students with life threatening allergies.
- **Special events/Non-routine days.** The greatest risk for a life threatening allergic reaction exists when the normal routine is broken. Examples are classroom parties, field trips, a substitute teacher, and after school events. **Be Prepared.** Always have the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) available and think ahead to prevent possible exposures to a food allergen.
- **Symptoms vary greatly.** Call 911 when anaphylactic symptoms occur or if ingestion is suspected. Use emergency medication (i.e. Epi-Pen) if needed and follow the EAP.
- Life threatening allergy information will be on **bright paper** to make it easily identifiable.

ALLERGY OVERVIEW

- **Background.** A food allergy involves the immune system. A person with food allergies has an immune system that is overly sensitive to a food's PROTEIN. The protein is recognized as a foreign invader, and the body releases histamine and other chemical mediators, which could result in a severe allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock. **Milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, soy, and wheat** are the foods that cause the majority of allergic reactions. **Every child is different.** Some students will have gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms long before any other symptoms develop; others have rash or hives and respiratory symptoms almost immediately. Approximately 5% of children in the US are affected by food allergies. Most are not life threatening. Some highly sensitized children will develop a **rash or hives from just touching a surface** that has traces of their offending food protein.
- **Be safe, not sorry!** Take all complaints from children with food allergies very, very seriously. It is important to respect the needs and rights of each student, especially those covered under Section 504.
- A child with a life threatening food allergy should **NEVER eat unexamined food.**
- **Be prepared! Know your plan!**

- In the event a student has an allergic reaction at school, **call 911 and administer emergency medication** (i.e. antihistamine and Epi-Pen) as ordered by the student's physician. Key staff members should be trained to use emergency medications and know the location of those medications at school and on any special function. **If epinephrine (Epi-Pen) is used, the student should be taken to the hospital for evaluation even if the allergic reaction symptoms subside.** The school principal, nurse and area director should be notified as soon as feasible. Emergency rescue squad should be called for all suspected food allergy reactions. No one can predict how a reaction will progress. A mild reaction can blossom into a full blown anaphylactic reaction very quickly or over several hours. A reaction can also appear to subside or even appear to be under control and can blossom again into a more severe reaction.
- **Cross contamination.** It only takes a trace amount of the food protein to cause an allergic reaction. To prevent exposure to an allergen, **hand washing** and **washing of surfaces** (tables, chairs, mixing bowls, etc.) where an allergen has been used is necessary. Soap and warm water are most effective for cleaning surfaces.
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AWARENESS, PREVENTION, and EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

By working together, parents, students, medical professionals, school district team members, and community partners can create a safe and nurturing environment for all of our students, including those with life threatening allergies. The first two keys to this safe environment are awareness and prevention.

Awareness means that students, staff, and the community become more aware of the impact of life threatening allergies and a better understanding of its impact and implication to students and families who have to live with this condition. It also means that key school team members know who in their school community has a life threatening allergy.

Prevention addresses the need to limit or avoid possible exposure of students with life threatening allergies to their allergen. The school district has reviewed and will continue to update key procedures and forms that help protect these students. **One of the key ways to help prevent allergy problems in school is for the parent to ensure that all the necessary health information and forms are updated each year.** A law is now in place (RCW 28A.210) that requires each family to provide the school a completed Emergency Action Plan along with required medication and a completed medication request form before their child with a life threatening allergy can attend school.

Another key to prevention is for the family to **provide meals and snack items from home** if possible. Local allergists recommend this, and foods provided from home offer the safest option for students with life threatening allergies.

Unfortunately, total avoidance is simply not possible because many of the offending substances are so widespread or hidden in our daily environments. That is why **Emergency Preparedness** is so important. Each child with life threatening allergies will have an Emergency Action Plan in place, and key school team members will be trained.

CARE TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Family's Responsibility

- Notify the school of the child's allergies.
- Work with the school team 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, as well as an Emergency Action Plan.
- Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a physician, using the Emergency Action Plan as a guide.
- Provide small photo of the child (approx. 1½" x 2") to be used on the Emergency Action Plan.
- Replace medications after use or upon expiration.
- Ensure all necessary enrollment forms are filled out accurately and updated annually to keep parent and emergency contact information accurate.
- Educate the child in the self-management of their food allergy including:
 - Safe and unsafe food
 - Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods
 - Symptoms of allergic reactions
 - How and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy related problem
 - How to read food labels (age appropriate)
 - How to use Epi Pen, as advised by physician

If epinephrine (Epi-Pen) is used, the student should be taken to the hospital for evaluation even if the allergic reaction symptoms subside.

- Review policies/procedures and Emergency Action Plan with the school staff, the child's physician, and the child (if age appropriate) after a reaction has occurred.
- Ensure student information and necessary forms are provided if the child transfers schools at any time during the school year.
- Notify school staff of any changes in the Emergency Action Plan including emergency contact phone numbers.
- Share food allergy information including a copy of the Emergency Action Plan and medication orders with all after school programs/activities.
- Provide safe snacks 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 allergies.
- Work with kitchen staff and district nutrition services to ensure safe school meal options are selected if the child will eat at school.

Student's Responsibility

- Should not share or trade food or eating utensils with others.
- Should not eat anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen.
- Should be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions based on their developmental level.
- Should notify an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic.
- Should notify an adult if they are being picked on or threatened by other students as it relates to their food allergy.

Principal's Procedures/Responsibility

The building principal is the key care team coordinator that pulls together the building, district, and school community team members that can best serve the particular student and circumstance. Key responsibilities are:

- Meet with parents and **LISTEN** to their needs and concerns. They often have become an expert on their child's specific allergy.
- Establish a care team. (Could include: Parent, Principal, Teacher, Student, Nurse, Aid, Kitchen Manager)
- Help parent understand possible 504 implications.
- Inform parent when child may attend school.
- Develop school accommodation plan: Lunchroom, classroom, lunch menu, special events, parties, field trips, and science kits.
- Ensure necessary paperwork is completed/updated prior to attendance each year: Enrollment forms, EAP, Medication forms.
- Ensure training takes place annually and as needed: Emergency medications (i.e. Epi-Pen), EAP, Accommodation Plan at school.
- Ensure medications are stored appropriately, are accessible, and staff knows where they are located.
- Ensure district procedures for special events are followed: Field trip plans, parties, and special events.
- Ensure Emergency Action Plans are in designated areas, key staff are trained, and staff practice the EAP at least once as early in the school year as possible.
- Ensure new staff and substitutes are alerted.

Office Staff's Procedures/Responsibility

- Review Enrollment form (1F15B) and identify students with life threatening allergies.
- Hand out a complete Life Threatening allergy packet to parent and explain that **required forms must be returned and approved by the school nurse prior to the child attending school.** This is in compliance with the state law.
- Notify the principal, nurse, and teacher immediately that a student with a life threatening allergy will be enrolling (e-mail or call).
- Receive and review all required forms (EAP, Medication request form, and any other information the parent provides).
- Immediately inform nurse that the completed paper work is available.
- Ensure all care plans are on file in the designated notebook and easily accessible.
- Prompt entry of health codes into Student Records System.

Nurse's Procedures/Responsibility

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

- Work with principal and parents to develop an EAP and an individual health care plan.
- Review and approve EAP and medication forms as submitted.
- Distribute EAP and medication request form to appropriate staff.
- Train staff in using emergency medications and EAP.
- Review EAP annually and update as needed. Communicate with parents and medical professionals as needed.
- Monitor emergency medication expiration dates.
- Resource to school staff in accommodating student needs.

Teacher's Procedures/Responsibility

The teacher has the greatest impact on the student and classroom environment. Making the school a place where the student can be accepted is very important. Key responsibilities are:

- Understand parent and student needs.
- **Call 911 first** when allergy related symptoms occur or ingestion is suspected.
- Know the Emergency Action Plan and school/classroom accommodations.
- Inform substitutes of the plan(s) and ensure all paper work is current and available.
- Help educate students about allergies and peer pressure. (Video available)
- Review/rethink lesson plans and field trips in regard to foods.
- Be prepared for special events (parties) and field trips. The greatest risk for a student to have an allergic reaction is when class activity is outside the normal routine.
- Only use approved forms for meal requests (Special Order Sack Lunches, Testing snacks, Outdoor Educational Camp)
- Emphasize hand washing and surface washing before and after eating or handling food.
- Train all students not to share food or eating utensils.
- Review craft and science projects in regards to specific food allergies.
- Practice the Emergency Action Plan at least once as early in the school year as possible.
- Know the location of all Emergency information and medications.
- Know how medications are accessed after normal school hours and on special trips.
- Know how to contact emergency services at school or on a field trip.
 1. Do you dial "9" first?
 2. Know how to contact emergency services throughout the full course of your field trip.
 3. Is 9-1-1 available throughout the entire itinerary? If not, what is the number to dial for the local emergency response service?
 4. Be aware that your cell phone may not be operational in all areas.
 5. **Know your alternatives.**
- Ensure compliance with district field trip procedures.

Nutrition Services' Procedures/Responsibility

The Nutrition Services has access to educational resources and staff that are trained in nutrition, labeling, and food production. Their role is to clearly communicate with the principal and parent what allergens exist on the school menus. Key responsibilities are:

- Know the ingredients of school food items.
- Annually review food labels.
- Label peanut and nut products that are produced by nutrition services.
- Participate with care team as needed.
- Ensure all meal requests are on appropriate forms.
- Label all sack meals ordered for the students with life threatening allergies with the student's name and allergy.
- Prevent cross contamination of allergenic food products.
- Ensure all EAP's are posted on the hot box closest to the serving line.
- Make menu accommodations as needed. Communicate these changes with the principal and nutrition services supervisor.
- Compare EAP's posted in kitchen with EAP's available in school office and nutrition services office.
- Provide appropriate food substitutions that comply with EAP.

RESOURCES

The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN). FAAN is a great resource for current research, informational newsletter, support groups, and information of food products. Their phone number is 800-929-4040, and the Web address is: www.foodallergy.org

Allergy, Asthma Information Association of Canada. (AAIA) <http://cgi.cadvision.com/~allergy/aaia.html>

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. (AAAAI). <http://www.aaaai.org>

National Association of School Nurses. <http://www.nasn.org>

Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America. <http://www.aafa.org>

Inland Food Allergy Support Team. Local eastern Washington support group. www.i-fast.org