

School Committee Policy on Life-Threatening Allergies

Background:

Allergic reactions span a wide range in the severity of symptoms. The most severe and life threatening reaction is anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a potentially life-threatening medical condition occurring in allergic individuals after exposure to their specific allergens. Anaphylaxis refers to a collection of symptoms affecting multiple systems in the body, the most dangerous of which are breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock, both of which are potentially fatal. The most common causes of anaphylaxis in children include allergies to the following:

- Foods (most commonly peanuts, tree nuts, milk, dairy products, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish)
- Insect stings (yellow jackets, bees, wasps, hornets)
- Medications
- Latex

The Hanover Public School guidelines developed within this document are applicable to students who are at risk for anaphylaxis and in circumstances where a previously undiagnosed life-threatening allergic response occurs. Anaphylaxis can occur immediately or up to two hours following allergen exposure. Therefore, it is important to identify students at risk, to implement appropriate preventative policies and to be prepared to handle these emergencies when they arise.

Goals:

As part of its Life Threatening Allergies policy, Hanover Public Schools has developed the following four chief goals:

- Maintain a system-wide protocol for responding to students' needs
- Minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to students with life-threatening allergies
- Prepare for possible allergic reactions, and to respond appropriately to any allergy emergencies
- ~~Work to prevent occurrence of life-threatening allergic reaction~~

Hanover Public Schools cannot guarantee to provide an allergen-free environment for students with life threatening allergies. However, an overall purpose of the Life Threatening Allergies policy is to develop a system-wide effort to educate all stakeholders - educators, parents, students and community about LTAs. To this end the sections below highlight the major responsibilities of those various stakeholders. However, the Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) developed for each child with an LTA will be individualized and not all responsibilities are or can be detailed in these guidelines.

Responsibility of the Hanover School Department:

The Superintendent and staff are responsible for the following:

- Create a system-wide emergency plan for addressing life threatening allergic reactions
- Provide in-service training and education on reducing allergy risks, recognizing allergy symptoms, and emergency procedures for staff. Training shall include, but not be limited to the following:
 - A description/definition of severe allergies and a discussion of the most common ~~food, medication, latex and insect sting~~ LTA allergens
 - A description/discussion of the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis
 - Training to designated staff on the correct use of an EpiPen
 - Discussion of specific steps to follow in the event of an emergency
 - Encourage a “NO FOOD TRADING” and “NO UTENSIL SHARING” practice in all schools with particular focus at the elementary school level.
 - Provide for school nurses, in conjunction with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the primary care provider/allergist, and the school physician (if appropriate) to prepare an Individual Health Care Plan for any student with a life threatening allergy. The Plans will be reviewed by the school nurse, the student's parent(s) ~~and primary care provider and/or the student's allergist, and will be signed off by the child's physician to indicate that he/she deems the IHCP to be adequate.~~
 - Ensure that LTA precautions are in place in school cafeteria as outlined by the Individual Health Care Plan (i.e., Tables will be cleaned and sanitized and designated by a universal symbol.)
 - Make the Individual Health Care Plan available in the nurse's office and a student's homeroom. Recommend that parent(s)/guardian(s) attach a photograph of their student with a Life Threatening Allergy to their Allergy Action Plan (AAP).
 - Submit to School Bus Company an LTA list of students who have life threatening allergies.
 - Require all food service employees to use latex free gloves.
 - Make EpiPens (belonging to the school and those prescribed to the students) available in the nurse's office and in other clearly designated locations as specified in the AAP/IHCP. At the middle and high school levels, students are allowed to carry their EpiPens on their person as allowed by the medication policy.
 - Familiarize teachers with the IHCP of their students and any other staff member who has contact with student on a need-to-know basis.
 - Post the “Guidelines for Students with Life-Threatening Allergies” on the school district's website.
 - Provide in-service to food service employees regarding safe food handling practices to avoid cross-contamination with potential food allergens

Responsibilities of the School Principal:

The principal of each school is responsible for the following:

- Familiarize teachers with the Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) of their students and any other staff member who has contact with student on a need-to know basis.
- In conjunction with nurses, provide in-service training and education for staff regarding life-threatening allergies, symptoms, risk reduction procedures and emergency procedures including demonstration on how to use the EpiPen.
- Discuss the protocol for Life Threatening Allergies at kindergarten orientation.
- Post the school's emergency protocol on LTAs in appropriate locations, including school website.
- Notify staff of the locations of EpiPens in the school.
- Provide for a contingency plan for staff and students in the event the nurse is not immediately available.
- Provide a list of students with LTAs to the Business Manager

Responsibilities of the School Nurse:

The school nurse is the primary coordinator of each student's plan. Each school nurse has the following responsibilities:

- Meet and/or collaborate with each parent/guardian of a student with an LTA and develop the students' Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP).
- Maintain updated IHCPs in nurse's office and in student's homerooms at each school.
- Assist the principal in providing information about students with LTAs to staff
- Work with the principal to provide in-service training for staff regarding LTAs- their symptoms, risk reduction procedures and emergency procedures
- Familiarize teachers with the IHCPs of their students and any other staff member who comes in contact with the student
- Follow the Department of Public Health regulations regarding administrations of medications, especially administering EpiPens
- Discuss with parents appropriate locations for storing EpiPens.
- Inform the principal and parents/guardians of the student if any student experiences an allergic reaction for the first time
- Work with the principal to establish emergency protocol in the event the nurse is out of the building
- Participate in the planning of a student's re-entry to school after an anaphylactic reaction

Responsibilities of Teachers:

Each teacher has the following responsibilities:

- Receive and review the IHCP in collaboration with the nurse and the parent of any student in the teacher's classroom with a Life Threatening Allergies
- Leave information in an organized, prominent and accessible format for a substitute teacher
- Participate in in-service training for students with life threatening allergies
- Collaborate with the nurse and parents of an allergic student and set protocols in the classroom for management of food in the class
- Participate in the planning of a student's re-entry to school after an anaphylactic reaction
- Notify the school nurse of upcoming field trips as soon as possible to ensure proper emergency medications are available

Responsibilities of Parents:

Each parent of a student with an LTA has the following responsibilities:

- Inform the school nurse of your child's allergies prior to the opening of school or as soon as possible after diagnosis
- Arrange to meet and/or collaborate with the school nurse to develop an Individual Health Care Plan/ Allergy Action Plan / (IHCP/AAP) for the student
- Provide medical information from the child's treating physician as needed to write the plans, IHCP
- Provide the school with a list of foods and ingredients to be avoided, and provide a list of safe or acceptable foods that can be served to your child.
- Provide the school nurse with enough up-to-date emergency medications including EpiPens
- Provide a Medic ALERT ID for your child
- Notify school nurse of upcoming field trip as soon as possible and provide EpiPen to be taken on field trips as needed
- Instruct your child on the following, as appropriate for the child's age and developmental level:
 - Recognizing the first symptoms of an allergic/anaphylactic reaction
 - Knowing where the epinephrine auto-injector is kept and who has access to the epinephrine
 - Communicating clearly as soon as he/she feels a reaction starting
 - Carrying his/her own EpiPen auto-injector when appropriate
 - Not sharing snacks, lunches, or drinks
 - Washing hands before and after handling food
 - Understanding the importance of hand-washing before and after eating
 - Reporting teasing, bullying and threats to adult authority
 - Taking as much responsibility as possible for his/her own safety
- As children get older, when developmentally appropriate, instruct them on the following:

- ~~Communicating the seriousness of the allergy to an adult~~ Participate in the development of the IHCP, along with the school nurse and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Communicating symptoms as soon as they appear to an adult
- Reading labels
- Administering own epinephrine auto-injector and be able to train others in its use
- Inform the school of any changes in the child's LTA status.
- Provide the school with the licensed provider's statement if the student no longer has allergies
- If accommodations cannot be made in the cafeteria for the child's allergy, parents will provide appropriate lunches

Responsibilities of Students:

In accordance with the student's age and level of development, each student with a Life Threatening Allergy is responsible for the following:

- Taking responsibility for avoiding allergens
- Not trading or sharing foods
- Washing hands before and after eating
- Learning to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction
- Promptly informing an adult as soon as accidental exposure occurs or symptoms appear
- Developing a relationship with the school nurse and/or another trusted adult in the school to assist in identifying issues related to the management of the allergy in the school

Responsibilities of Food Service Personnel:

- Food Service personnel have the following responsibilities:
- Minimize, to the extent practicable, the use of peanut/tree nut products in the cafeteria.
- Supply cleaning materials for washing and sanitizing tables.
- Participate in in-service regarding safe food handling practices to avoid cross-contamination with potential food allergens.
- Wear latex free gloves
- Ensure that kitchens are locked at the end of each school day.

Responsibilities of Bus Company:

- Inform each driver if she/he is transporting a child with a known LTA.
- Provide functioning emergency communication devices (e.g., cell phones, two-way radios, etc.) on each bus.

- Provide emergency allergy response training to all drivers and/or bus monitors.
- Maintain a policy for no eating on the bus.
- Ensure surfaces and seats are kept as clean and allergy free as possible.

Responsibilities of Van Drivers:

The van drivers have the following responsibilities:

- Pull over and call 911 if a student with a LTAs is at risk
- Participate in awareness training to learn to recognize the symptoms of an allergic reaction

Responsibilities of Persons in Charge of Conducting After School Activities:

Persons in charge of extracurricular programs will have the following responsibilities:

- Coaches and other staff who supervise students' school sponsored activities after school will participate in training and implementation of the Allergy Action Plan/Individual Health Care Plan as appropriate

Responsibilities During Recess & Physical Education Classes:

During recess and physical education classes, the school's staff will ensure the following:

- Children will be under the supervision of at least one adult
- An Epi-pen will be taken outside if specified in the child's IHCP / AAP.

Responsibilities for Field Trips:

The schools will assume the following the responsibilities relative to participation of LTA students on field trips:

- Parents will work with staff to evaluate potential risks when determining whether it is appropriate for their child to attend a particular field trip.
- Lunches should be held in a safe-place so that children cannot access them until the appropriate time. Lunches of children with food allergies should be stored separately to minimize cross contamination.