

## **File: JLDD – LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES**

### **Background**

The number of students with life-threatening allergies has increased. As with all children with special health care needs, it is important that students with life-threatening allergies are able to access all education and education related benefits.

Every allergic reaction has the possibility to develop into a life-threatening and potentially fatal anaphylactic reaction. This can occur within minutes of exposure to the allergen. Some students who are very sensitive to their allergen may react to just touching or inhaling the allergen. For others, ingesting even the tiniest portion of their allergen or an insect sting can cause death.

### **Policy**

The Weymouth Public Schools recognizes that it is not possible to eliminate all possible exposures. The purpose of these guidelines are to minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to the students in the Weymouth Public Schools, provide all students, through necessary accommodations where required, the opportunity to participate fully in all school programs and activities, and to educate the school community about life-threatening allergies (LTAs). The focus of this district-wide allergy management plan is prevention, education, awareness, communication, and emergency response. ♦

In order to minimize the incidence of life threatening anaphylactic allergic reactions, the Weymouth Public Schools will maintain a system-wide plan for addressing life threatening allergic reactions. This plan shall include: building-based general medical emergency plans, an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP) for students with known Life Threatening Allergies (LTA), appropriate staff training, age appropriate meaningful guidelines for students with LTA, and other such guidelines that will ensure that students with LTA can participate fully in school activities.

### **Severe Allergic Reaction (Anaphylaxis)**

**Description:** This is a rare and extremely serious form of allergy. It usually develops suddenly and requires rapid management to prevent shock and possible death.

#### **Some causes of allergic reactions include:**

1. Foods such as peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, spices, milk, food dyes
2. Insect bite or sting, usually bee or wasp or fire ants
3. Idiopathic (unknown origin)
4. Medication - oral, injected or immunizations

5. An inhaled substance (dust, pollen, or chemicals)
6. An absorbed substance (certain chemicals when in contact with the skin such as latex)

### **Signs and Symptoms:**

1. Sudden onset
2. Hives, itchy red rash, swelling of the face or extremities
3. Tightness of chest, shortness of breath, wheezing
4. Itchy, tingling sensation or swelling of lips, tongue, throat, difficulty swallowing
5. Repetitive throat clearing, change in quality of voice
6. Sneezing, runny nose, itchy eyes, cough
7. Pallor or flushing, dizziness, feeling of apprehension
8. Nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting
9. Sweating and weakness
10. Weak rapid pulse and low blood pressure
11. Loss of consciousness, shock or coma

**Injection of Epinephrine auto injector is the treatment of choice for allergic emergencies (anaphylactic reactions).** It quickly constricts blood vessels, relaxes smooth muscles in the lungs to improve breathing, stimulates the heartbeat, and works to reverse hives and swelling around the face and lips.

### **Procedures:**

The School Nurse will be responsible for coordinating the management of students with Life Threatening Allergies (LTA) in school. The management of LTA takes a multidisciplinary approach of collaboration between the family, student, principal/administrator, nurse, classroom teacher(s)/specialists, support staff, counselors, food services/cafeteria staff, lunch/recess paraprofessionals, transportation department, and custodial staff. Awareness, prevention, and emergency preparedness are crucial elements in the management of a student with LTA. Each student with known LTA will have an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP) on file that is signed by the student's physician, parent/guardian, and school nurse. An Individual Health Care/504 Plan will be developed as deemed necessary by the parent, school nurse and building 504 coordinator.

### **School Team Responsibilities**

The School Team shall be comprised of the student's parents/guardians and school personnel who may have direct contact with the student.

### Family's Responsibility

1. Notify the school nurse **and** Principal, ~~and WeyCare Site coordinator, if necessary,~~ of the child's allergies.
2. Provide written medical documentation and instructions as directed by a physician including completion of the Individual Healthcare Plan.
3. Provide a small photo, if possible, of the child to be attached to the IHCP.
4. Deliver/provide physician ordered medications in properly labeled pharmacy containers to the school nurse on or before the first day of school.
5. Work with the school team to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school, including in the classroom, cafeteria, during field trips and on the bus.
6. Parent/Guardian is responsible for sharing all allergy information including a copy of the IHCP with all before and after school programs/activities and with the transportation department.
7. Participate in developing an Individual Health Care Plan and/or Section 504 plan with the school team as necessary.
8. Notify the school nurse of any changes in the IHCP including emergency contact phone numbers.
9. Parents/Guardians shall read The Allergen Alert Notification: Policy# JLDD-N-Letter (in classroom teachers responsibilities #'s 7 **and** 8), sent home when food is being used, and inform the School Team of any safety issues.
10. Educate their child in the self-management of their food allergy including:
  - Safe and unsafe foods
  - Strategies to avoid exposure to their allergens
  - Symptoms of an allergic reaction
  - How and when to tell an adult about an allergy related problem
  - How to read food labels (age appropriate)
11. Obtain a medical alert bracelet/necklace and encourage your child to wear it at all times.

12. Provide the school nurse with annual updates on your child's allergy status.
13. Work with the food services director and building cafeteria staff to ensure that a safe school meal option is selected if the student will eat food prepared by the school.
14. Sign release to share information with staff pertaining to LTA and to post information if appropriate.
15. Provide the school nurse with the licensed provider's statement if student no longer has allergies.
16. Provide medical documentation to the school team supporting the students right to carry his/her own epinephrine auto injector and the choice to do so.

### **Student's Responsibility**

1. Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction.
2. Do not share or trade food, drinks or eating utensils with others.
3. Avoid eating anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen.
4. Understand the importance of hand washing before and after eating.
5. Notify an adult immediately if he/she is experiencing signs/symptoms of an allergic reaction.
6. Be proactive in the care and management of his/her allergies and reactions based on his/her developmental level.
7. Report teasing, bullying and threats to an adult immediately.
8. Carry his/her own epinephrine auto injector when deemed appropriate.

**The ultimate goal is that children with LTA will learn to keep themselves safe.**

### **Principal/Administrator (or designee) Responsibilities**

1. Support School Team in implementing all aspects of the LTA program.
2. Provide opportunities for training and education for faculty, staff and substitutes regarding:
  - Life threatening allergies (foods, insect stings, medications, latex)
  - Risk reduction procedures
  - Emergency procedures
  - How to administer an epinephrine auto injector in an emergency.

## Health Services Coordinator Responsibilities

1. Health Services Coordinator will inform the Transportation Supervisor of students who are being transported with documented life-threatening allergies.

## School Nurse Responsibilities

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

2. Work with the parent/guardian and physician to develop an IHCP and if deemed necessary, a section 504 plan prior to the student starting school or immediately after the diagnosis of an LTA condition.
3. Assure that the IHCP includes the student's name, photo, allergens, and symptoms of allergic reaction, emergency procedures and required signatures.
4. Communicate the IHCP/504 plan with school staff that have a "need to know" designation (e.g. principal, classroom teachers, specialists, food service personnel, lunch/recess paraprofessionals, custodian, coaches)
5. As necessary, arrange and convene a meeting with the school team to explain the IHCP/504 and other accommodations that the student may require.
6. At the beginning of each school year and in February, offer education and training to all school personnel in the administration of emergency epinephrine, **per policy JLCD.** (See medication policy for training protocol)
7. Maintain open and frequent communications between home and school. Review the IHCP annually and update as needed.
8. Monitor emergency medication expirations dates.
9. Meet with student and show him/her how to get to the health office and where the epinephrine medication is stored (unlocked).
10. Student education on LTA will be based on individual need within the schools and classrooms. The school nurse will facilitate and conduct programs, as the need is determined. (Video is available)
11. If an epinephrine auto injector is administered, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health form must be completed and mailed to the address on the form. A copy is to be sent to the Health Services Coordinator and a copy placed in the student's health record.
12. Debrief with School Team within 24 hours of an emergency event.

## Classroom Teacher/Specialist Responsibilities

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:

1. Review the IHCP with the school nurse and incorporate any classroom accommodations as specified in the IHCP/Section 504 plan.
2. Participate in a meeting with the school team members as deemed necessary to develop a plan for the student with LTA.
3. Review the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis.
4. Follow the medical emergency ~~policy~~ **procedure** if a student develops symptoms associated with anaphylaxis. Faculty/staff who have been trained in administration of emergency epinephrine may do so and then immediately notify the school nurse.
5. Develop a system for notifying a substitute teacher of which students have LTA in the classroom.
6. Avoid the use of foods for classroom activities such as craft and science projects as well as special celebrations.
7. Notify the school nurse of the possible presence of allergens, based on school IHCPs and receive the approval from the school administration for curriculum alignment.
8. Notify parents using the Allergen Alert Notification Letter Policy# ~~JLDD-N~~ at least five school days in advance that lesson materials may contain an allergen from an IHCP or that use the lesson that may use food.
9. Review plans for field trips and avoid high-risk places. Consider eating situations on field trips and plan for prevention of exposure to the student's LTA.
10. Notify the nurse as soon as a field trip is planned so a substitute nurse can be obtained. If a nurse is unavailable, then at least one staff member must be trained in the administration of emergency epinephrine auto injector and in emergency procedures. At the elementary level, invite the parent of the child with LTA to attend the field trip if possible.
11. In grades Pre-K through 6 discourage students from sharing and trading foods.
12. Reinforce hand washing before and after eating whenever possible.
13. If outdoors, take a walkie-talkie or have cell phone available for emergencies.

### **Food Service Manager Responsibilities**

1. Participate in a meeting with the school nurse and other care team members as deemed necessary to develop a plan for the student with LTA.
2. Know the ingredients of school food items and recheck labels routinely for potential food allergens.
3. Review and follow sound food handling practices to avoid cross contamination. Train all food service staff and their substitutes to read product labels and recognize food allergens as per United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements.

### **Transportation Supervisor Responsibilities**

1. Maintain information provided by the Health Services Coordinator if/when student with a life-threatening allergy is receiving transportation.
2. Inform appropriate School Bus Drivers that he/she is transporting a child with a life-threatening allergy. Information will be provided by Health Services Coordinator to the Transportation Supervisor if or when a student with a life-threatening allergy is receiving transportation.
3. Provide time for training in emergency response as deemed necessary by the Health Service Coordinator.
4. Enforce a "no eating" policy on school buses with exceptions made only to accommodate Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

LEGAL REF: Public Law 108:337 Asthmatic School Children's Treatment and Health Management Act of 2004

Approved by SC: 5/10/18 [NEW DATE PENDING]