



## **Guidelines for Protecting Students with Life Threatening Allergies and Food Intolerances**

Severe allergies can be life threatening. Severe food intolerances (i.e. celiac disease) can be damaging and can produce chronic long term health effects. The risk of accidental exposure to food allergens can be reduced in the school setting if schools partner with students, parents and physicians to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for severely allergic and food-intolerant students.

The foods most likely to cause allergic reactions are: peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, eggs, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish. Students affected by celiac disease must avoid wheat, rye, barley and oats. However, any food can cause an allergic reaction in an affected student.

Allergic reactions can produce mild reactions such as watery eyes or an itchy nose, moderate reactions such as hives, or the life threatening reaction called anaphylaxis wherein multiple body systems are affected.

Severe food intolerance (i.e. celiac disease) reactions vary in nature and time of onset, and may include severe stomach/gastrointestinal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, and skin rash. In celiac disease, ingestion of gluten from wheat, rye, most oats and/or barley causes severe damage to the small intestine resulting in malabsorption of vital nutrients and other major health concerns.

Gunnison Watershed School District (GWSD) cannot guarantee that a student will never experience an allergy related event while at school. Because the school district is committed to student safety, the district has created these guidelines to reduce the risk children with life threatening allergies/food intolerances will experience an allergy-related event.

### **Family's Responsibilities**

1. Notify the school (principal and/or school nurse) of the child's allergies/intolerance as soon as possible prior to the first day of attendance, preferably in the spring preceding the school year. Allow sufficient time to secure physician signatures on all necessary forms, including the medication administration form.
2. Work with the school team - which may include the principal, food services, counselor, classroom teacher, school nurse, and others – to determine the appropriate health care plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school including in the classroom, in the cafeteria, in after-school programs, during school sponsored activities and on the school bus.

3. Provide a letter from a health care provider that states your child's diagnosis, any history of allergic reactions, especially whether your child has experienced anaphylaxis and any medically advisable accommodations.
4. Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and properly labeled, current medications as directed by a physician using the appropriate health care plan as a guide to the school. Include a photo of the child on the written form. Provide replacement medications after use or upon expiration. Pick up medication at the end of every school year.
5. If your child is a bus rider, notify transportation (970-641-7780) of your child's food allergy/intolerance as soon as possible prior to the first day of attendance.
6. Provide a list of foods/ingredients to avoid.
7. Provide emergency contact information.
8. Educate the child in the self-management of their food allergy/intolerance including:
  - a. Safe and unsafe foods
  - b. Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods
  - c. Symptoms of allergic reactions
  - d. How and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy-related problem
  - e. How to read food labels (age appropriate)
  - f. Review weekly lunch menu together and contact Food Service Director for ingredient listings
  - g. No trading of foods with anyone at school
  - h. No accepting foods from anyone unless designated by family
9. Should a reaction occur, review policies/procedures with the school staff, child's physician and the child (age appropriate) following the incident.
10. Provide safe meals for lunchtime should the family determine the cafeteria menu is not safe.
11. Provide safe snacks if the family determines the likelihood of accidental exposure is too great when other parents provide birthday treats, party treats, bake sale treats, etc.
12. Strongly consider participating in the classroom as a volunteer and/or room parent to organize parties where food may be present.
13. If you observe a student not following these guidelines at school or on a field trip, request a school staff member to intervene.

### **Student Responsibilities**

1. Attend (age appropriate) the health care plan and/or 504 Plan meetings so that self-advocacy and food allergy/intolerance knowledge will continue to increase with age.
2. Agree to not trade food with anyone.
3. Agree to not eat anything with unknown ingredients or anything with a known allergen.
4. Agree to be proactive in the care and management of their food allergy/intolerance and reactions based on their developmental level. This may include educating their classmates about their allergy/intolerance or mentoring other severely allergic students about their allergy/intolerance.

5. Notify an adult immediately if they eat something believed to contain a food allergen.
6. Notify an adult immediately if they believe they are experiencing an allergic reaction.
7. Agree to carry their epinephrine at all times once they are approved to self-carry.
8. GWSD cannot guarantee that products with nuts or other food allergens will never be present at school or at school sponsored events. Likewise, GWSD cannot monitor products sold at athletic events or special student sales, products brought for potlucks or celebrations, or served on off-campus trips. Therefore, students with severe food allergies/intolerances must carefully monitor their food (and likely provide own food) in these situations.

### **GWSD Responsibilities**

1. Be knowledgeable about and follow applicable federal laws including ADA, IDEA, Section 504 and FERPA and any state laws and regulations and district policies that apply.
2. Create/review/update district policies and procedures regarding how to properly manage severely allergic/food intolerant students for affected schools in the district to follow.
3. Provide training to school principals, teachers, food service workers, and bus drivers, and other staff as appropriate regarding life threatening allergies and food intolerances. Training should include how to recognize and how to respond to a life threatening allergic reaction, including administration of epinephrine.
4. Review policies/procedures/training on a periodic basis to ensure student's needs are being met.

### **School Responsibilities**

1. Be knowledgeable about and follow applicable federal laws including ADA, IDEA, Section 504, FERPA and any state law and regulations and district policies that apply.
2. Review the health information submitted by parents and physicians to determine whether a health care plan, Section 504 Plan or both will apply. Create appropriate plan(s) to be reviewed at least on an annual basis. Distribute Plan annually (prior to start of school year) to all teachers/extra-curricular staff of severely allergic/food intolerant child. Ensure that pertinent information be shared with faculty and staff that have contact with the student in accordance with federal and state law, but otherwise kept confidential.
3. Inform and educate teachers as far in advance as possible that they will be teaching a severely allergic student or a student with food intolerances.
4. Take reasonable efforts to train all staff to identify signs of an allergic reaction and to administer epinephrine. All staff shall include teachers, playground monitors, cafeteria staff and extra-curricular staff, such as coaches.
5. Identify a core team of, but not limited to, principal, school nurse, counselor, teacher(s), food service personnel to work with the parents and the student (age appropriate) to establish a plan of education, awareness and prevention for the school community.
  - a. School wide food bans are discouraged. Food safety and awareness is encouraged.

- b. Allergen-free classrooms and allergen-free tables in the cafeteria decrease potential exposure to an allergen, and are vital for the severely food allergic student to remain safe, especially in elementary school. A letter home to classroom parents may be necessary to ensure an allergen-free classroom is maintained. The student's name will remain confidential.
  - c. Take reasonable steps to maintain a playground free of food allergens.
  - d. Encourage hand washing after lunch especially in the elementary school age group.
  - e. Wash allergen free cafeteria tables using separate supplies – bucket, water, sponges, and rags – than supplies used for other tables.
  - f. Identify staff in the cafeteria responsible for ensuring food allergy safety by monitoring the allergen free tables and watching for severe allergic reactions.
  - g. For all teachers of the food allergic or intolerant student, lesson plans that involve food will be reviewed to determine appropriate alternatives.
  - h. Review supplies to ensure they are non-allergenic. Play-dough, finger paint, art projects, science chemicals, and cleaning solutions can all contain food allergens.
  - i. Keep medicine in an unlocked cabinet during the school day (locked after hours) with child's health care plan.
  - j. Review policies/prevention plan after a reaction has occurred.
  - k. Have teachers create a substitute teacher folder with an additional copy of the health care plan/504 plan identifying all severely allergic/food intolerant children in their classroom.
  - l. Provide listing of children with severe food allergies/intolerance to the food services staff to ensure safe meals are fed to those children who choose to eat a school meal.
  - m. When appropriate, and with permission of student and parent, conduct a lesson for the child's classroom(s) about severe allergies/food intolerances.
  - n. Consider integrating awareness about severe allergies into the curriculum, where appropriate, e.g. as part of character education, health or science.
  - o. Discuss field trips of the severely allergic/intolerant child to decide appropriate strategies for managing the food allergy/allergies/intolerance. Determine who is responsible for carrying allergy medications. Ensure access to a phone in case of an emergency when possible.
  - p. Observe and be aware of how other students are reacting to the allergic/intolerant student to prevent teasing/harassment. Enforce district bullying policy.
6. Ensure that severely allergic/food intolerant students are included in all school activities to the extent that reasonable accommodations can be made to provide for their safety. Students should not be excluded from school activities solely based on their food allergy, nor asked to stay home for a day when a school activity involving food is occurring.

### **School Nurse Responsibilities**

1. Write health care plan for severely allergic/food intolerant child.

2. Designate school personnel who are properly trained to administer allergy medications in accordance with State Nursing and Good Samaritan Laws governing the administration of emergency medications.
3. Coordinate with school to be sure medications are properly stored and proper paperwork is completed for medication to be carried or remain in front office.
4. Review health care plan annually (prior to first day of new school year) and ensure that information related to severely food allergic/intolerant child has been disseminated to the appropriate staff.

### **District Transportation Responsibilities**

1. Inform bus driver of food allergic/intolerant child. Supply driver a folder on bus with picture, name and food allergy/intolerance information for that student.
2. Ensure that bus driver of food allergic child has annual training on recognizing symptoms of an allergic reaction and on administration of epinephrine.
3. Ensure all buses have communication devices in case of an emergency.
4. Discourage children from eating on the bus and drivers from distributing food to children on bus.

### **Food Services Staff Responsibilities**

1. Attend annual training and learn to recognize symptoms of food allergy reactions and learn role as a responder.
2. Know and follow protocol for maintaining an allergen-free table in the cafeteria.
3. Individual students are permitted to bring in peanut/nut butter in their lunches but may not sit at cafeteria tables designated nut free.
4. When asked, communicate with parents and students about specific menu ingredients.
5. Know and follow protocol for safe food preparation, handling and service of food to avoid cross-contamination.
6. Discourage students from trading food at lunch.

### **Resources**

- [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/pdf/13\\_243135\\_a\\_food\\_allergy\\_web\\_508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/pdf/13_243135_a_food_allergy_web_508.pdf)
- <https://www.nsba.org/sites/default/files/reports/Safe-at-School-and-Ready-to-Learn.pdf>
- <https://www.cde.state.co.us/healthandwellness/standardanaphylaxisplan2016>
- GWSD Policies: JLCDA, JLCDA-R Students with Food Allergies