

## **VERNON BOARD OF EDUCATION**

### **Food Allergy Management for Students**

The Vernon Board of Education (VBOE) recognizes the increase in the number of students with life threatening food allergies. Effective management of food allergies in the school setting includes implementing strategies for the avoidance of offending foods by allergic students and emergency planning to insure prompt identification and treatment of allergic reactions. The risk of accidental exposure to allergy-inducing foods can be reduced as the schools and the students, parents and physicians work together to minimize the risks to provide a safe educational environment for food allergic students. The following BOE guidelines cannot guarantee an allergy free environment, but encourage a cooperative relationship among students, parents, and school staff to cultivate a safe environment for identified food-allergic students.

### **GOALS**

1. To encourage the health and protection of children who have life-threatening food allergies that are developmentally appropriate, promote self-advocacy and competence in personal responsibility for the provision of appropriate educational opportunities.
2. To ensure that interventions and individual health care plans (IHCP) and emergency care plans (ECP) 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 across all transitions.

It is the policy of the VBOE to follow the guidelines developed and promulgated by the Connecticut Department of Public Health and Department of Education for students with identified life-threatening food allergies. The guidelines will include:

1. A process for development of IHCP and food allergy action plans (AAP) for students identified with a life-threatening food allergy.
2. Procedures for responding to life-threatening food allergic reactions to food.
3. Protocol example forms (attached) to prevent exposure to food allergens provided.
4. Education and training for appropriate school personnel on the management of students with identified life-threatening food allergies, including training related to the administration of medication.

### **Identification of students with life-threatening food-allergies**

Students may be identified with life-threatening food allergies through Health Profiles with Kindergarten registration, new student entries and school nurse communication with families.

#### ***Parents of Students with Life Threatening Food Allergies should:***

- Notify the school (school nurse, principal, and teacher) of their child's allergies. The school will be notified of any changes in their child's health or allergies.
- Provide current and updated written documentation signed by the student's physician indicating the student's:
  - Specific allergy (as established through blood tests (RAST), skin tests or history of reaction requiring treatment by a health care provider.
  - Emergency Plan
  - Medication orders
- Provide properly labeled medication and signed medication authorization form to the school nurse. All medications must be delivered and picked up by a parent or identified adult. Medication should be replaced after use, upon expiration or with notification from the nurse.
- Meet with school staff to develop a plan to meet the health needs of their child including the classroom, cafeteria, after-care programs, school sponsored events and school bus.
  - Provisions of food, as needed
  - Review policies and IHCP after reaction has occurred
  - Provision of foods or ingredients list of foods to be avoided.
    - **Only parent/guardian shall make the determination of food safety for their child**
    - **School personnel will not assume responsibility to determine food safety for students with identified life-threatening food allergies.**
- Educate their child in the self-management of his/her food allergy regarding
  - Safe and unsafe foods.
  - Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods
  - Symptoms of allergic reaction.
  - How to tell an adult that they may be having an allergic reaction.
  - Understand food labels as age appropriate

**Development of Individual Health Care Plan( IHCP) or Emergency Care Plans (ECP) or Allergy Action Plan(AAP) as appropriate for the child to be reviewed annually, after reaction or as changes in status are determined.**

An IHCP involves the collaborative efforts of those having a role in establishing and implementing the care for the child with identified food allergy and are developed for students with special needs or whose health requires daily intervention. An IHCP will include functional health issues, student objectives for promoting self care and age appropriate independence, responsibilities of parents, school nurse, teacher(s), student and administration as appropriate.

An ECP or AAP provides specific directions about what to do in a medical emergency. The ECP may be part of an IHCP. The ECP or AAP is a written plan that aids responders to an emergency situation to react in a prompt, safe, and individualized manner.

***Schools Responsibility to Students with Life Threatening Food Allergies should:***

- Identified school personnel will be knowledgeable about and follow applicable federal laws, including American Disabilities Act (ADA), Individualized Disability Education Act (IDEA), Section 504, and FERPA and any state laws or district policies that may apply to meet the student's needs.
- Review student's health records provided by parents and physicians, at the beginning of the school year (annually), upon entrance into the school, after a reaction and as needed.
- Develop and implement an ECP/AAP or IHCP (as appropriate) for individual food-allergic student as determined by an identified core team that may include physician, school nurse, teacher, principal, food services, parent/guardian(s) and student.
- IHCP,ECP,AAP will include and address a plan for fire drills, lockdowns or shelter to include access to medications and availability to allergy free foods to ensure continuity of care for students with life-threatening food allergies.
- Encourage inclusion of student with food allergies in all school activities.
- School nurse shall conduct in-service training for identified staff regarding the student with the life-threatening allergy including:
  - Signs and symptoms of allergic reaction
  - Risk reduction procedure
  - Emergency procedure
  - Medication administration training
    - Storage and availability
    - Procedure of administration
    - Documentation

- Training of Epinephrine Auto-injector
- Staff development meetings regarding students with life threatening food allergies.
- Food services may make food substitutions with completion of a “Medical Statement for Students without Disabilities” to be submitted and to be on file.
- The food services must make substitution as prescribed by a physician if the food allergy is severe enough to result in a life-threatening (anaphylactic) reaction
- Food services will make food labels and ingredient lists and menus available to parents/guardian(s) of a student with identified life-threatening food allergies.
- Food service staff will be provided information by the school nurse and the food service director regarding safe food preparation practice to protect students with food allergies.
- Education efforts should also include education for the individual student to promote self-advocacy and competence in self care including:
  1. Collaborate with families, school staff and students to define reasonable and unreasonable risks for children at appropriate developmental stages regarding medication carrying, self administration, food choices, education of peers about life-threatening food allergies and other factors to provide a safe educational environment for food-allergic students.
  2. Determine appropriate steps for safety in the context of children’s needs to take risks in order to learn and develop.
- Effective sanitation and cleaning measures to clean lunch tables, classroom surfaces known to remove food proteins.
- Promotion of hand cleaning practices following eating and use of food products.
- Enforcement of safe practices among students to include but not limited to:
  1. No food or meal swapping or exchanging
  2. No food or eating on school busses or during school transportation
  3. No food provided or given to students without labels or identified ingredients listed.

***The VBOE and its school personnel shall NOT be responsible for determining food allergens and/or those foods or ingredients in foods that are safe for a student with an identified food allergy to consume.***