

## LIFE THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES

Food Allergies currently affect an estimated 8% of school-age children and present a substantial and growing challenge for schools. This policy is in effect to help us address food allergies and the potential for anaphylaxis, a life-threatening allergic reaction.

Peanuts and tree nuts (such as walnuts and almonds) are responsible for 92% of severe and fatal reactions. For this reason, Gardner Public School is a “nut aware” school district. All Gardner schools strongly discourage students and staff from bringing any nuts and/or nut products into the school building OR to any school activities, including field trips.

In the event that a child brings nuts and/or nut products to school, the item is disposed of and/or sent home and a substitute will be offered free of charge. The parent and child will be reminded that nuts and/or nut products should not be brought to school and a copy of the policy will be provided at the request of the parent. The cafeteria offers a peanut butter substitute at lunchtime. Allergy information is presented to the school in written format from the parent and/or medical provider to the school nurse. When the school nurse obtains information that a student has a food allergy or intolerance, the information is communicated to the food service workers in the cafeteria as well as the Food Service Director as soon as possible. The food service provider is responsible to ensure that the student is not served the item. The school nurse also shares food allergy information with the student’s teacher.

The school nurse will request documentation from the student’s medical provider on any food allergies. If there is no medical documentation of the food allergy, the food service provider will still refrain from serving the student the food in question.

Student’s that have significant food allergies that require changes to the regular breakfast/lunch program must have medical documentation or he/she will not be allowed to participate in the school lunch program. This is for the safety of the student.

Student’s that have food allergies that require changes to the regular breakfast/lunch program will be offered alternatives to school lunch items that they are restricted from. Alternatives should consist of food that is similar in nutritional content and quality. If a student is unhappy with the alternative option that is presented, the food service department will work with the student and/or family quickly to come up with an acceptable alternative.

In the case that information on food allergies needs to be clarified in order for the Food Service Director to provide food to the student, the Food Service Director will contact the parent/guardian of the student directly to get clarification. If clarification of medical documentation needs to occur, the school nurse will contact the medical provider and request clarification.

The Food Service Director is responsible for training Food Service Staff.

When a food allergy is life-threatening, the School Nurse will require notification in writing from the child’s physician as well as a current medication order for the use of an

EpiPen. EpiPens that are prescribed for a particular student are kept in the School Nurse's office *unlocked* where they are accessible to other staff in the case of an anaphylactic reaction. GPS School Nurses will also keep *stock* EpiPens in the case that there is an anaphylactic reaction in a child who has not been diagnosed with a life-threatening food allergy. Middle School and High School students using EpiPens while attending school activities should keep an EpiPen with them during these activities and let their coach or supervising adult know where it can be located in the case of an emergency.

Trained Educational Staff may administer an EpiPen in the case of an anaphylactic reaction provided they have completed the bi annual Epi-Pen Administration training and the School Nurse has deemed them competent to do so. Staff may only administer an EpiPen to a student that has a child's name on it. Stock EpiPens in the case of an undiagnosed anaphylactic reaction are only to be administered by the School Nurse who has been trained to assess and treat an undiagnosed anaphylactic reaction.

The School Nurse will:

- Develop an Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) that includes an Emergency Medical Plan (EMP) addressing the management of anaphylaxis for any student with known food allergies that are considered potentially life-threatening either prior to the student's entry into school or immediately after the diagnosis of the condition.
- Organize and conduct a meeting as needed to plan for the care of the student, making sure to include the student's parents/guardians, the student (if appropriate), the classroom teacher, the food service manager, and other personnel.
- Provide bi-annual basic education concerning food allergies, prevention of exposure, and emergency response procedures to follow if an anaphylactic event occurs, including the administration of EpiPen, to all school staff entrusted with the care of students.
- Maintain records of any life-threatening allergic reaction, the use of an EpiPen, and the call for medical assistance by calling 911. School Nurses will report all life-threatening reactions to the School Nurse Leader, who will notify the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), according to department regulations and protocol.
- Because of the confidentiality of medical records, a student's parent/guardian will be responsible for notifying school bus drivers directly of any life threatening allergies of which the bus driver should be aware.

The Food Service Director will:

- Contact parents to set up a meeting between the Food Service Director, parents, student, and Principal or designee, whenever accommodations to the regular school breakfast/lunch menu need to happen. Accommodations to the regular school breakfast /lunch menu will be agreed upon by the food service manager and the student/parent/guardian to ensure that the student being nourished throughout the school day.
- Provide education to food service personnel on food allergies.
- Ensure the food service personnel are trained in safety as required by the Board of Health as well as CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation.)
- Update the Nutri-Kids system and food service personnel on student allergies.

- The following rules shall be adhered to in school:
- Children are not allowed to trade or share food with other children.
- Celebrations and/or rewards should not be limited to food. Other options are encouraged.
- Baked Goods are not allowed to be brought in from home and distributed in classes.
- Fundraisers during school for school programs should be done with non-food items. However, please note that Massachusetts School Nutrition Regulations effective as of August 1, 2012 do not apply to food and beverages served prior to 30 minutes before the start of the school day or following 30 minutes after the close of the school day or to fund-raising activities.
- The use of food for curriculum instruction or special occasions during the school day will be restricted to those with prior approval by the School Principal and Nurse. This may only be done by submitting a *Food in School Approval Form* to the School Nurse.
- All foods that are offered during the school day will meet the Massachusetts School Nutrition Regulations.

Note: Programs that use the building during non-school hours need to have their own food allergy awareness protocols.

Principals are responsible for the enforcement of this policy at the building level.

[Reference: Healthy Students, Healthy Schools: Revised Guidance for Implementing the Massachusetts School Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages]

[Adopted: November 2004]

[Reviewed: January 2006]

[Revised: December 2012]

[Revised: October 2015]

[Revised: June 2016]

[Revised: May 2019]

FOOD IN SCHOOL-APPROVAL FORM

Food that is served during the school day requires the approval of the School Nurse. However, Food Service personnel are responsible for complying with Massachusetts School Nutrition Regulations for food served in school cafeterias, (including a la carte items) and vending machines). All other food served in classrooms, hallways, snack bars, school stores, during school sponsored activities and field trips require use of this form. Massachusetts School Nutrition Regulations effective August 1, 2012 regulate any food or beverages served 30 minutes before through 30 minutes after the school day.

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) food will be distributed: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of food that will be distributed: \_\_\_\_\_

Portion size of food that will be distributed: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be offering this food more than once? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, how often? \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom: \_\_\_\_\_

Occasion \_\_\_\_\_

Is this food part of an academic lesson? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware of food allergies in the group of students that will be involved? \_\_\_\_\_

Please be aware that our Life-Threatening Food Allergies Policy encourages non-food items in Birthday Parties, celebrations, and as rewards. However, the use of food for curriculum instruction or special occasions during the school day will be allowed based on prior approval by the School Nurse. Due to potential allergies, NO BAKED GOODS may be brought in.

The following resource may be used to guide you in selecting healthy food choices:

[www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/alist](http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/alist)

\_\_\_\_\_ Approved

\_\_\_\_\_ Not Approved

The nurse will review for allergy concerns

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Nurse's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_