

REFERENCE COPY

FILE: JHCF
Critical

STUDENT ALLERGY PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

The purpose of this policy is to create an organized system for preventing and responding to allergic reactions. This policy is not a guarantee of an allergen-free environment; instead, it is designed to increase awareness, provide education and training, reduce the chance of exposure and outline responses to allergic reactions. The best form of prevention for life-threatening allergies is avoidance of the allergen.

Research shows that allergies can negatively impact student achievement by affecting concentration, auditory processing and attendance. In addition, healthy students are better learners. In addition to posing health risks, allergies can be potentially deadly for some individuals.

This policy applies to district facilities to which students have access and includes transportation provided by the district. The Board instructs the superintendent or designee to develop procedures to implement this policy.

Identification

Each school will attempt to identify students with life-threatening allergies, including food allergies. An allergic reaction is an immune system response to a substance that itself is not harmful but that the body interprets as being harmful. Allergic reactions range from mild to severe, even life-threatening. At enrollment, the person enrolling the student will be asked to provide information on any allergies the student may have.

Prevention

Students with allergies that rise to the level of a disability as defined by law will be accommodated in accordance with district policies and procedures pertaining to the identification and accommodation of students with disabilities. An Individualized Health Plan (IHP), including an Emergency Action Plan (EAP), may be developed for students with allergies that do not rise to the level of a disability.

All staff members are required to follow any 504 Plan or IHP/EAP developed for a student by the district. Staff members who do not follow an existing 504 Plan or IHP/EAP will be disciplined, and such discipline may include termination.

Staff members shall not use air fresheners, oils, candles or other such items intended to add fragrance in any district facilities. This provision will not be construed to prohibit the use of personal care items that contain added fragrance, but the principal may require staff members to refrain from the use of personal care items with added fragrance under particular circumstances.

Staff members are prohibited from using cleaning materials, disinfectants, pesticides or other chemicals except those provided by the district.

The district will not serve any processed foods, including foods sold in vending machines, which are not labeled with a complete list of ingredients. Vended items must include a list of ingredients on the individual package. The food service director will create an ingredient list for all foods provided by the district as part of the district's nutrition program, including food provided during the school day and in before- and after-school programs. This list will be available upon request.

Prepackaged items used in concessions, fundraisers and classroom activities must include a list of ingredients on the package. If the package does not contain a list of ingredients, the list of ingredients must be available at the location where the package is sold or provided.

Education and Training

All staff members will be regularly trained on the causes and symptoms of and responses to allergic reactions. Training will include instruction on the use of epinephrine premeasured auto-injection devices.

Age-appropriate education on allergies and allergic reactions will be provided to students as such education aligns with state Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) for health education. Education will include potential causes, information on avoiding allergens, signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and simple steps students can take to keep classmates safe.

Confidentiality

Information about individual students with allergies will be provided to all staff members and others who need to know the information to provide a safe learning environment for the student. Information about individual students with allergies will be shared with students and others who do not have a legitimate educational interest in the information only to the extent authorized by the parent/guardian or as otherwise permitted by law, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Response

Response to an allergic reaction shall be in accordance with established procedures, including application of the student's 504 Plan or IHP/EAP. Information about known allergies will be shared in accordance with FERPA. Each building will maintain an adequate supply of epinephrine premeasured auto-injection devices to be administered in accordance with Board policy.

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Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.

Adopted:

Revised:

Cross Refs: AC, Prohibition Against Illegal Discrimination and Harassment
EF, Food Services Management
EFB, Free and Reduced-Cost Food Services
IGBA, Programs for Students with Disabilities

Legal Refs: § 167.208, RSMo
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 - 1417
34 C.F.R. Part 300
The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, 29 U.S.C. § 794
34 C.F.R. Part 104
Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 - 12213
P.L. 79-396, National School Lunch Act, as amended, and accompanying regulations
P.L. 89-642, Child Nutrition Act of 1966, as amended, and accompanying regulations

EXPLANATION:

House Bill 922 (2009) requires school districts to adopt a policy on allergy prevention and response by July 1, 2011. House Bill 922 also requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to develop a model policy in consultation with an appropriate professional organization by July 1, 2010. MSBA has worked with DESE to develop this model policy and procedure. The Missouri Department of Health and Human Services (DHSS) also provided input.

Allergies, especially food allergies, are a significant issue in schools. The most common life-threatening allergies are to foods, but environmental, fragrance and chemical allergies may also pose a health risk for some students or staff members. The most important aspect of the management of people with life-threatening allergies is avoidance.

By law, this policy must do the following:

1. **Distinguish between building-wide, classroom and individual approaches to allergy prevention and management.**
2. **Provide age-appropriate education on allergies and prevention.**
3. **Describe the role of staff members in determining how to manage an allergy problem.**
4. **Describe the role of other students and parents in cooperating to prevent and mitigate allergic reactions.**
5. **Address confidentiality issues, including when parental permission is required to make medical information available.**
6. **Coordinate with the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), local health authorities and other appropriate agencies.**

These requirements are included in this model policy and the accompanying procedure.

Training of Staff

Staff training need not be lengthy, but should cover the various types of allergic reactions and how to identify and respond to a life-threatening reaction. Staff members who have responsibility for students who have an emergency action plan (EAP) should be trained on the plan annually. Training materials and assistance are available on the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) website; including the *Manual for School Health*. House Bill 922 did not specify how often staff should be trained, but presumably training should be frequent enough that all staff members have at least been introduced to the subject.

Health care professionals recommend annual training. The model procedure that accompanies this policy requires training within thirty (30) days after the initial adoption of the policy, but this is just a suggestion. The school district may want to train at the beginning of the school year immediately following the adoption of the policy, annually, or on some other schedule. The key is to make sure that staff members are trained quickly and at least once. No school district wants the tragedy of a student dying from an allergic reaction because the district did not get around to providing training.

Response

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Life threatening allergies can result in anaphylaxis, which requires an immediate medical response. Epinephrine is the treatment of choice for anaphylaxis and should be administered as soon as possible. It is the most important action the district can take to save a student.

Student Education

This model policy requires the district to educate students regarding the causes and symptoms of allergies and to recognize an allergic reaction. This model policy calls for the district to provide such education at those grade levels where the state Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) would accommodate a discussion of allergies. A district may require that information on allergies be included in the curriculum more frequently.

This model policy does not address staff members; however, staff members will benefit from some parts of the policy. Staff allergies should be addressed by adhering to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). See also MSBA policies AC and GBE and form GBE-AF or similar policies and form.

PLEASE NOTE that this model policy assumes the district has epinephrine premeasured auto-injection devices available for use in an emergency (see MSBA policy JHCD or similar policy). If this is not the case, the district must remove the last line of this policy and replace it with “Parents of students with life-threatening allergies should supply the school with epinephrine premeasured auto-injection devices to be administered in accordance with Board policy.”

Resources

The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) has many free resources that can be found at www.foodallergy.org. FAAN has also developed a School Food Allergy Program for purchase.

Symons, Cynthia Wolford et al. "Bridging Student Health Risks and Academic Achievement through Comprehensive Student Health Programs," *Journal of School Health* 67 (August 1997): 220-7.

School Guidelines for Managing Students with Food Allergies:
www.foodallergy.org/school/guidelines/SchoolGuidelines.pdf.