

# **Westford Public Schools**

## **Protocol and Guidelines for Management of Life-Threatening Food Allergies (LTA)**

### **June 2016**

#### ***Purpose and Goal***

The Westford Public Schools cannot guarantee to provide a food allergen-free environment for all students with life-threatening allergies, or prevent any harm to students in emergencies. The goal is to minimize the risk of exposure to food allergens that pose a threat to those students, educate the community, and maintain and regularly update a system-wide protocol for responding to their needs. A coordinated effort requires the cooperation of all groups of people within the school district. The goal of the Westford Public Schools LTA Protocol and Guidelines regarding life-threatening Food Allergies is to engage in a system-wide effort to:

- Prevent any occurrence of life-threatening food based allergic reactions
- Prepare for any allergic reactions to food
- Respond appropriately to any food allergy emergencies that arise

#### **A. Protocol and Guidelines**

##### ***Background***

Allergic food reactions can span a wide range of severity of symptoms. The most severe and potentially life-threatening reaction is anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is the potentially life-threatening medical condition occurring in food allergic individuals after exposure to their specific food allergens. Anaphylaxis refers to a collection of symptoms affecting multiple systems in the body, the most dangerous of which are breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which are potentially fatal.

This protocol is used for students who are at risk for anaphylaxis and in circumstances where a previously undiagnosed life-threatening allergic response occurs.

The most common causes of anaphylaxis in children include allergies to:

- Foods (most commonly: dairy products, eggs, fish, shellfish, milk, peanuts/tree nuts, soy, wheat)
- Latex
- Bee stings
- Medications

Anaphylaxis can occur immediately or up to two hours following allergen exposure, so it is important to:

- Identify students at risk
- Have appropriate preventative policies
- Be prepared to handle an emergency

##### ***B. Responsibilities of the Westford Public Schools (WPS):***

**I.** The Superintendent or his/her designee and staff will be responsible for the following:

1. Create a system-wide emergency plan for addressing life-threatening food based allergic reactions.

2. To the best of its ability, the school will provide annual training for Westford Public school employees regarding:

- The most common allergens that cause life threatening allergies; such as foods, medications, latex and stinging insects.
- Ways to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction
- Steps to take in the event of an allergic reaction.
- The correct use of Epinephrine Auto injectors.

3. Adopt a “no food trading/sharing” and “no utensil sharing” procedure in all schools with a particular focus at the elementary school level.

4. In the interest of promoting health and wellness, non-food celebrations will be encouraged.

In the event of a school celebration with food, the following items have been approved to be served at special celebrations:

Beverages: 100 % Juice (no sugar added) 4 oz. portion size, water, no soda or sports drink

Snacks: Fruit, vegetables, popcorn, pretzels, and raisins

All snack foods must be store-bought and in its original sealed package.

No foods containing nuts/nut products may be sent to school.

5. Provide and maintain life-threatening food allergy sensitive tables in each school cafeteria. These tables will be designated by a universal symbol. These tables will be cleaned and sanitized as per district protocol. Students may invite a friend to sit with them at the allergy aware table. To ensure a nut-free table, students that do not have food allergies and wish to sit at the allergy table will need to purchase a school lunch.

6. Designated personnel will be assigned to clean life-threatening food allergy tables.

7. Make applicable student IHCP's (Individual HealthCare Plan) available in the nurse's office.

8. Make Epinephrine Auto-injectors available in the nurse's office and in other clearly designated locations as indicated in the IHCP. At the secondary level students are allowed and encouraged to carry their Epinephrine Auto-injectors on their person as per physician orders.

9. Familiarize teachers with the IHCP of their students and any other staff member who has contact with the student on a need to know basis.

10. If necessary, consult with facilities personnel to develop protocol for cleaning classrooms, cafeteria, and other areas of the building to insure that the threat of allergens is minimized.

11. For events such as appreciation meals, dances, volunteer recognitions that are held in public/common spaces in a school (Gym, cafeteria), only nut-free foods should be served. Additionally, only Non-Latex gloves should be used for serving at any such events.

12. For 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Camp, parents should be provided with a list of snacks that will be served to the students. The students' group leaders should be provided with a list of which children have allergies and their allergy plan. Students who self-carry medications should receive advice on proper storage of the medication(s) during water activities.

## ***II. WPS Nurse Responsibilities***

1. Meet with the parent/guardian of a student with LTA and develop an allergy action plan or IHCP for the student. During meetings with parents/guardians, nurses shall discuss the use of a MEDIC-ALERT bracelet and other methods of identification for students with LTA's.
2. In conjunction with the Principal, provide in-service training and education for staff regarding LTA, symptoms, risk reduction procedures and emergency procedures including demonstration on how to use the Epinephrine Auto-injector.
3. Familiarize teachers with the Allergy Action Plan/IHCP of their students and any other staff member who has contact on a need to know basis.
4. Notify cafeteria manager of students with known allergies in each building.
5. The school Nurse will be responsible for following Department of Public Health regulations governing the administration of prescription medications. Nurses are also responsible for following the regulations that permit registration of non-licensed personnel to be trained and administer Epinephrine Auto-injector.
6. Discuss with parents the appropriate locations for storing Epinephrine Auto-injectors and the possibility of receiving more than one Epinephrine Auto-injectors as necessary.
7. Emergency protocol will be in place in the event the nurse is not in the building.

## ***III. WPS Teacher Responsibilities***

1. Review the Allergy Action Plan/IHCP with the nurse and parents/students as deemed appropriate.
2. Leave information prominent and accessible for the substitute teacher.
3. In collaboration with the nurse and parent, set a classroom protocol regarding the management of food in the classroom.

## ***IV. WPS Food Services Personnel Responsibilities***

1. The food services department will be sensitive to potential food allergens.
2. Individual cafeterias will indicate a presence of the major allergen food groups, i.e. soy, dairy, wheat, seeds on a daily basis.
3. Supply cleaning materials for washing and sanitizing tables.
4. Provide in-service to food service employees regarding safe food handling practices to avoid cross-contamination with potential allergens.
5. Provide in-service to staff regarding life-threatening allergies, symptoms and emergency procedures.
6. Food services employees will wear non-latex gloves.

#### ***V. WPS Transportation Responsibilities***

1. The bus company will review the procedure that must be taken in the event of a medical emergency with transportation employees.
2. Provide and maintain functioning emergency communication devices (e.g. cell phones, two-way radios, etc.) on each bus. Transportation employees should ensure proper functioning of communication devices at the start of each shift.
3. K-5 bus drivers will be encouraged to walk through the bus each morning and afternoon and pick up litter (especially food wrappers).

#### ***VI. Responsibilities of persons in charge of conducting after-school activities***

The allergy action plan will be available for parents to copy to give to others who assume responsibility for their child.

- 1. A school nurse is not present during before or after school programs or weekend activities.**

**\*Please see Extra-Curricular Emergency Medical Form**

Examples of this may include:

- Babysitters
- Camp Counselors
- Department of Community Services
- Westford Youth Services

2. Facilitators of after-school clubs and organizations will be notified of which children have allergies and will be supplied with the student's Extra-Curricular Medical Form. The Facilitators will be trained in epipen use and appropriate allergy protocol. Parents should be notified if any food is to be provided to students. No nut-containing products should be served to students.

#### ***VII. Responsibilities for Fields Trips***

1. The teacher(s) will review emergency procedures to be followed when out of the building for students who may have a medical emergency.
2. Teachers must take into consideration the risk for allergen exposure when planning a trip.
3. Lunches of children with food allergies should be stored separately to minimize cross contamination.
4. If there is any question about the allergy-related safety of an activity on a field trip, teachers should notify the parent(s) and provide venue contact information. Parents will have the responsibility of calling the venue directly for specific information so as to determine whether or not their child will participate.
5. Parents of children who have severe allergies should be allowed to accompany their child on a field trip. Alternative plans might need to be made due to space limitations.
6. Parents will be informed in advance of a field trip if food will be served. Only nut-free foods should be distributed.

### ***VIII. Student's Responsibilities***

1. Take responsibility for avoiding allergens.
2. Do not trade or share foods.
3. Wash hands before and after eating.
4. Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction.
5. Promptly inform an adult as soon as accidental exposure occurs or symptoms appear.
6. Take more responsibility for allergies over time.
7. Develop a relationship with the school nurse or other trusted adult in the school to assist in identifying issues related to management of the allergy in the school.

### ***IX. Parent's Responsibilities***

1. Inform the school nurse of your child's allergies prior to the opening of school (or as soon as possible after a diagnosis).
2. Parents must arrange to meet with the school nurse to develop an Allergy Action Plan/IHCP for the student and provide medical information from their child's treating physician as needed to write the plans.
3. Provide the school a list of foods and ingredients to be avoided.
4. Provide the school nurse with adequate supplies of up-to-date emergency medications.
5. Complete and submit all required medication forms.
6. Provide a medic alert ID for your child, if possible.
7. Encourage students to:
  - Wash hands before and after handling food.
  - Communicate clearly as soon as s/he feels a reaction is starting.
  - Understand their allergies and how to prevent, recognize potentially unsafe situations and treat when possible.
  - Take as much responsibility for his/her own safety as is feasible.
  - Carry his/her own Epinephrine Auto-injector auto-injector when appropriate.
  - Read labels.
8. Inform the school of any changes in the child's LTA status.
9. Provide the school with a physician's letter if the student no-longer has allergies.
10. Go on field trips and out of school activities with your child whenever possible.
11. Notify the Transportation Coordinator if necessary, of your child's LTA's.

## Extra-Curricular Emergency Medical Form

**\*\*A school nurse is not present during before or after school programs or weekend activities.**

Activity/Sport: \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone:  
\_\_\_\_\_

My child has the following medical condition that may require immediate attention **(911)** at school sponsored activities or athletic practices/events that occur outside of the regular school day.

**Please circle:** Allergy to: \_\_\_\_\_ Requires Epinephrine \_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Asthma \_\_\_ Diabetes \_\_\_ Seizures \_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### ACTION PLANS:

**Action Plan Allergic Reaction:** (examples of some of the symptoms include) Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, wheezing, difficulty swallowing, hives, itching, swelling of any body part.

**Action Plan: Call 911 and assist child in using Epinephrine, if prescribed and available.**

***Allow the child to lie down after epinephrine administration.***

**Asthma:** student has difficulty breathing, wheezing, and shortness of breath.

**Action Plan:** If the student has their inhaler, allow them to use it. If no relief of symptoms in five (5) minutes, call 911. If no inhaler available, call 911 immediately.

**Diabetes:** Low blood sugar reaction-hunger, sweaty, pallor, feels shaky, headache.

**Action Plan:** Allow student to drink a juice box or regular soda, or eat glucose tablets or a snack from his/her emergency snack pack. Have student test their blood glucose level and record number.

If no change in symptoms in five (5) minutes -call 911 and have child repeat all of the above.

**Seizure:** Altered consciousness, involuntary muscle stiffness or jerking movements, drooling/foaming at the mouth, temporary halt in breathing, loss of bladder control.

**Action Plan:** protect student from falling or injuring any body parts, **call 911.**  
Never put anything into the student's mouth.

Child specific instructions:

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardiansignature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

School Nurse signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

\_\_\_\_\_