



District 61

Resource Guide

For Supporting Students with

Life – Threatening Allergies

District 61 Resource Guide for Supporting Student With Life-Threatening Allergies

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	3
General Information about Life-Threatening Allergies	4
Anaphylaxis	4
Individual Health Care Plan	5
Guidelines for Students with Life-Threatening Food	6
Guidelines for Parents/Guardians	6, 7
Guidelines for School Administration	8
Guidelines for the Certified School Nurses	9
Guidelines for the Classroom Teacher	10,11
Snacks/Lunch Time	11
Classroom Activities	11
Field Trips	12
Coaches and Supervisors of School Funded Activities	13
Guidelines for the Director of Food Services	13
Guidelines for Recess/Lunch Room Monitors	14
Guidelines for the Transportation Department	15
School Bus Driver	15
Common signs and symptoms of allergic / anaphylactic reactions	16

Resources:

- District 61 Certified School Nurses
- District 39 (Wilmette) Resource Guide
- District 67 (Lake Forest)
- District 64 (Park Ridge-Niles) Guidelines
- FAAN Food Allergy & Analphylaxis Network
- Christine Szychlinski, APN, CPNP Manager, Bunning Food Allergy Program at Children's Memorial Hospital
- Illinois State Board of Education, Nutrition Department
- AHSD25: Food Services in AHSD25 Schools
- District Policies
- USDA Food & Nutrition Services Regulations

Introduction

District 61 Resource Guide for Supporting Student With Life-Threatening Allergies

The goal of District 61 is to provide a safe environment for all children, including those with life-threatening allergies. Although the risk to students with these allergies in the schools cannot be completely eliminated, it can be greatly reduced. This plan of support addresses the identification of individual needs, staff awareness, necessary curricular and procedural modifications, and emergency plans. Protecting students with life-threatening allergies is the shared responsibility of families, schools, and the community. Although the focus of this document is on life-threatening food allergies, other life-threatening allergies can include bee/insect stings, medications, and latex. Therefore, some of this document will also apply to these situations.

Decatur Public School District 61 cautions that it is necessary for staff, students, and parents to understand that an all allergen-free environment is impossible to achieve, and to expect it is to harbor a false sense of security.¹

The purpose of this manual is to reduce unintended allergic reactions by outlining the problem, providing education on allergen avoidance strategies, establishing emergency response procedures, and outlining the responsibilities for the student, families, and the school system. District 61 will continue to monitor and evaluate this issue to ensure the proper implementation of these guidelines across our jurisdiction.

¹ See Connecticut Policy on banning specific foods, “Guidelines for Managing Life-Threatening Allergies in Connecticut Schools.”
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/deps/student/health/Food_Allergies.pdf.

General Information about Life-Threatening Allergies

Life-threatening allergies present increasing challenges for schools. Because of the severe nature of some of these allergies, school districts and individual schools need to be ready for the enrollment and attendance of students with food and other life-threatening allergies. Even in schools with comprehensive prevention plans, students may be subject to accidental ingestion of a food allergen, due to such factors as the large number of students, exposure of the student with allergies to food allergens, as well as cross contamination of tables, desks, and other surfaces. Risk areas and activities for the student with food allergies include: the cafeteria, food sharing, hidden ingredients, craft, art and science projects, bus transportation, fundraisers, bake sales, parties and holiday celebrations, and field trips.

Allergic reactions to foods vary among students and can range from mild to severe, life threatening anaphylactic reactions. Over 90 percent of allergic reactions are caused by the following eight foods: peanut, tree nut (walnut, cashew, pecan, hazelnut, almond, etc.), milk, egg, fish, shellfish, soy, and wheat. Ingestion of the food allergen is the principal route of exposure; however, it is possible for a student to react to tactile (touch) exposure or, in rare cases, inhalation exposure. The amount of food needed to trigger a reaction depends on multiple variables. Each food allergic person’s level of sensitivity may fluctuate or diminish over time. The symptoms of a food allergy reaction are specific to each individual. He/she should be medically evaluated.

While this document focuses on food allergies, other life-threatening allergies may include, but are not limited to: bee/insect stings, medications, or latex, all of which have the potential of causing a life-threatening allergic reaction, with some allergens being specific to the student.

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a potentially life threatening medical condition occurring in students with allergies after exposure to their specific allergens. Anaphylaxis refers to a collection of symptoms affecting multiple systems in the body. The most dangerous symptoms include breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock that are potentially fatal.

Anaphylaxis typically occurs either immediately or up to two hours following allergen exposure. Anaphylaxis should be treated with the administration of epinephrine (EpiPen), a prescribed medication that immediately counteracts the life threatening symptoms.* Epinephrine is an easily administered injection. Call 911 when an EpiPen is used.

* Treatment should take place immediately following a known exposure. Epinephrine may be ineffective if treatment of anaphylaxis symptoms is delayed.

In about one-third of anaphylactic reactions, the initial symptoms are followed by a late phase of symptoms two to four hours later. **It is imperative that following the administration of epinephrine, the student be transported by emergency medical services to the nearest hospital emergency department even if the symptoms appear to have been resolved.** When in doubt, medical advice indicates that it is better to administer the student's prescribed EpiPen and seek medical attention. **Remember that in a crisis, a student may not be able to self-administer medication, even if given permission to do so. In the event of an anaphylactic reaction, call 911 immediately, then call the school nurse.**

Individual Health Care Plan

An Individual Health Care Plan is a written plan that is based on the physician's statement and outlines what the school can do to accommodate the individual needs of a child with a life-threatening allergy. Prior to enrollment in school (or immediately after the diagnosis of a life-threatening allergic condition), the parent/guardian should meet with the certified school nurse (and food service personnel, as needed) to develop an individualized health care plan.

Guidelines for Students with Life-Threatening Allergies

The long-term goal is for the students with life-threatening allergies to be independent in the prevention, care, and management of their food allergies and reactions based on their developmental level. To this end students with life-threatening allergies are asked to follow these guidelines:

1. Do not trade or share foods or utensils.
2. Wash hands or use hand wipes before and after eating.
3. Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction or accidental exposure, and notify an adult immediately if a reaction is suspected.
4. Develop a relationship with the school nurse and your teacher/team leader to assist in identifying issues related to the management of the allergy in school.
5. Learn the difference between safe and unsafe foods. Do not eat anything with unknown ingredients or ingredients known to contain an allergen or its byproducts.
6. Develop a habit of always reading ingredients before eating food.
7. Be responsible for carrying your medication(s), if medically necessary. If a Medic Alert bracelet is provided by your parent, wear your ID at all times.
8. Be responsible for the appropriate use of your medication if you are participating in extracurricular activities.
9. Inform others (and friends) of your allergies and your specific needs.
10. Self-advocate in situations that you might perceive as compromising your health.
11. Do not board the bus if you are experiencing an allergic reaction.
12. Report teasing, bullying and threats to an adult authority concerning your allergies.

Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

Parents are asked to assist the school in the prevention, care, and management of their child's food allergies and reactions. Additionally, parents are encouraged to foster independence on the part of their child, based on her/his developmental level. To achieve this goal, parents are asked to follow these guidelines.

1. Indicate your child's allergies on the annual school registration form prior to the opening of school (or immediately after a diagnosis).
2. In addition, provide the following completed documents: Form 24A available from your school nurse.
3. Periodically check for expiration dates and provide the school with current medications, EpiPens or inhalers.

4. Notify the school nurse if your child has experienced any changes in medical status or if there are any changes in medications.
5. Make sure your child knows how to self-administer his/her medication before expecting self-administration at school, if age-appropriate.
6. Provide a Medic Alert bracelet for your child, if appropriate.
7. Participate in developing an Individual Health Care Plan with the certified school nurse, if appropriate.
8. Notify supervisors of any before and after school activities, sponsors of events, and clubs regarding your child's allergy and provide necessary medication.
9. **You the parent are responsible for providing necessary medications for extra curricular activities.**
10. Be willing to go on your child's field trip, if requested. While the school will not exclude a student with allergies from a field trip, a parent may choose to do so.
11. Provide safe classroom snacks for your own child.
12. For district-provided meals, check website for menus and labels.
13. Contact Food Service Department to request modified allergen-free lunches.
14. Educate your child in the self-management of his/her food allergy.
15. Arrange for your child to carry his/her own EpiPen, when appropriate, or know where the EpiPen is located.
16. Encourage your child to:
 - Recognize safe and unsafe foods and do not share snacks, lunches, utensils, or drinks.
 - Read ingredient labels before eating food.
 - Understand the importance of hand washing before and after eating.
 - Inform others of allergy and specific needs.
 - Report teasing or threats regarding his/her allergy to an adult authority.
17. Empower your child to self-advocate in situations that he/she might perceive as compromising his/her health.
18. Review the Guidelines for Students with Severe Allergies periodically with your child.
19. Participate in the creation of a Section 504 Plan if your child's life-threatening allergy has a significantly adverse effect on your child's performance in school.

Guidelines for School Administration

Administrators assist school faculty and staff in the prevention, care, and management of activities on behalf of students with food allergies. Educators are encouraged to foster independence on the part of students, based on her/his developmental level. It is the responsibility of administrators to:

1. Review the District 61 Resource Guide for Supporting Students with Life-Threatening Allergies.
2. Participate in in-service training on the identification of anaphylaxis, risk reduction and emergency response procedures.
3. Be knowledgeable about and follow applicable federal laws including ADA, IDEA, Section 504, FERPA and any state laws or district policies that apply to food allergies.
4. Include students with food allergies in school activities. Students should not be excluded from school activities because of a food allergy.
5. Arrange for annual training and education for faculty and staff regarding:
 - Allergies, insect stings, medications, latex, *etc.*;
 - Emergency and Risk reduction procedures;
 - How to administer an EpiPen for an emergency; and,
 - Special training for food service personnel and lunch/recess monitors.
6. Provide a location for medications and provide emergency communication devices for all school activities, including gym, lunch recess, and transportation that involve a student with life-threatening allergies.
7. Communicate in a timely manner with school health personnel regarding field trips.
8. Arrange for an allergen-free table in the lunchroom.
9. Ensure that a contingency plan is in place for substitute teachers or food service personnel.
10. Ensure that emergency health information regarding specific high-risk students is provided to all staff, including substitutes.
11. Include the following statement in the sub folder, “You have a child with a severe allergy. Call the building nurse for specific details of the student’s Health Care Plan. Do not eat lunch in the classroom if a child has food allergy. Do not distribute food items without express permission from the building principal. The Health Office Extension number is _____.”
12. Provide district approved cleaning products to classroom teachers and other school personnel.
13. Ensure that an administrator or school nurse accompany the child to the hospital and contact parents.
14. Plan for student transitions to the next grade level each spring for the next school year.

15. Direct faculty and staff not to provide candy or foodstuffs as rewards to children unless instructionally appropriate.

Guidelines for the Certified School Nurses

Nurses assist the school team in both prevention of allergic-reactions and emergency care of children with food allergies. Nurses are encouraged to foster independence on the part of children, based on their developmental level. Certified school nurses are expected to:

1. Review the District 61 Resource Guide for Supporting Students with Life-Threatening Allergies.
2. Meet with the student at the beginning of the year to familiarize the student with the Health Office and review procedures in the event of an emergency.
3. Identify staff members to work with parents and the student to establish an Individual Health Care Plan, if appropriate.
4. Work with the building 504 Coordinator, parents and school staff to create a 504 Plan, if the allergy has a significantly adverse impact on several educational domains.
5. Share developed plans with appropriate school staff.
6. Review the plans again with appropriate staff and make revisions, as necessary if the student has had a severe reaction.
7. Maintain a roster of expiration dates and check allergy-related medications stored in the Health Office periodically.
8. Make sure substitute nurses have completed orientation and keep nurse sub folders current.
9. Include severe allergy information in annual health review for staff, substitute training, and new staff training. Collect agendas and sign-in sheets to verify attendance. (If appropriate)
10. Provide necessary information to staff who have regular, sustained contact with students with life-threatening allergies. Information should include student names, risk factors, and medications.
11. Provide an Allergy Action Plan and medications plan for students with severe, life threatening allergies when on field trips.
12. The administrator or school nurse should accompany the child to the hospital and contact parents.

Guidelines for the Classroom Teachers

Teachers are an essential part of the school team in the prevention of allergic-reactions, care, and management of activities on behalf of students with food allergies. Educators are encouraged to foster independence on the part of students, based on their developmental level. Teachers are expected to:

1. Review the District 61 Resource Guide for Supporting Students with Life-Threatening Allergies.
2. Participate in in-service training on the identification of anaphylaxis, risk-reduction and emergency response procedures
3. Be familiar with the Individual Health Care Plan or 504 Plan of any student(s) in the classroom with life-threatening allergies.
4. Keep the student's plan in an identified, accessible location.
5. Participate in any team meetings and in-service training for the student with life threatening allergies.
6. Inform student teachers and classroom assistant(s) of the student with food allergies.
7. Leave information for substitute teachers in an organized, prominent, and accessible format. Follow building guidelines for subfolders. Include the following allergy statement in front of folder: "You have a child with a severe, life-threatening allergy. Do not distribute food items without express permission from the building principal. The number for the Health Office is _____."
8. Inform parents of the student with allergies in advance of any in-class events where any food will be served or used as a class activity. Work with parents to provide a safe alternative, if appropriate.
9. Never question or hesitate to immediately initiate intervention if a student reports signs of an allergic reaction.
10. Contact the nurse or office immediately if a student exhibits signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction. Do not send another student. Time is of the essence.
11. Include information regarding a specific food allergy in a letter to all families in the beginning of the year. (Example Letter C)
12. Plan to pick up and return necessary forms and medications from the Health Office if planning a field trip.
13. Use only district-approved cleaning products in the classroom.
14. Clean up your desk and wash your hands after eating at your desk if there is a student with a food allergy on your team or in your class.
15. Reinforce school guidelines on bullying and teasing to avoid the harassment of students with allergies.

16. Be willing to administer an EpiPen, if necessary. If unable or unwilling, Contact school principal for reassignment of duty .
17. Designate a separate area where students with allergies may place their lunches.
18. Do not allow a child to board the school bus if child is experiencing symptoms of allergic reaction.
19. Communicate field trip dates and information in advance.
20. Restrict use of foods as instructional tools.

Guidelines for the Classroom Teachers - Continued Snack/Lunch Time

1. Promote and encourage healthy snacks at snack time.
2. If the teacher discovers unknown (homemade) or restricted food (as defined in the Individual Health Care Plan) in the classroom, intercede on behalf of the student with severe, life-threatening allergies.
3. Reinforce hand washing before and after eating.
4. Work with parents to provide alternate snacks for students with allergies.
5. Create alternate snack locations for students who may have brought a restricted food for snack.

Classroom Activities and School Day Events

In order to reduce the likelihood of a severe allergic reaction, staff members must exercise caution when using food as a part of the curriculum or classroom activities. The classroom teacher has the following responsibilities:

1. Restrict the presence of foods in classroom activities (e.g. arts and crafts, science projects, celebrations, or other projects). Modify class materials or provide a healthy alternative, as needed.
2. Promote and encourage healthy snacks for parties and celebrations.
3. Make appropriate accommodations for children with allergies. Do not isolate or exclude a child because of allergies.
4. Encourage the use of stickers, pencils, or other non-food items as rewards instead of food or candy.
5. If an animal visits the classroom, special attention must be paid to other allergies children may have (e.g., dander) and to the animal's food (peanuts, soy or milk).
6. Notify parents at least 2 days in advance of a classroom activity or event using food or animals. Work with the parents to provide a safe alternative or plan.

7. Read food labels and give consideration to the possible presence of allergic substances.

Guidelines for the Classroom Teachers - Continued

Field Trips

Field trips are an extension of classroom activities. Field trips should be considered and selected subject to the following guidelines:

1. Consider the student when planning a field trip due to a risk of allergen exposure.
2. Collaborate with the building nurse prior to planning a field trip. Ensure medications (EpiPen) are taken on field trips and a copy of medication authorization form.
3. Identify one staff member who will be assigned the task of watching out for the student's welfare and handling any emergency.
4. Consider eating situations on field trips and plan for prevention of exposure to the student's life-threatening foods.
5. Invite parents of student(s) at risk for a severe allergic reaction to accompany his/her child on school trips, in addition to the chaperone(s). However, the parent's presence at a field trip is not required.
6. Consider ways to wash hands before and after eating (e.g., provision of hand wipes, etc.)
7. Plan for the availability of a communication device.
8. Be willing to administer medications (EpiPen) while on field trips or designate a trained alternate to do so.
9. Know your location when dialing 911.
10. Call 911 if you administer the EpiPen.

Coaches and Supervisors of School Funded Activities

1. Review the District 61 Resource Guide for Supporting Students with Life-Threatening Allergies.
2. Participate in in-service training on the identification of anaphylaxis, risk reduction and emergency response procedures.
3. Provide the certified school nurse with a list of students who will participate in the activity.
4. Review the Individual Health Care Plan or 504 Plan with the building nurse, for any indicated students.
5. Clearly identify who is responsible for keeping the EpiPen or other medication, and where it will be kept.
6. Collect necessary equipment and medications from the student prior to the activity and return the medications to the student after the activity.
7. Restrict the presence of foods in extra-curricular activities (*e.g.*, arts and crafts, celebrations, or other projects). Notify parents well in advance (2 days) of an activity using food. Work with parents to provide a safe alternative, if appropriate.
8. Make certain that emergency communication device (*e.g.*, walkie-talkie, intercom, cell phone, PDA, *etc.*) is always present.
9. Cover or tape Medic Alert identifications. They must not be removed for activities.
10. Be willing to administer medications in emergencies and be trained in first aid procedures.
11. Call 911 if you suspect a life-threatening allergic reaction and know your location. If you use an EpiPen, call 911.

Guidelines for the Director of Food Services

The Food Service Department will promote sound food handling practices to reduce the cross-contamination with potential food allergens. The food service department cannot guarantee that food served in the general lunch program is allergen-free. Parents and students have access to reading food labels to identify the ingredients in the products used by a school's cafeteria. If medically necessary, food services will make available an allergy free lunch substitute. **It is ultimately the responsibility of the parent to decide whether the child will buy the allergy-free lunch substitute, bring a lunch to school.** The Director of Food Services will:

1. Review the District 61 Resource Guide for Supporting Students with Life-Threatening Allergies.
2. Participate in in-service training on the identification of anaphylaxis, risk reduction and emergency response procedures.

3. Have food service employees trained on safe food handling procedures pertaining to food allergies, *e.g.*, cross-contamination.
4. Have food service employees trained on proper cleaning and sanitation pertaining to food allergies.
5. Have product food labels available on the district website for parents and students.
6. Collaborate with the director of facilities regarding training for custodians on proper cleaning and sanitation pertaining to food allergies.
7. Ensure that food services staff reviews the list of students with life-threatening allergies and needed information. The food service staff will make age appropriate arrangements for delivery of the allergen-free meal that has been requested by the parent.
8. Maintain contact information for manufacturers of food products.
9. Make appropriate substitutions or modifications for meals served to students with food allergies. Post the availability of this substitution on the website menus.
10. Make available advanced copies of the menus and labels on the district website.
11. Provide safe meals for field trips, if requested.
12. Include allergy information (EpiPen) in annual staff first aid review and substitute training.
13. Do not use latex gloves by food service personnel.
14. Collaborate with school nurses to share appropriate allergy-related information.
15. Provide translated instructions for non-English speaking staff, as needed.

Guidelines for Recess/Lunch Room Monitors

Teachers and staff responsible for lunch and/or recess shall be trained to recognize and respond to a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis. Recess/Lunch Room Monitors should be responsible for the following:

1. Review the District 61 Resource Guide for Supporting Students with Life-Threatening Allergies.
2. Participate in in-service training on the identification of anaphylaxis, risk reduction and emergency response procedures.
3. Review your role in a severe allergy situation with your certified school nurse.
4. Take all complaints seriously from any student with a life-threatening allergy by immediately contacting the building nurse, or school office.
5. Dial 911, provide emergency treatment, then inform the principal when the nurse is not available.
6. Know that sometimes a student having an allergic reaction may withdraw, run, go to the washroom, etc.
7. Be aware of the location of EpiPens and other medications.

8. Allow only children whose parents have requested the allergen-free table to sit at the allergen-free table.
9. Supervise the thorough cleaning of all tables after lunch with district-approved products.
10. Use district approved cleansing agent to clean the allergen-free table. The table should be cleaned by an adult.
11. Exempt students with food allergies from cleaning lunch tables.
12. Encourage hand washing or use of hand wipes for students after eating.

Guidelines for the Transportation Department

Ensure that the school bus contractor provide training for all school bus drivers on managing life-threatening allergies which includes calling 911 in an emergency. District allergy guidelines for cab or bus drivers will be shared annually.

School Bus Driver/Cab Driver

- Call 911 when an allergic reaction is suspected.
- Maintain policy of no food consumption allowed on school buses or cab. Exceptions may include field trips, etc., with permission of the principal.
- Bus driver / cab driver will not give out candy/food as a reward.

Common signs and symptoms of allergic / anaphylactic reactions may include:

HIVES	WHEEZING
ITCHING OF ANY BODY PART	THROAT TIGHTNESS OR CLOSING
RUNNY NOSE	SWELLING (OF ANY BODY PARTS)
VOMITING	RED, WATERY EYES
DIARRHEA	DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING
STOMACH CRAMPS	DIFFICULTY BREATHING
CHANGE OF VOICE/HOARSENESS	SENSE OF DOOM
COUGHING	