

FOOD ALLERGY MANAGEMENT POLICY

Purpose

The Canton Public School System takes seriously its responsibility to implement reasonable steps to protect the safety of its school community members by recognizing that every food allergy reaction has the possibility of developing into a life threatening, potentially fatal anaphylactic reaction. In order to minimize the incidence of allergic reactions, our school system will maintain a district-wide plan to address all allergies with the intent to reduce and/or eliminate potential reactions.

The focus of the Food Allergy Management Policy shall be prevention, education, awareness, communication and emergency response. The Food Allergy Management Plan shall be the basis for the development of the procedural guidelines that will be implemented at the school level and provide for consistency across all schools within the district.

Goals

The District wide plan will include:

1. Mandatory Education Plan and Prevention

There will be annual education of students, teachers, substitute teachers, staff and faculty, bus drivers and all support personnel. In essence, every individual who is employed by Canton Public Schools or spends significant time at the Canton School facilities will receive annual education.

Topics of Educational Plan will include, but not be limited to:

1. Common allergens and the management of students with life-threatening food allergies.
2. Recognition of the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction.
3. Prevention measures employed by the school system within the classrooms and public areas.
4. Emergency response plan for individuals diagnosed with life-threatening allergies, as well as those who are not diagnosed.

2. Awareness

A critical component of the Mandatory Educational Plan is to heighten awareness about life-threatening allergies throughout the school system. Canton Public Schools will provide information throughout the Canton Community to foster a greater appreciation concerning life-threatening allergies.

Information will be distributed via:

- a. District and individual school websites.
- b. School newsletters.
- c. Attempt local cable station airing.
- d. Attempt access to local newspapers.
- e. Student take-home materials.

3. Individualized planning and accommodations

An Individual Health Care and Emergency Health Care Plan with photographic recognition will be developed for each student with an allergy. Classroom teachers, specialists and substitutes in all preschool to grade 5 students will have a copy of the Allergy Action Plan.

The core subject teachers, specialists and substitutes for middle and high school students will receive a copy of the Individual Health Care and Emergency Health Care Plans with photographic recognition. In order to assist children with life-threatening allergies to assume more individual responsibility for maintaining their safety as they grow, there is an expectation that guidelines shift as children advance through the primary grades and through secondary school.

4. Communication

It is vital to provide open and informative communication for the creation of an environment with reduced risks for all students and their families. School nurses and parents will establish open communications with administration, classroom teachers, specialists, and other staff regarding notification relating to students with life-threatening allergies. Areas that are specifically designated as “Allergen Free” will be clearly identified to all individuals who come into the school.

5. Emergency Response

An increasing number of students and staff have life-threatening allergies. Exposure to the affecting allergen can trigger anaphylaxis, which requires prompt medical intervention with an injection of epinephrine. Canton Public Schools seek to be prepared to handle episodes of anaphylaxis in students and staff who have diagnosed allergies, and also those individuals with no previous history of life-threatening allergies.

6. Use of food in the Canton Public School curriculum

The use of food in a classroom curriculum is viewed as an enhancement to student learning. Further, Massachusetts Educational Standards reflect objectives which would require the use of food to achieve the goals of the lesson. There are occasions when the established objectives of a lesson can only be met utilizing a particular food product for instruction, rather than a non-food alternative. Therefore, a protocol to notify parents of a food allergic student will be utilized when classroom activities integrate food into the lesson plan.

7. Specialized circumstances

There are students who are on a designated Individual Education Program that includes food for the purpose of optimizing feeding, developmental, and social skills. These students will be exempt from the component involving food in the curriculum as noted in the Food Allergy Management Policy.

Policy Adopted: 6/18/09

Policy Reviewed:

Policy Revised: