

INCARNATE WORD ACADEMY SCHOOL POLICY ON ALLERGY AWARENESS AND SAFETY

I. Allergic Reaction

Anaphylaxis is a rare but preventable and treatable event. Anaphylaxis refers to a collection of symptoms affecting multiple systems in the body. The most dangerous bodily effects are drop in blood pressure and difficulty breathing, which can be fatal. An anaphylactic reaction can be immediate and deadly. In a matter of minutes a child can lose consciousness and their life. Hesitation in an anaphylactic situation can mean the difference between life and death.

Successful school anaphylaxis plans are built on respect for others, sound medical information and realistic expectations of what the school community can do to help safeguard students at risk for anaphylaxis.

II. Student Identification

Identifying students with severe allergies is the first step in the process of developing a plan. Students can be identified through registration, health history forms, emergency medical forms, and communication with families. Identification is imperative to implement proper planning and allow school staff to be educated, trained and prepared for the student. This should occur as close as possible to the first day of school.

III. Prevention and Implementation

A. Avoidance of Allergens

The most important aspect of the management of students with life-threatening allergies is avoidance. Incarnate Word Academy School puts safety first and continuously strives to create an allergy-safe environment.

No guarantee can be given that there will be zero risk. School buildings cannot be "allergen free".

B. Student Self-Management

Students must be encouraged to be responsible for managing their condition and when they reach a certain age, avoid allergens as much as possible. In some circumstances, there may be a need for a student to carry their own epinephrine auto-injector and asthma inhalers (if relevant and appropriate paperwork completed by physician and parent). Otherwise, "epi-pens" will be stored in the office of the school nurse and if agreed upon in the classroom.

C. Environmental management

Information about anaphylaxis and strategies that reduce the risk of exposure to triggers of anaphylaxis within the school environment will be shared with the entire school community.

Reactions to some foods, such as nuts, can produce a more severe response than other food items. Even a minimum amount of these foods can be life-threatening if ingested. Peanut allergies are one of the most common food allergies and the leading cause of food induced anaphylaxis.

The following guidelines will provide a safer learning environment for students with severe allergies:

1. Implementation of effective sanitation measures. Proper washing of tabletops, toys, etc. to remove contaminated foods.
2. Promote safe practice among students. No swapping or sharing of food or utensils.
3. Encourage "No Eating" rule during daily travel on school buses.
4. Alert parents in advance of school celebrations that involve food. **ALL FOODS BROUGHT INTO SCHOOL MUST BE IN A WRAPPER THAT LISTS THE INGREDIENTS.**
5. Alert all school parents in the same classroom with the child with allergies.
6. Well-trained staff (that will promptly recognize the signs of anaphylaxis and respond swiftly) should supervise the cafeteria and playground.
7. Have a picture of the student in a location where staff can identify the child, if parent/ guardian consents to such.
8. Keep life-saving epinephrine in a location where staff can easily access and administer medication.
11. Place posters describing signs and symptoms of anaphylactic reaction as well as emergency procedures in relevant school areas.

IV. Rules and Responsibilities

A. School Responsibilities

- Be knowledgeable about and follow applicable federal laws and any state laws or district policies that apply.
- Work to eliminate/reduce the use of the food allergens in the student's meals, arts/crafts projects, educational tools and discourage food as classroom incentive.
- Ensure that students with allergies are not excluded from school activities based solely on their allergies.
- Notify parents of celebrations or any school activities off school property (i.e., field trips) that the student with allergies will be attending.
- Ensure that there is an adequate number of staff members designated and trained to and administer emergency medications, possibly including the epinephrine auto-injector.
- Ensure that a trained staff member accompanies the student on any school activities that are off school property.

- Provide a safe lunch environment for students in Grades 4-8. Encourage limiting peanut and tree nut products in the classroom.
- Allow food allergic children in Grades 4-8 to sit in a designated allergen free desk throughout the day.
- Pre-K through Grade 3 classrooms will be peanut and tree nut free.
- Keep emergency medications in a secure location that is easily accessible to designated school personnel.

B. School Nurse Responsibilities

- Provide education to school staff and students regarding allergies. This should include risk reduction strategies, use of an EpiPen, recognition of the signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction and how to respond to an emergency. Train staff in the dynamics of student's allergy, recognition of symptoms and appropriate reactions.
- Provide educational information to staff, students or community when requested.
- Reinforce self-management of students in dealing with allergies.
- Provide list of students with allergies to principals as soon as available, so principal can coordinate meeting with staff, family.
- Provide allergy education in the classroom with parental involvement; include education about peer pressure.

C. Teacher Responsibilities

- Be knowledgeable about the child's allergies.
- Understands the allergy and can recognize symptoms of a reaction.
- Know what to do in an emergency. .
- Notifies classroom parents that a student in the classroom has a severe food allergy
- No sharing of food allowed.
- Communicate with parent to ensure classroom activities are safe for students with allergies.
- Communicate with parent to ensure classroom supplies like paints and science kits are allergen free.
- Encourage hand washing with soapy water before and after lunch and snacks (good hygiene for everyone).
- Be prepared for special events (parties) and field trips.
- Inform parent of allergic child in advance of any food that will be used in the classroom.
- Know the location of all emergency information and medication.
- Know how medication is accessed after normal school hours and on special trips.
- Know how to contact emergency services at school or on field trip.

****Greatest risk for a student to have an allergic reaction is when class activity is outside the normal routine****

D. Gym and Recess

- Staff in the gym, playground and other sites used for recess should have a cell phone or other communication device for emergency.
- Teachers and staff members during gym and recess should be aware of the child who has a severe allergy and the steps to respond to an emergency situation.
- Access to life saving epinephrine medication should be available for a quick response and an adult staff member onsite should be trained in its use.
- No food should be allowed on playground equipment.
- School personnel must make sure that they have student's medications, health care plan and emergency contact numbers with them.
- Students with severe allergies should be chaperoned by school personnel or parent and not a volunteer adult.

E. Field Trips

- School personnel must make sure that they have student's medications, health care plan and emergency contact numbers with them.
- Students with severe allergies should be chaperoned by school personnel or parent and not a volunteer adult.
- Parents of allergic children should be encouraged and invited to attend as many field trips as possible and should be given priority when a limited number of chaperones are allowed.

F. Family Responsibilities

- Notify the school, all teachers, school nurse and school principal of the child's allergies at enrollment and prior to the start of each school year.
- Provide school staff with updated and complete written medical documentation, instructions, and medication, both periodically and upon request.
- Provide complete and updated emergency contact information.
- Educate the child in the self-management of their allergies, including helping the child to tell a responsible adult when they are having a possible reaction, exposure to an allergen, and be able to question the content of food.
- Notify all extracurricular supervisors and coaches of any school activities of child's allergies, location of medications and to request copies of the child's health plan.