



GUIDELINES TO SAFE FOOD ALLERGY MANAGEMENT

Safe food allergy management is a continuum of precautionary measures that have to be put in place to **minimize the risk** of accidental exposure to allergens. It is our objective to create an “**ALLERGY-SAFE**” and “**ALLERGY AWARE**” school environment, thus, keeping our allergic students as safe as possible. It is, however, a shared responsibility between the school, the student and the parent.

The legal responsibilities of school boards:

1. Adapting the school environment for students with allergies
2. Obtaining valid parental consent forms
3. Ensuring student privacy is respected
4. Providing training to staff
5. Providing emergency treatment

“It is a school board’s duty to exercise reasonable care and skill to see that students are kept reasonably safe **but not** to assume responsibility for providing a completely allergen-free environment or to eliminate all risk.”

The following checklists are to be used to ensure precautionary measures are practiced by all.

IS YOUR SCHOOL “ALLERGY-SAFE” and “ALLERGY AWARE”?

Information and awareness (✓)

- Obtain from parents of students with allergies, a complete individual Emergency Response Plan based on physician’s instructions (foods, symptoms, treatment protocol...) and ensure school nurse’s receipt
- Obtain parental consent to disseminate information to staff (and students) and to meet with students with allergies to explain precautionary measures and symptom recognition
- Identify students with allergies to staff and students
- Train staff (with school nurse) on food allergies; recognition of symptoms, how to respond to emergencies and how to use an auto-injector
- Train staff to recognize sources of allergens (or contamination by) in school material (play-dough, stuffed toys) and equipment (desks, tables, door handles, musical instruments, computers)
- Train staff on precautionary measures
- Train daycare staff and lunch monitors on safe lunchroom practices using “Allergy-Safe” Lunchroom Practices
- Raise awareness on food allergies with all students using There Are Students with Food Allergies in Your Child’s Class
- Raise awareness with parents using There Are Students with Food Allergies in Your Child’s Class and Food Allergies Information Letter

Avoidance (to minimize the risk of accidental exposure to allergens) (✓)

- Prioritize vegetables, fruit and dairy products as snacks (snacks are usually eaten in the school yard or a common area and these foods are least likely to trigger an allergic reaction)
- Sensitize students with allergies to clean their work/play/eating area (with a cleaning wipe or disposable paper and soap) before using
- Enforce the “no eating” rule on buses
- Enforce the “no sharing/trading” food, utensils, containers or water bottles rule
- Remind all staff to be vigilant in the distribution of food to students with allergies
- Ensure eating surfaces are cleaned by staff before and after eating
- Support staff to implement strategies to facilitate hand washing
- Prioritize non-food activities for birthdays, holidays and celebrations; If not possible, remind parents of students with allergies to provide snacks for their children

Avoidance (to minimize the risk of accidental exposure to allergens) cont'd (✓)

- Use *“Allergy-Safe” Lunchroom Practices* to establish safe lunchroom practices; daycare staff and lunch monitors should ensure that all students:
 - wash their hands with water and soap before and after eating
 - are vigilant if their lunch contains allergens (avoid contact with students with allergies)
 - use a thermos instead of microwave ovens
 - refrain from touching desks and place mats of students with allergies
- Use *“Allergy-Safe” Lunchroom Practices* to establish safe lunchroom practices; daycare staff and lunch monitors should ensure that students with allergies:
 - always use same assigned seating to eat
 - always eat at their desk if classrooms are used as an eating area (or identify their desk not to be used by others to eat)
 - clean their eating surface (with a cleaning wipe brought from home or disposable paper with water and soap) before eating
 - use a place mat or napkin to set their food
 - refrain from using microwave ovens (a food thermos should be used)
 - only eat food from home (unless their parents said other foods are safe)
- Advise parents of students with allergies that the absence of allergens cannot be guaranteed in foods provided through school services and activities (cafeteria, lunch programs, snack programs, community events, potluck meals and cooking workshops)
- For foods provided through school services and activities as mentioned above, advise parents of students with allergies of the menu, snacks and foods to be offered (in advance) in order for them to make an informed decision on choosing to use or participate in these services/activities or to provide allergen-free foods from home as a precaution
- For foods provided at school for educational activities (e.g. cooking workshops), adapt the recipe to accommodate students with allergies (when possible), while advising parents the absence of allergens cannot be guaranteed

NOTE: Banning of foods has not proven to be successful at preventing allergic reactions and, therefore, is discouraged. It is rather encouraged to put in place all other precautionary measures.

Emergency Measures (✓)

- Have an Emergency Measures Plan in place (daily, school trips...) and ensure its review with all staff
- Although not required by law, it is recommended that the school's first aid kit include an up-to-date auto-injector
- Ensure that anaphylactic students always carry an up-to-date auto-injector on them
- In the possible presence of an allergen, students at risk must be directed to a safe area
- Epinephrine is the only medication to be used in case of anaphylactic reaction and can be administered by anyone

While our schools make every effort to create “ALLERGY-SAFE” environments to keep our allergic students as safe as possible, we cannot eliminate the presence of allergens. It is thus, not possible to have allergen-free schools.

For any questions, contact: Sylvie Beaudry, Dietitian - Coordinator, School Organization

Sources:

[Anaphylaxis in schools and other settings](#), 3rd Edition, Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, 2014

[Anaphylaxis: A Handbook for School Boards](#), Canadian School Boards Association, 2001

[Protocole visant à protéger les élèves Québécois ayant des allergies alimentaires- Manger sans craintes](#), Allergies Québec, 2017

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