

Food Allergies

Intent

Barrington is committed to the safety and health of all students and employees. In accordance with this and pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 16-21-31 and 16-21-32, the purpose of the policy is to:

- Provide a safe and healthy learning environment for students with food allergies;
- Reduce the likelihood of severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reactions;
- Ensure a rapid and effective response in the case of a severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reaction; and
- Protect the rights of food allergic students to participate in all school activities.

Rationale

Food allergies can be life threatening and the prevalence of food allergies may be increasing. The level of sensitivity and the types and severity of reactions vary in different individuals, therefore the school's approach to preventing and treating food allergies must be individualized yet comprehensive.

Individual Health Care Plans and Emergency Health Care Plans

In all elementary schools and middle schools in Barrington,¹ an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) and an Emergency Health Care Plan (EHCP) shall be developed for each student identified with any food allergy² with potentially serious health consequences. The school nurse teacher will develop the IHCP and EHCP in collaboration with the student's health care provider, the parents/guardians of the student, and the student (if appropriate). This shall be done prior to entry into school or immediately thereafter for students previously diagnosed with an allergy. It should be done immediately after the diagnosis for students already enrolled who are newly diagnosed with an allergy. These plans should include both preventive measures to help avoid accidental exposure to allergens and emergency measures in case of exposure.

School Protocol

In elementary and middle schools in Barrington,³ the principal/school administrator, in coordination with the school nurse teacher, shall implement a protocol, consistent with this policy and with the IHCPs and EHCPs, providing food allergic students with protections while they are attending school or participating in school-sponsored activities. The protocols shall be reviewed and updated at least annually, as well as after any serious allergic reaction has occurred at school or at a school-sponsored activity.

¹ This is recommended for all schools. It is required by law for elementary, middle and junior high schools.

² This is recommended for all food allergies. It is required by law for peanut and tree nut allergies.

³ This is recommended for all schools. It is required by law for elementary, middle and junior high schools.

Posting of Signs

In all schools in Barrington,⁴ signs shall be posted in a conspicuous place at every point of entry and with the cafeteria facility, advising that there are students with allergies to peanuts/tree nuts. The exact wording on the sign may vary, in accordance with the measures contained within students' IHCPs and the school protocol.

Staff Training

In all schools in Barrington,⁵ the principal/school administrator/school nurse teacher shall identify school personnel who might be involved in managing an emergency in a school, including anaphylaxis. Training shall be provided for these personnel. At all times during normal school hours at on-site school-sponsored activities, at least one person other than the certified school nurse teacher must be trained and responsible for the administration of the epinephrine auto-injector, subject to the Good Samaritan provisions. These personnel shall review emergency protocols on an annual basis.

If trained school personnel are not available any willing person may administer the epinephrine auto-injector. Good Samaritan provisions apply.

Communication

In all schools in Barrington,⁶ the principal/school administrator in collaboration with the school nurse teacher shall ensure that all school employees, who may be involved in the care of a student diagnosed with a severe food allergy shall be informed of the IHCP and the EHCP, as appropriate. These individuals should understand and consistently follow these plans and protocols.

Parents/guardians will be informed by the principal/school administrator in collaboration with the school nurse teacher about their rights and responsibilities regarding IHCPs and EHCPs for food allergic students. They will be given clear guidance to help them follow the measures stipulated in these plans, as well as complying with the peanut/tree nut law. Parents' of students with severe food allergies will be made aware of their responsibility in communicating the allergy to appropriate personnel for before and after school programs and events, as well as transportation and food service personnel.

The principal/school administrator shall work with the transportation administrator to ensure that school buses are equipped with required communication devices and that drivers are properly trained to recognize symptoms of allergic reactions and know what to do in case of an emergency.

⁴ This is required by law for all schools.

⁵ This is required by law for all schools.

⁶ This is required by law for all schools.

Self-Management

In all schools in Barrington,⁷ each student at risk for anaphylaxis shall be allowed to carry an epinephrine auto-injector with him/her at all times, if appropriate. A written authorization will be required by the student's health care provider and parent if this is deemed necessary. If this is not appropriate, the epinephrine auto-injector shall be kept in a conspicuous place with reasonable safeguards in place to ensure its safekeeping. A medically identified student may self-administer the epinephrine auto-injector, with written authorization by the physician, if appropriate.

Emergency Protocols and Standing Orders

In all schools in Barrington,⁸ the school physician shall prepare and update, as appropriate, but at least on an annual basis, written emergency protocols and standing orders in the event of injuries and acute illnesses, including anaphylaxis. The school physician shall also review at least annually the procedures for addressing incidents of anaphylaxis and the use of the epinephrine auto-injector. Such procedures must also stipulate that the epinephrine auto-injector be used only upon the student for whom it was prescribed.

The school physician shall also issue a standing order for the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector by the school nurse for a student who has not been previously medically identified for the prevention or treatment of anaphylaxis.⁹

In the event of an episode of anaphylaxis, the principal/school administrator shall verbally notify the student's parents/guardians as soon as possible or delegate someone to notify them. Following an episode, the school nurse-teacher shall complete a written report and file it in the student health record.¹⁰

Allergy Bullying

All threats or harassment of students with regards to food allergies will be taken very seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with the Barrington bullying policy and pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 16-21-26.

Confidentiality

Pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), the *Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs* (R16-21-SCHO), and other statutes and regulations, the confidentiality of students with food allergies shall be maintained, to the extent appropriate, and as requested by the student's parents/caregivers.

Approved 04/23/09

⁷ This is required by law.

⁸ These are required by law.

⁹ This is recommended but is not required by law.

¹⁰ This is required by law.

