

Administrative Procedures for Life-Threatening Allergies

Severe allergies are serious and can be fatal. Anaphylaxis, a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction, can be triggered by exposure to one or more allergens, including foods, insect stings, drugs, and latex products. Anaphylaxis can affect multiple areas of the body, such as skin, respiratory tract, gastrointestinal tract, and the cardiovascular system. Symptoms can include severe headache, nausea and vomiting, sneezing and coughing, hives, swelling of the lips, tongue and throat, itching all over the body, and anxiety. The most dangerous symptoms include difficulty breathing, a drop in blood pressure, and shock—each of which can be fatal.

The risk of accidental exposure to allergens can be reduced in the school setting if schools partner with students, parents, and health-care professionals to minimize risks and to provide a safe educational environment for severely allergic or food-intolerant students. The Grinnell-Newburg School District cannot guarantee that a student will never experience an allergy-related event while at school. However, the District has created these procedures to reduce the risk that those students with life-threatening allergies will experience an allergy-related event at school.

The most common life-threatening allergies are to peanuts, tree nuts, and shellfish. For this reason, these procedures outline steps regarding nut allergies. These procedures will be followed for any other life-threatening allergy, where appropriate. For those students who are highly allergic to nuts, contact with nut products can cause a life-threatening anaphylaxis reaction. The only way to protect students who are highly allergic to nuts or nut products is to minimize the nut product exposure in their environment.

The following procedures will be implemented in the Grinnell-Newburg School District.

All peanut and tree nut products will be eliminated from the school food service menu, and from any other district-provided food distribution points.

Each K-4 building principal will designate tables in the cafeteria for hot and cold lunch.

All teachers will be encouraged to eliminate peanut or tree nut food items of any kind from instruction or any school project related to the curriculum.

Peanut butter jars or any nut product jar may not be used for storage of classroom materials.

Classrooms that have classroom pets may only use nut-free pet foods and bedding.

A yearly update/training on allergy procedures will take place for both students and staff.

The following procedures will be implemented in the respective attendance center when a student with a life-threatening allergy attends that building.

All students and staff will be encouraged to wash their hands after eating. All students that eat at a cold lunch table will be required to wash their hands after eating.

*NOTE: Antibacterial gels and liquids kill germs, but they do not remove protein from the skin and should not be used in place of soap and water and/or wipes.

Cafeteria tables will be washed after each meal rotation. To prevent cross-contamination, those tables set aside for cold lunch will be sanitized with materials not used to clean the other tables. Similarly, those hot lunch tables that are free from any nut products will be sanitized with materials not used to clean the tables set aside for nut products. This

procedure will minimize the potential for cross-contamination. Students with life-threatening allergies in grades 5-12 will be provided cleaning materials to clean their eating area.

No peanut or tree nut food items of any kind may be used as part of instruction or any school project related to the curriculum. Teachers may select items from an approved list of food materials, or check with the building principal. If foods need to be prepared at home for curricular needs, specific guidelines must be followed.

No homemade treats or food items are permitted in K-12 classrooms. All treats must be commercially prepared and packaged for distribution with intact ingredient labels.

Classrooms with students who have life-threatening allergies may have an approved purchase list, but as long as there are no peanuts/nuts, food items not on the approved list will be permitted. Food allergic students will always have a safe treat on hand with their respective teacher, supplied by the student's parent. Students in the same homeroom as a student with a life-threatening allergy must wash hands following a snack with any potential nut/nut product. Either soap and water or disposable wet wipes may be used for washing, as both will remove the allergen.

Signs designating nut-free zones, such as a severely allergic student's classroom, will be used.