



RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Managing Life-Threatening Food Allergies

POLICY STATEMENT

River Valley School District will take all appropriate steps to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for students with life-threatening allergies.

BACKGROUND

Severe allergic reactions are called anaphylaxis. It is caused by exposure to an allergen. Anaphylaxis resulting from food allergies and insect stings, affects an estimated 1% to 2% of the general population, with a smaller reported occurrence associated with drugs and latex. Approximately two million school-aged children have an allergy to food. Eight foods account for 90% of all reactions in the United States: milk, eggs, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish. There is no cure for food allergy. Strict avoidance of the allergy-causing food is the only way to prevent a reaction. Epinephrine is the treatment of choice for acute anaphylaxis.

IMPLEMENTATION

The River Valley School District cannot guarantee an allergy free environment. Because each student's allergy and situation is different, an individualized plan of action may be created for some students.

Specifics of the plan may include the following:

1. Knowledge and application of appropriate federal laws including ADA, IDEA, Section 504 and FERPA and any state law or district policy that applies.
2. The parent/guardian will provide the school nurse with written medical documentation of the life threatening allergy, instructions and current medications, as directed by a physician.
3. The school nurse, in conjunction with the student's parent/guardian and the physician, will prepare a Food Allergy Action Plan. A photo of the student will be included on the written form. The school nurse will review the plan with the parent/guardian annually, or as changes in the student's medical condition or environment occur.
4. The Food Allergy Action Plan will be distributed and reviewed with all necessary school staff at the beginning of each school year. Instruction will include preventive and emergency procedures for life-threatening allergic reactions. Training will include the administration of Epinephrine.
5. Life-threatening food allergies and school policy will be communicated to parents via annual back to school newsletter.

Classroom

1. The school nurse is responsible for notifying classroom teachers of students with life-threatening allergies. The Food Allergy Action Plan will be kept in the classroom.
2. At the elementary level, parents of the allergic child are responsible for providing a supply of safe snacks for their child. These snacks should be stored separate from other snacks, to prevent the possibility of cross contamination.
3. If snacks and or treats (e.g. birthdays, holidays) are served in the classroom setting, desk and table surfaces will be washed by the classroom teacher or other designated staff, after food is served.
4. Snacks and or treats may be eliminated from the classroom and served in the cafeteria. This is the decision of the individual classroom teacher in conjunction with the school nurse. This decision will be based on individual student needs in the classroom.
5. All staff and students will wash their hands after handling/consuming any food product.
6. Common allergens should be avoided in class lesson plans and projects.

Cafeteria

1. The Elementary and Middle School cafeterias will have a designated “safe” area for students with food allergies. No food products containing potential allergens, either provided by the school or lunches brought from home, will be allowed at the designated table. This is to prevent other students’ exposure to foods that may cause an allergic reaction.
2. A no “food trading” rule should be followed by all students
3. Hands should be washed before and after eating, to remove possible traces of allergens.
4. All table surfaces will be wiped thoroughly with soap and hot water before and after each meal, to prevent cross contamination.
5. A designated staff member will be responsible for monitoring the student with a life-threatening food allergy.
6. In Middle School and High School, students will be encouraged to take a more active role in assuring their food and eating-place is not contaminated and to seek help if problems arise.

School Field Trips

1. Protocols for field trips will include timely notification to the nurse.
2. The Food Allergy Action Plan and any prescribed medication will accompany the student on all field trips.
3. In the absence of an accompanying parent, a trained staff member will be assigned to monitor the student’s welfare and respond appropriately to an emergency.

Bus Drivers/Substitute Teachers

1. Bus drivers will be alerted to reinforce the “no eating” rule for all students with exceptions made only to accommodate special needs under federal of similar laws.
2. The school nurse is responsible for notifying bus drivers and substitute teachers of students with life-threatening allergies.
3. The student’s Food Allergy Action Plan will be kept on the bus.

APPROVED: August 9, 2005