

## **Rochester Community Schools Guidelines and Protocols for Students with Food Allergies**

Rochester Community Schools recognizes the large number of students in our schools with potentially life-threatening food allergies. It is the District's responsibility to develop appropriate health plans for students with food allergies that detail emergency treatment while proactively addressing conditions to prevent exposure to specific allergens. While the medical and health-related needs are unique for each child, the intention of this regulation is to establish a set of consistent, systematic practices within the district.

A collaborative partnership between school, families, and medical personnel can provide a safe and healthy learning environment, which will help students with food allergies make the transition from the safety of their home environment into the expanding world of a school. Although there are other life-threatening allergy conditions that exist, this regulation recognizes that food allergies are the most common cause of life-threatening allergic reactions at school. The most common food allergens include peanut, tree nut, dairy, eggs, fish, shellfish, wheat, and soy.

The Rochester Community Schools "*Managing Life-Threatening Allergies in School Children: Guidelines and Practices*" handbook is referenced in the regulation and serves as a more thorough guide. It contains the complete/full staff responsibilities lists, educational components, forms, suggested resources, and signage to aid in the overall food allergy management program.

### **General**

1. Each student with an epinephrine auto-injector **MUST** have a severe allergy **Medical Action Plan (MAP)** specific to them and signed by their physician and parent/guardian, giving instructions on what to do if the student has an allergic reaction.
2. Keep student information private unless permission was given by the parent/guardian in writing to share names or allergies.
3. Eliminate unscheduled/unplanned food celebrations and/or food rewards. Rewards should be non-food items only.
4. Inform parents/guardians ahead of time of any classroom activity or school events where food will be served.
5. Never question or hesitate to act if a student reports signs of an allergic reaction.
6. Be aware of how the student with food allergies is being treated; enforce school rules about bullying and threats. Be supportive and inclusive towards students with food allergy. When appropriate, conduct classroom education for students regarding food allergies. *Be respectful and non-judgmental about all food restrictions.*
7. During school hours, food should not be taken to common areas such as the school office, principal's office, media centers, multi-purpose rooms, playgrounds, computer labs, or other

classrooms. If food is served in these areas outside of school hours or during non-student events, thorough cleaning processes must be followed: tables and/or surfaces with which food has come into contact should be cleaned with warm, soapy water (or wipes). Examples of these events include staff meetings, volunteer teas, staff appreciation events, PTA meetings, etc.

8. All classrooms that cook for classroom activities will choose recipes that are free of food allergens as necessary for students with various food allergies. Cooking utensils, kitchenware, and cooking areas will be cleaned thoroughly with soap and warm water to decrease allergen exposure.
9. All staff will wash their hands after eating or touching any foods.
10. Classroom-provided birthday celebrations will be limited to **non-edible items and/or activities**. Refer to *Alternatives to Food-Based Celebrations and Rewards* in Appendix of "*Managing Life-Threatening Allergies in School Children: Guidelines and Practices*" for activity ideas. School communities should discourage overly elaborate, expensive, or excessive items.
11. All students will provide his or her snack (in classrooms that allow snacks) each day, unless buying food from the cafeteria; classroom-provided snacks are not allowed (i.e., one parent/student providing snacks for all students). Snacks eaten in classrooms should be free from allergens specific to students in that room. After snacks are eaten in classrooms, tables should be cleaned with warm, soapy water (or wipes) and all students should wash their hands to prevent potential cross-contamination.
12. All before- and after-hours school-sponsored events that serve food must identify a clearly defined area where food will be served and/or consumed. The student with life-threatening allergies and his/her family should be notified well in advance of these events. Thorough cleaning processes must be followed: tables and/or surfaces with which food has come into contact should be cleaned with warm, soapy water (or wipes).
13. For all student events during school hours (classroom or school-wide), only manufactured foods with ingredient labels (no homemade foods) may be served; individually packaged foods are best. If food is not individually wrapped, ingredient labels should be available and/or posted for students or family members to review. Principals must be consulted by event planners (including staff, students, parents/guardians) before food is served, as foods should not be offered that contain known food allergens listed in the MAPs on file for that building. (Individual groups or clubs [i.e., Robotics club, swim team, etc.] should consider food restrictions of members as appropriate.)
14. All student events during non-school hours in which food is served must have manufactured food items with ingredient labels available. Thorough cleaning processes must be followed: tables and/or surfaces with which food has come into contact should be cleaned with warm, soapy water (or wipes).
15. Due to inconsistencies in labeling, the District cannot guarantee that labeled products are food-allergen free.