



## Superintendent's Circular

NUMBER:  
SHS-11  
Version 01

### LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES (LTA OR ANAPHYLAXIS)

*This circular will remain in effect unless rescinded or superseded by a subsequent version*

#### **POLICY**

The Massachusetts Department of Education recommends that all school districts have policies and protocols regarding the care of students with life-threatening food allergies. This is in addition to [2012, c.77, An Act Relative to Medical Emergency Response Plans for Schools](#), requiring local school districts to develop efficient written medical response plans for responding to life-threatening emergencies.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health Regulations governing the [Administration of Prescription Medications in Public and Private Schools 105 C.M.R. 210.100\(A\)\(4\) and \(A\)\(4\)\(c\)\(iv\)](#) authorize school personnel who are trained and tested for competency to administer epinephrine by auto-injector to individuals with previously diagnosed life-threatening allergies who are experiencing an anaphylactic event. School districts must be registered with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for this purpose.

## **BACKGROUND ON ANAPHYLAXIS**

Anaphylaxis is a sudden, severe, potentially fatal, systemic allergic reaction that can involve various areas of the body (such as the skin, respiratory tract, gastrointestinal tract, and cardiovascular system). Symptoms occur within minutes to two hours after contact with the allergy-causing substance, but in rare instances may occur up to four hours later. Anaphylactic reactions can be mild to life-threatening. The annual incidence of anaphylactic reactions is about 30 per 100,000 persons, and individuals with asthma, eczema, or hay fever are at a greater relative risk of experiencing anaphylaxis. The most common allergens in children are food and bee-sting.

Because of the life-threatening nature of this condition, it is important for schools to develop and implement care plans for all children identified with life-threatening allergic reactions.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations provides for the administration of epinephrine by auto-injector by non-medical personnel who have been trained by the school nurse in the administration of epinephrine by auto-injector delivery. In consultation with the school physician, the school nurse leader has the final decision-making authority about the program, which must be in accordance with MA DPH standards. This includes school-sponsored programs as well as before and after school when a nurse is not immediately available.

The Boston School Committee, as part of the Superintendent's Circular SHS-08 Medication Administration, has approved the training of administration of epinephrine by auto-injector for students with identified allergies under the supervision of the

school nurse.

**The purpose of these Administrative Procedures and Guidelines is to:**

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

## **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Staff to be trained includes, but are not limited to, teachers, paraprofessionals, food service staff, school leaders, support staff, and student interns/teachers.

Education and training by the school nurse will include:

- Identification of potential food allergens
- Role and responsibilities in the prevention and reducing risks
- Recognizing allergic reactions
- Responding to an allergic reaction
- How to administer an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen®).

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Role of the Parent:**

- Inform the school nurse if their child has a Life-Threatening Allergy (with specific information regarding the allergen (i.e. food types, insect, medication))
- Provide the school with a list of allergens, the Individual Health Plan (IHP) (preferably with a Food Allergy action plan, where appropriate), and a physician order for epinephrine auto-injector administration
- Provide physician/provider documentation regarding allergy, diagnosis and treatment
- Work with the school nurse, school leader, and classroom teacher to develop and implement the Allergy Action Plan +/- IHP for ensuring that their child is safe from potential allergens
- Provide an epinephrine auto-injector(s) and other physician-ordered emergency medication if indicated to the school nurse
- Sign release of information/permission for identified school staff to have information about their child's allergy
- Provide current contact information, including emergency contacts
- Ensure that the pre-school and after-school staff have the appropriate information.

### **Role of the School Administrator:**

- Support training for school staff, provided by the school nurse at the beginning of every school year and as needed
- Support faculty, staff, and parents in implementing all aspects of the LTA (Life-Threatening Allergy) program
- Consider a school-wide policy, with input from the School Site Council, for avoiding LTA's wherever possible (i.e., peanut-free zones, no food at functions, etc.)
- Provide emergency communication devices (two-way radio, intercom, walkie-talkie, cell phone) for all school activities, including transportation, that involve a student with life-threatening allergies
- Ensure there is a contingency plan in the case of a substitute nurse, teacher, or food service personnel
- Ensure that 911/EMS is activated (in the event of an exposure).

### **Role of the School Nurse:**

- Provide training at least annually (beginning of school year) for school staff that will include information on food allergies, risk reduction procedures, how to recognize an allergic reaction, and how to respond in the event of an allergic reaction, including the use of an epinephrine auto-injector. Training will include a return demonstration by school staff on the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector.
- Obtain an Individual Health Plan (IHP) from the family/primary care provider (this should include the specifics about a food allergy action plan)
- Develop a plan for child management in the classroom,

lunchroom, playground, field trips, and emergency situations

- Ensure that all other staff members who have contact with students with life-threatening allergies (LTAs) are familiar with their IHPs on a need-to-know basis
- Provide a list of students with life-threatening allergies (if consent is given by parent) to all staff on a need-to-know basis (including transportation staff)
- Conduct in-service training and education for appropriate staff regarding a child's life-threatening allergens, symptoms, risk reduction procedures, emergency procedures, and how to administer an epinephrine auto-injector
- Post general emergency protocol and location of an epinephrine auto-injector; Epinephrine should not be locked away but should be available to school staff in a secure location and must be readily available for use in an emergency situation
- Ensure that all IHPs for children with LTAs are readily available for transport with EMS
- Ensure that there is a contingency plan in place in all school-related venues where substitutes are utilized
- Communicate with parents on a regular basis to discuss issues relating to the plan
- In the event of epinephrine auto-injector administration, complete the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's epinephrine auto-injector administration form and alert Health Services

**Role of the Teacher:**

- Receive training at least annually to recognize symptoms of allergic reaction and to understand their role as a responder in the event of an allergic reaction; including the use of an epinephrine auto-injector (i.e.EpiPen®)
- Collaborate with the school nurse and parent/guardian to develop and implement a plan for ensuring that their child is safe from potential allergens, including field trips, classroom festivities, arts & crafts activities, and cafeteria management
- Maintain a list of all students in the classroom with LTA; include the list in the substitute teacher folder
- Participate in a team meeting for a child with life-threatening allergies and in-service training about LTAs
- Keep accessible the child's emergency plan with a photo (where possible) in the classroom (with parent's permission) or keep with the lesson plan
- Inform volunteers, student teachers, aides, specialists, and substitute teachers about the child's food/other allergies and necessary safeguards by both verbal communication and in an organized, prominent, and accessible written format
- Coordinate with the parent on providing a lesson plan about food allergies for the class and discuss anaphylaxis in age-appropriate terms, with the child's permission
- Remind students never to share or trade food
- Inform parents about events involving food
- Provide the school nurse 4-6 weeks in advance with dates for field trips & school-sponsored off-site activities
- Discuss with the parent the process for ensuring before and after school continuity of access to epinephrine auto-injector administration and allergen reduction.

### **Role of Off-site Staff (Athletics):**

- Maintain a list of all students in their charge who have LTA
- Athletic coaches will be informed via review of sports clearances in ASPEN of any students on their teams who have LTAs
- Coaches will participate in training at the school level that will include information on Life-Threatening Allergies, risk reduction procedures, how to recognize an allergic reaction, and how to respond in the event of an allergic reaction, including the use of an epinephrine auto-injector and return demonstration
- Encourage these students to carry the epinephrine auto-injectors to all practices and events
- Ensure the off-site staff has knowledge of the child with the allergy, their specific allergy, and symptoms that they may suffer during a reaction:
  - Ensure that the off-site staff knows to call 911 or other emergency numbers and request an Advanced Life Support unit if a reaction occurs.
  - Allow a responsible child to carry their own epinephrine auto-injector in their backpack.
- Keep accessible the child's emergency plan in the specific venue (with parent's permission)
- Inform substitutes about the child's food/other allergies and necessary safeguards by both verbal communication and in an organized, prominent, and accessible written format.

### **Role of Food Services:**

- Provide a food preparation environment that follows



sound food handling to avoid cross-contamination and procedures to address food-allergic students

- Ensure all food service staff are able to recognize symptoms of allergic reaction and to understand their roles as a responder in the event of an allergic reaction; including the use of an epinephrine auto-injector.

### **Role of the School Transportation Company:**

- Provide training for all bus drivers on managing life-threatening allergies
- Be familiar with local EMS procedures
- Have functioning communication equipment to access EMS
- Maintain a policy of *"No food/drink consumed on the bus"*.

Details of management and all necessary forms are available in the Nurses' Protocol and Procedure Manual (available to BPS School Nurses)

- [Managing Food Allergies in Schools The Role of School Teachers and Paraeducators](#)
- [FAACT Education for School Personnel](#)

### **REFERENCES**

Mass.gov [Report epi-pen administration](#)

Mass.gov [School Health Services: Medication Administration](#)

Summary of significant dates and deadlines:

Date	Activity
September 2024	All staff should have a Life-Threatening Allergy review & epinephrine auto-injector demonstration by the school nurse

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