

Managing life-threatening allergies

updated May 2017

Chesterfield County Public Schools

Providing a safe, supportive and nurturing environment is a goal of Chesterfield County Public Schools. This includes preventing and managing life-threatening allergic reactions so that all students can fully and safely participate in school activities.

Allergic reactions are an immune-system hypersensitivity to a particular substance called an allergen. For many allergic individuals, exposure to an allergen results in mild symptoms. But for some people, allergic reactions can be life threatening. The most dangerous symptoms include difficulty breathing and a drop in blood pressure, which are potentially fatal. Called anaphylaxis, this life-threatening and lightning-fast allergic reaction may affect students with known allergies and those without known allergies.



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Protecting You and Your Environment

Between 1 percent and 2 percent of people are at risk for anaphylaxis from food and stinging insects. The most common allergens, accounting for 90 percent of allergic reactions, are milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat and soy, according to Food Allergy Research and Education.

Fewer people are at risk from drugs, latex, chemical or environmental allergens, such as perfume or scented lotion, but these can also cause life-threatening reactions, so it is important to follow the school system's environmental health procedures.

Because it is difficult to predict the time or severity of an allergic reaction, it is vital to be prepared to respond rapidly in order to maintain a safe educational environment for all students. Supporting the success of a student with a life-threatening allergy requires a team approach and a coordinated plan, so that all team members understand their roles. Team members include the parent/guardian, student, school staff members, health-care provider, school nurse and community.

A component of school emergency preparedness plans, these life-threatening allergy guidelines outline the roles of individuals responsible for the health and well-being of students with life-threatening allergies, supporting inclusion of all students in school activities. This document is designed to be flexible and to change over time. Recognizing that it is not possible to eliminate every potential allergy exposure, these guidelines also encourage age-appropriate student education and self-advocacy.

Wondering about privacy? The Family Educational and Privacy Rights Act allows information to be shared with school employees to maintain students' health and safety.

Helpful phone numbers

Chesterfield County Public Schools ► 748-1405

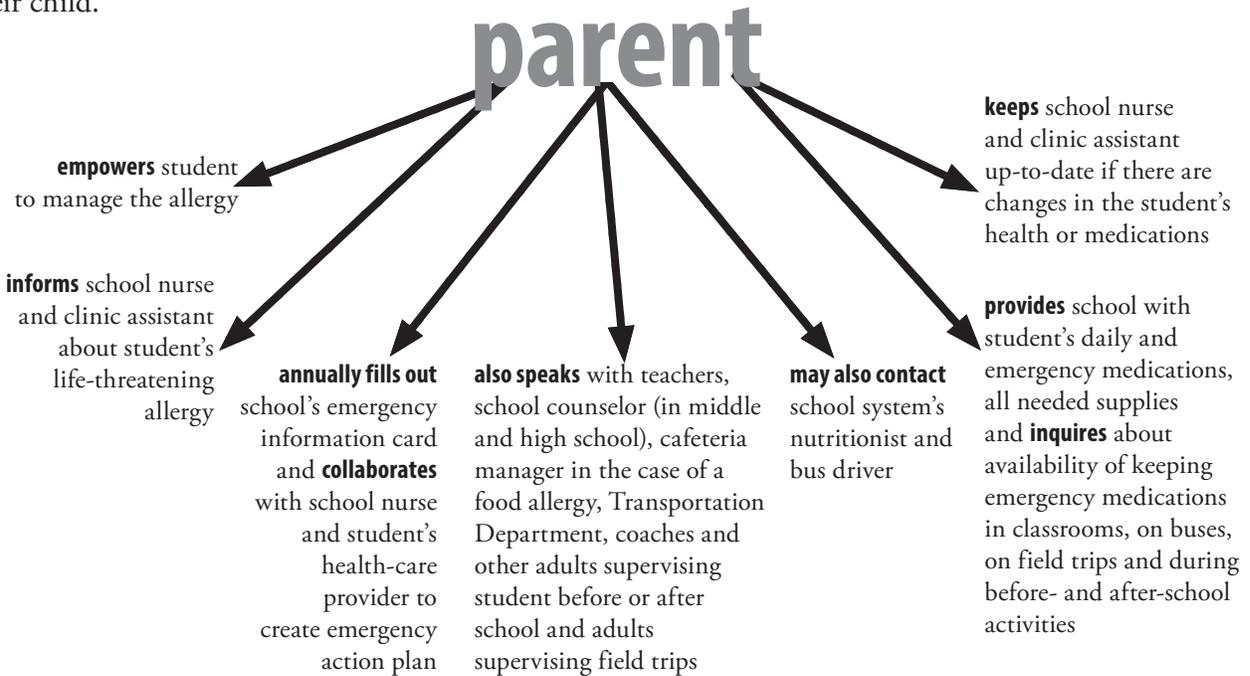
Transportation Department of Chesterfield County Public Schools ► 748-1656

Nutritionist for Chesterfield County Public Schools ► 743-3728

Environmental Health and Safety for Chesterfield County Public Schools ► 318-8048

Responsibilities of parents/guardians

It starts with the parent. Parents/guardians of a student with a life-threatening allergy are key to the process of keeping their child safe at school. They are at the center of developing a plan that works for their child.



- Empower the student to manage his/her allergy, making sure he/she is knowledgeable about
 - allergens.
 - first symptoms of allergic/anaphylactic reaction.
 - the importance of hand washing before and after eating.
 - strategies for avoiding exposure to the allergen (including not sharing or trading food, if allergen is a specific food).
 - how and when to tell an adult that he/she may be having an allergy-related problem.
 - how to safely carry emergency medication, if student's emergency action plan requires this.
 - self-administration of medication, if ordered by student's health-care provider.
- Promptly complete Chesterfield County Public Schools emergency information card **annually**.
- Collaborate **annually** with the school nurse and student's health-care provider to create a emergency action plan for the student. Using guidelines from the school nurse, talk with the student's health-care provider to make sure all appropriate measures are in place. Discuss with the student's health-care provider whether or not emergency medication should accompany the student throughout the school day, including on the school bus.
- In addition to the school nurse, contact **annually** about the student's life-threatening allergy
 - student's teachers.
 - student's school counselor in middle and high school.
 - the school's cafeteria manager, providing physician documentation of food allergies. When student eats school breakfasts or lunches, use the cafeteria's online payment system because it lessens the chances of the student buying food he/she is allergic to.
 - school system's Transportation Department.
 - coaches and other adults supervising before- or after-school activities.
 - adults supervising the student on field trips.
- May also speak with the school system's nutritionist and the student's bus driver.

► ► ► **responsibilities of parents/guardians continued from previous page** ► ► ►

- Provide the school with all daily and emergency medications prescribed by the student's health-care provider and all necessary supplies (such as wipes) following school system medication administration policies. Keep medications up to date.
- Be aware that emergency medication is not accessible from the clinic during before- or after-school activities.
- If you suspect your child may have a disability, ask your child's teacher, counselor or administrator for a referral to consider eligibility for 504 or special education services.
- Communicate any changes in the student's health or medications to principal, school nurse, clinic assistant, teacher and other staff members.
- Notify the school nurse if the student will transfer during the school year to another Chesterfield school.
- At the end of the school year, retrieve student's medication and any unused supplies from the school clinic. Medication not picked up by a parent will be disposed of.

Responsibilities of student

The goal for the student is to be empowered to manage his/her life-threatening allergy, based on the student's developmental level. The life-threatening allergy management process is directed toward the student's well-being and safety.

- Be proactive in the care and self-management of life-threatening allergies and reactions, based on developmental level.
- Take responsibility by
 - not trading or sharing food.
 - not eating foods with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen.
 - being aware of allergen exposure risks (bus, cafeteria, school playground, latex).
 - washing hands before and after eating.
- Immediately notify an adult as soon as exposure or symptoms occur. Students should be prepared to advocate for themselves if necessary.
- If authorized to self-carry emergency medication, transport it safely.
- If authorized to self-administer emergency medication, initiate treatment and immediately notify an adult.
- Notify an adult of any unkindness by others related to the life-threatening allergy.

Responsibilities of principal

Principals are concerned with the health and safety of all students and staff members in their school, including students with life-threatening allergies.

- Oversee the school's support system for students with life-threatening allergies and other medical conditions, making sure it is operating as intended. Communicate to staff members their specific roles and responsibilities in life-threatening allergy management.
- As part of the school's emergency preparedness plan, make sure the correct number of staff members are certified in CPR and first aid and maintain a list of students with life-threatening allergies and other critical health conditions.
- Identify at least two staff members and refer them to the school nurse for training in administering emergency medication (for example, epinephrine) on field trips. A trained staff member must go on field trips that include a student with a life-threatening allergy.
- Make sure that teachers, staff members and all school system employees in your building know which staff members are certified in CPR and first aid and which staff members are trained in administering emergency medication.
- Provide time **at the beginning of each school year** for the school nurse to provide general allergy awareness information to all staff members.
- Incorporate into your school's general operating procedures not allowing snacks on the playground, encouraging non-food parties and having classrooms cleaned after snacks.
- Notify the school nurse or clinic assistant if parents tell you that their child has a life-threatening allergy.
- Follow the student's emergency action plan. Be aware of students who are authorized to carry or self-administer emergency medication, including transportation needs.
- Provide an environment that embraces the core values of respect, responsibility, honesty and accountability and investigate any incidents of unkindness directed at students with life-threatening allergies.

Responsibilities of school nurse

Chesterfield County Public Schools office of Student Health Services provides nursing services in schools to protect, preserve and promote optimum health in school communities. Each school nurse is a registered nurse who works collaboratively with principals, clinic assistants, staff members, students and families by providing case management, health assessment, training and education, referrals and other services.

- Coordinate with principal to provide general allergy awareness information to all school staff members **at the beginning of each school year.**
- Collaborate with parent/guardian and student's health-care provider to develop a emergency action plan. This includes identifying staff members who need to know about the student's life-threatening allergy.
- Serve as case manager for students with life-threatening allergies, offering principal, teachers, clinic assistant, 504 coordinator, school counselor, Transportation Department, custodial staff members and other staff members the information and training as needed to keep students safe. This includes providing a list of students with life-threatening food allergies to the cafeteria manager and providing a list of students who have epinephrine on school buses to the Transportation Department for distribution to area coordinators.
- Collaborate with cafeteria manager to compare life-threatening allergy list with food allergy medical statements.
- Develop health alert communications outlining daily management and emergency assistance, based on the emergency action plan. Share health alerts with the principal, teachers, clinic assistant, 504 coordinator, school counselor and other staff members as appropriate. Review with appropriate staff members their specific roles and responsibilities in life-threatening allergy management.
- Train designated staff members in daily management of the student's life-threatening allergy, including transportation needs.
- Train designated staff members in administering emergency medication (for example, epinephrine) during the regular school day and on field trips.
- Review with the student how to self-manage and prevent life-threatening allergic reactions.
- Follow the student's emergency action plan.
- Notify the school nurse if you know that a student with life-threatening allergies will transfer during the school year to another Chesterfield school. Each spring, send a list of rising sixth-graders or rising ninth-graders with life-threatening allergies to the school nurse at the middle or high school they will attend.
- Consider leading a discussion and support group for students with life-threatening allergies.

Responsibilities of clinic assistant

The clinic assistant works closely with the school nurse, parent, student and staff members to provide care to the student during the school day.

- Participate in general allergy awareness information session conducted **near the beginning of each school year** by the school nurse for all school staff members.
- Participate in **annual** training for medication administration.
- Contact parents who do not promptly return emergency information card.
- Notify the school nurse if parents tell you that their child has a life-threatening allergy.
- Collaborate with the school nurse.
- Collaborate with the cafeteria manager and share information about students who have life-threatening food allergies, including information from food allergy medical statements.
- Provide daily management and emergency assistance according to the emergency action plan and health alerts.
- Prepare emergency medication for field trips for trained school staff members to transport and administer.
- Notify parent when medication refills are needed.
- Notify parent of any expiring medication before the expiration date.
- Follow the student's emergency action plan.
- Know which staff members in your school are certified in CPR and first aid and which staff members are trained in administering emergency medicine.
- Notify parents to pick up medication at the end of the school year.

Responsibilities of teacher

Having daily contact with the student, the teacher is an integral member of the life-threatening allergy management team. The teacher is often the first to witness the signs of a life-threatening allergic reaction and needs to respond appropriately for the student's safety.

- Notify the school nurse or clinic assistant if parents tell you that their child has a life-threatening allergy.
- Notify cafeteria aides and playground monitors of students identified with life-threatening allergies.
- Participate in general allergy awareness information session conducted **at the beginning of each school year** by the school nurse for all school staff members.
- Know the details of the student's emergency action plan and follow it.
- Provide substitute teachers with the emergency action plans of students with life-threatening allergies.
- Before a field trip
 - consider receiving emergency medication administration training from school nurse. If you are not trained, identify who is trained. A trained staff member must go on field trips that include a student with a life-threatening allergy.
 - send a list of participating students to clinic assistant so that emergency medication can be prepared.
 - clarify management and emergency assistance needs of student with school nurse.
 - take with you copies of all emergency information cards and emergency action plans.
- Know which staff members in your school are certified in CPR and first aid and which staff members are trained in administering emergency medication.
- Collaborate with other school staff members and volunteers to
 - discourage food sharing among students.
 - discourage using food or other potential allergens in the classroom for rewards, teaching purposes, holiday celebrations or birthday parties.
 - use non-latex items (for example, balloons, gloves, tape) if a student is identified with a life-threatening latex allergy.
 - provide appropriate seating in the cafeteria.
 - teach proper hand washing.
 - inform administration of need for supplemental cleaning of classroom.

Responsibilities of school counselor

In middle and high schools, school counselors serve as a central contact for parents and teachers. Middle and high school students are more independent than elementary students and more adept at managing their life-threatening allergies.

- Notify the school nurse or clinic assistant if parents tell you their child has a life-threatening allergy.
- Participate in general allergy awareness information session conducted **at the beginning of each school year** by the school nurse for all school staff members.
- Follow the student's emergency action plan.

Responsibilities of elementary school office staff members

In elementary schools, office staff members serve as a central contact for parents.

- Notify the school nurse or clinic assistant if parents tell you their child has a life-threatening allergy.
- Participate in general allergy awareness information session conducted **at the beginning of each school year** by the school nurse for all school staff members.
- Follow the student's emergency action plan.

Responsibilities of nutritionist

The nutritionist for Chesterfield County Public Schools will collaborate with cafeteria managers, parents and school nurses about students who have life-threatening **food** allergies.

- Provide life-threatening allergy awareness education to cafeteria managers.
- Work with cafeteria managers on
 - following safe food handling, cleaning and sanitation practices to avoid cross-contamination with potential allergens.
 - making reasonable substitutions according to federal guidelines and Food and Nutrition Services procedures.
- Maintain ingredient information, nutrition facts and ingredient lists and make sure they are online.
- Contact parent and physician to get information about food substitutions.

Responsibilities of cafeteria managers

The cafeteria manager will work closely with the school nurse and clinic assistant to obtain and share information about students who have life-threatening **food** allergies.

- Participate in general allergy awareness information session conducted **at the beginning of each school year** by the school nurse for all school staff members.
- Enter student food allergy information into Food and Nutrition Services database, based on information from school nurse, clinic assistant, parent or student's health-care provider.
- Notify the school nurse or clinic assistant if parents tell you their child has a life-threatening allergy. This includes giving information from food allergy medical statements to the school nurse or clinic assistant.
- Collaborate with school nurse to compare life-threatening allergy list with food allergy medical statements.
- Train cafeteria staff members on procedures for handling life-threatening allergies.
- Make meal substitutions prescribed by student's health-care provider.
- In elementary schools, ensure that all students use their accounts for breakfast, lunch and a la carte.
- Follow safe food handling, cleaning and sanitation practices to avoid cross-contamination with potential allergens.
- Notify the school office as soon as possible if there is a change in entrees on the menu.

Responsibilities of cafeteria aides

Cafeteria aides monitor student meals and may be the first adult in a position to recognize a life-threatening situation.

- Participate in general allergy awareness information session conducted **at the beginning of each school year** by the school nurse for all school staff members.
- If notified by a parent that a student has a life-threatening allergy, promptly tell the school nurse or clinic assistant.

Responsibilities of Transportation Department

The Transportation Department is divided into several operation areas.

- If a parent communicates about a student's life-threatening allergy to a staff member in the Transportation Department office or in a district office, share that information with the student's bus driver, substitute bus drivers, school nurse and principal.
- Receive from school nurse a list of students who have epinephrine on school buses and distribute list to appropriate staff.
- If aware that a student has permission to carry an epinephrine autoinjector on the bus, notify the student's bus driver and substitute bus drivers.
- Maintain the confidential list of students with life-threatening allergies provided by the school nurse.
- Follow Transportation Department emergency protocols.
- Coordinate training for school bus drivers on CPR, first aid and epinephrine administration.
- Coordinate allergy awareness education for school bus drivers **annually**.

Responsibilities of bus drivers

The bus driver is often the first and the last person who interacts with students on school days.

- Follow Transportation Department emergency protocols.
- Participate in training for CPR, first aid and epinephrine administration when offered by the Transportation Department.
- Participate in allergy awareness education session **annually**.
- If parents tell you that their child has a life-threatening allergy, notify your district transportation office and encourage the parents to also inform the school.
- Allow special seating arrangements if needed.
- Prohibit eating and drinking on the bus, unless it is necessary for a student's health.
- Adhere to school system environmental procedures on the bus.

Responsibilities of custodial staff members

Custodial staff members help keep schools safe by making sure they are clean and orderly.

- Follow Chesterfield County Public Schools protocols for cleaning classrooms, cafeteria and other spaces, including tables, chairs, desks and keyboards.
- Participate in general allergy awareness information session conducted **at the beginning of each school year** by the school nurse for all school staff members.



Chesterfield County Public Schools ★ mychesterfieldschools.com ★ P.O. Box 10, Chesterfield, VA 23832

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