

# ***St. John's Academy***

## ***Food Allergy Management Plan***

***2011***

The proportion of students with life-threatening food allergies has increased dramatically in recent years. Like students with other special needs, students with life-threatening food allergies must be provided equal access to education and education-related benefits.

To reduce risks for students and staff with peanut allergies, St. John's Academy (SJA) adopted a "Peanut and Tree Nut Policy" in August of 2010. The policy is indicative of the School Board's (Board) resolve to take reasonable measures to protect students at SJA and others who might be afflicted. Specifically, it prohibits students, staff, employees, visitors and guests from using, serving, or selling peanuts, peanut butter or any product containing peanuts, tree nuts, or peanut oil in the SJA building or on SJA grounds.

This Food Allergy Management Plan (Plan) prescribes a team approach for reducing risks associated with life-threatening food allergies. It supersedes all previous transmittals relevant to food allergies. Although families are expected to make every effort to avoid bringing peanuts or tree nut products into SJA, expecting to achieve an entirely "peanut free" or "peanut safe" environment is unrealistic: peanuts still are likely to find their way into the school. Reducing risk of exposure is, therefore, just one component. Early recognition of symptoms resulting from exposure and prompt, appropriate responses are also critical.

The Board and school administration are committed to providing students with life-threatening food allergies with a quality education in a caring and safe environment. This Plan endeavors to achieve this by outlining procedures and protocols to help prevent allergic reaction emergencies and death from anaphylaxis.

### ***WHAT IS ANAPHYLAXIS?***

Anaphylaxis is a potentially life-threatening medical condition occurring in allergic individuals after exposure to specific allergens. Anaphylaxis refers to a collection of symptoms affecting multiple systems in the body. These symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Hives
- Vomiting
- Itching (of any body part)
- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramps
- Red, watery eyes
- Change of voice
- Runny nose
- Coughing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Wheezing
- Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- Throat tightness or closing
- Sense of doom
- Itchy scratchy lips, tongue, mouth and/or throat
- Fainting or loss of consciousness
- Dizziness, change in mental status

- Flushed, pale skin, cyanotic (bluish) lips and mouth area

The most dangerous symptoms include breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which are potentially fatal. Anaphylaxis can occur immediately or up to several hours after allergen exposure. In about a third of anaphylactic reactions, the initial symptoms are followed by a delayed wave of symptoms.

Although initial symptoms often respond to epinephrine administered by injection, delayed symptoms may not respond at all. Therefore, it is imperative that following the administration of epinephrine, the student be transported by emergency medical services to the Emergency Room even if the symptoms appear to have been resolved. **When in doubt, it is better to administer epinephrine and seek medical attention. Death may result if epinephrine is withheld.**

Although this document focuses on **food allergies**, treatment of anaphylaxis is the same whether caused by an insect sting, latex, or is exercise-induced.

## ***PREVENTING AND MANAGING REACTIONS OF LIFE THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES***

***Total avoidance of the substance to which the student is allergic is the only means to prevent food allergy reactions.*** Therefore, SJA will strive to protect students with life threatening food allergies by taking reasonable measures to reduce risks of exposure.

Some students, who are very sensitive, may react to just touching or inhaling the allergen. For other students, consumption of as little as one five-thousandth of a teaspoon of an allergenic food can cause death. **Peanut and tree nuts account for 92% of severe and fatal reactions.** The relatively prevalence of peanut allergy at SJA compels the Board to outline the following procedures and protocols. It should be noted that while this was initially prepared to protect students with peanut allergies, the measures and protocols outlined here are applicable or can be adapted to all life threatening food allergies.

### **Responsibility of the Parents/Guardians:**

***Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP)*** – The parent/guardian should meet with the Principal and teacher(s) to create a strategy for management of a child’s food allergy. The parent/guardian should provide the following:

- Licensed provider order for epinephrine by auto-injector (EpiPen) as well as other medications needed.
- Parent/guardian’s signed consent to administer all medications. This consent should include any restrictions the parents may wish to impose regarding who is to administer medications.
- Parent/guardian’s signed consent to share information with other school staff.
- A minimum of two up-to-date EpiPens (more may be necessary based on student’s activities and travel during the school day).
- A description of the student’s past allergic reactions, including warning signs.

- A description of the student's emotional response to the condition and need for support.
- Name/telephone number of the student's primary care provider and allergist.
- Method to reach parent/parent designee should an emergency occur.

The parent/guardian is also welcome and encouraged to participate in any training/orientation in the student's classroom. The only way to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for these children is for the school to partner with parents, tap into their knowledge and expertise, and develop a comprehensive approach based on the fundamentals listed here.

### **Responsibility of the School**

#### ***In the classrooms:***

- Except as described below, or with approval of the school administration, food and drink will not be allowed in classrooms.
- Teachers must be familiar with any applicable IHCP of students in their classes and respond to emergencies according to the emergency protocol outlined in this document.
- Students will be allowed to bring home-made snacks into classrooms and the cafeteria for their own consumption; however, ***families are expected to adhere to the school's prohibition on peanuts and tree nut products.***
- If a student inadvertently brings a restricted food to the classroom, he/she will not be allowed to eat that snack.
- ***Sharing or trading of food is prohibited.*** An exception may be considered for Pre-K and kindergarten where a student is assigned to bring the snack for the entire class. In such case, only pre-packaged snacks will be allowed. Snacks to be shared must be brought to the school in original packaging so teachers will be able verify ingredients. However, prior to implementation of such an arrangement, the teacher, principal and families of affected students must agree to a strict set of standards and conditions to ensure the safety of the students. Under this arrangement, students with severe peanut allergies will be required to bring their own snack.
- Tables should be washed with soap and water after snacks have been eaten.
- Proper handwashing technique by adults and children will be taught and required before and after the handling/consumption of food.
- Non-food items should be used for rewards.

#### ***In the cafeteria:***

- Except as described below, or with approval of the school administration, food and drink will not be allowed in the cafeteria.
- Cafeteria personnel will be trained to recognize food allergens listed on product labels. Foods containing peanuts or tree nut products, or those subject to cross contamination (manufactured in a facility which also processes peanuts) will not be served at SJA.
- After each meal, all tables, chairs, trays, etc. will be thoroughly washed with soap and water.
- Students will be allowed to bring food from other sources into the cafeteria; however, ***families are expected to adhere to the school's prohibition on peanuts and tree nut products.***

- If a student inadvertently brings a prohibited food to the school, he/she will not be allowed to eat that food.
- Sharing or trading of food is prohibited.
- Proper handwashing technique by adults and children will be taught and required before and after the handling/consumption of food.
- Cafeteria personnel will be trained in how recognize an allergic reaction and to respond to emergencies according to emergency protocols outlined in this document.

***In the Zebedee Center and Conference Room:***

Because the Zebedee Center is used for many functions unrelated to SJA, and due to the difficulty in assuring compliance by all users, the Zebedee Center should be viewed as any other public place with respect to the presence of peanuts or peanut-containing products. However, SJA will strive to keep the Zebedee Center free of peanut allergens by doing the following:

- Expecting families who bring home-made foods (bars, cookies, etc.) for various school functions (e.g., Spaghetti Night, Back to School night, etc.) to respect the Peanut and Tree Nut Policy by ensuring these foods do not contain restricted ingredients.
- Communicating the school’s Peanut and Tree Nut Policy to users whenever reasonably possible, and asking them to refrain from bringing foods containing these ingredients into the school.
- Routinely cleaning gym equipment with soap and water to remove food allergens inadvertently brought into the school.

**Cross Contamination**

Cross contamination can occur from cooking or serving different foods with the same utensils and surfaces. When preparing and serving food, it is critical to make sure food preparation and serving utensils are not exposed to allergens and then used for another food. Some examples of cross contamination would be:

- Lifting peanut butter cookies with a spatula and then using the same spatula to lift sugar cookies.
- Using a knife to make a peanut butter sandwiches, wiping the knife, then using that same knife to spread mustard on another sandwich.

If families choose to bring homemade foods into SJA, they are expected to be informed about the danger cross contamination creates for students with life threatening food allergies, and are asked to ensure that foods are prepared where surfaces and utensils are properly cleaned with hot soapy water.

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN for an ALLERGIC REACTION TO PEANUTS OR TREE NUTS PRODUCTS:**

An Emergency Response Plan will be prepared and reviewed annually. This Plan will affirm that all school personnel will receive education on life threatening allergic conditions, and will further outline specific training which will be pursued. Documentation of such training should be appended to the Plan once achieved.

The Plan will also identify the following:

1. Who remains with student?
2. Who calls 911?
3. Who administers EpiPen?
4. Who notifies parents?
5. Who notifies student's primary care provider or allergy specialist?
6. Who attends to the student's classmates?
7. Who meets emergency medical responders at the school entrance?
8. Who manages 'crowd control'?
9. Who accompanies the student to the ER?

### **FAQ's**

#### **1. Can I send home made snacks to school with my child?**

Yes. However, we ask families to make good-faith efforts to adhere to the Peanut and Tree Nut Policy by not sending food with restricted ingredients. Also, we ask families to be mindful of the potential for cross-contamination during food preparation and to take measures to avoid it.

#### **2. Can I send homemade treats to school to be shared with the rest of the class for my child's birthday?**

No. While you may send homemade food to school for your own child, it is not appropriate to for students to share or trade food in the classroom or the cafeteria.

#### **3. Is St. John's Academy a "Peanut Free" school?**

While SJA strives to keep peanuts and tree nut products out of the school, it cannot guarantee it and recognizes that, despite everyone's best efforts, these products will likely still be brought in on occasion. SJA does not want to run the risk of fostering a complacent atmosphere; therefore, SJA makes no claim to be "peanut free" or even "peanut safe."