



HAWTHORNE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

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Guidelines for Managing Students with Food Allergies

Food allergies can be life threatening. As a result of this, accidental exposure to foods must be reduced in the school setting. It is the desire of Hawthorne Christian Academy to partner with parents and students to ensure a safe educational environment for students with food allergies. This is a shared responsibility between the family, the school and the student. While it is not reasonable to expect a completely food allergy free environment at Hawthorne Christian Academy, when all parties work together, the risk of accidental exposure can be greatly reduced.

Definitions:

Food Allergy – A food allergy is any reaction to an otherwise harmless food or food component that involves the body's immune system. A reaction occurs when the body's immune system responds abnormally to a particular food. The body reacts by flooding the system with histamines and other chemicals to fight off what is perceived as an invader in the body. Reactions to food or food ingredients that do not involve the immune system are called food intolerance or sensitivities.

Anaphylaxis – A life-threatening hypersensitivity reaction. Anaphylaxis refers to a collection of symptoms affecting multiple systems in the body, the most dangerous of which are breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which are potentially fatal.

The following guidelines have been set forth at Hawthorne Christian Academy in order to reduce the risk to students with severe and/or life threatening food allergies.

Family Responsibility

- Notify the school nurse of the child's allergies including a list of the food contacts to be avoided.
- Work with the school to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school including in the classroom, at the lunch tables, in after care programs and on the school bus.
- Provide written medical documentation, instructions and medications as directed by a physician licensed to practice in the State of New Jersey.
- Provide properly labeled medications and **replace medications after use or upon expiration.**
- Educate the child in the self-management of their food allergy including:
 - ☐ safe and unsafe food
 - ☐ strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods
 - ☐ symptoms of allergic reactions
 - ☐ how and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy-related problem
 - ☐ how to read food labels (age appropriate)
- Review policies/procedures with the school staff, the child's physician, and the child (if age appropriate) after a reaction has occurred.
- Provide emergency contact information.

School Responsibility

- Review health records submitted by parents and physicians.
- Identify a core team of people, including but not limited to, the school nurse, teacher, and principal to work with parents and the student (age appropriate) to establish a prevention plan.
- Provide training for all school staff once yearly regarding food allergies to include the definition of a food allergy, most common food allergens, common symptoms of a reaction and what to do in an emergency. The training will also include the proper use and administration of an EpiPen.
- Endeavor to eliminate the use of food allergens in the classroom. Food allergens should not be used as educational tools or in arts and crafts projects and should not be used as incentives.
- Provide an “allergy free” table in the lower school for students with severe food allergies.
- Ensure that medications are stored properly in the health office and are easily accessible to school personnel. Students should be allowed to carry their own epinephrine, if age appropriate and after approval from the students physician, parent and school nurse, as allowed by the State of New Jersey.
- Ensure that there is a staff member available who is properly trained to administer medications during the school day and during after school care.
- Review policies/prevention plan with core team members, parents, student (age appropriate)-after a reaction has occurred.
- Teachers will require hand washing before and after food is eaten, as well as the student’s desk, in the Lower School to minimize the transfer of allergens.
- Discuss field trips with the family of the food allergic student to decide appropriate strategies for managing the food allergy while away from school. Lower School field trips require a parent to accompany a student with an EpiPen or with needed extra medical attention.

Student Responsibility

- Should take food allergies seriously. Students should not joke or tease other students about allergies.
- Should not trade food with others and should only eat food brought from home.
- Should not eat anything with unknown ingredients or that is known to contain any allergen.
- Should be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions as is age appropriate.
- Should notify an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic.
- Should notify an adult immediately if they begin to feel symptoms of an allergic reaction due to possible exposure in the classroom or other area of the school.
- Should always wash hands before and after eating.

These guidelines have been adapted from the document, “School Guidelines for Managing Students with Food Allergies” developed in coordination with the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of School Nurses, the National School Boards Association, the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network and the American School Food Service Association.