

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY

LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES

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Signature of Chair: _____

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I. BACKGROUND

- The prevalence of reported food allergies has continued to increase significantly over the last several years. It is reported that the incidence of peanut allergy over the last five years has doubled in children.¹ In 2003, it was reported that there were approximately 2 million school-age children with food allergies.² Those with a diagnosed food allergy are at significant risk of anaphylaxis, a life-threatening allergic reaction. In a study by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health there were 374 reported cases of anaphylactic reactions requiring the use of an EpiPen in the schools of the Commonwealth between September 2001 and May 2005.³
- In October 2002, the Massachusetts Department of Education joined the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (AAAAI) in recommending that all schools have in place a system to identify children with life-threatening allergies (LTA) and be prepared in the school workplace to deal with life-threatening allergic reactions. Education of all staff in life-threatening allergy awareness is the cornerstone of this initiative.

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- In order to minimize the incidence of life-threatening allergic reactions, the Lexington Public Schools (LPS) will maintain a system-wide response plan to address life-threatening reactions and maintain an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) for any student whose parent/guardian, primary care physician or board certified allergist has informed the principal of a school in writing that the student has a life-threatening allergy.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGY POLICY

The Lexington Public Schools (LPS) will:

¹ Sicherer MD, Scott, et al. "Prevalence of peanut and tree nut allergy in the United States ...A 5 year follow-up study," Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. December 2003.

² Munos-Furlong, A. "Daily Coping Strategies for Patients and Their Families". *Pediatrics*. 2003 111:1654-1661.

³ McIntyre RN, PhD, Lynn, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Report on EpiPen Administration in Schools.

- 1 **A.** Provide life-threatening allergy awareness education and EpiPen training for all LPS employees
2 based on Department of Public Health (DPH) and Department of Education (DOE)
3 recommendations, including but not limited to:
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- 5 **1.** the significance of LTAs and a discussion on the most common food, stinging insect,
6 latex, and medication allergies,
 - 7 **2.** how to create a safe environment for students with LTAs,
 - 8 **3.** the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis,
 - 9 **4.** what an EpiPen is and how to use it, and
 - 10 **5.** how to activate the Emergency Response System (ERS), i.e., nurse and 911 Emergency
11 Medical Services (EMS), to deal with an actual, suspected, or potential anaphylactic
12 reaction.
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- 14 **B.** At the elementary school level during the school day, all schools will require that any parties and
15 celebrations be food free. The use of food for curriculum instruction or special luncheons during
16 the school day will be restricted to approval by the principal. The use of food as a reward in any
17 classroom will be eliminated.
- 18 **C.** The principal or designee in each school will implement a “No Food or Utensil Sharing” practice,
19 with particular focus at the elementary school level.
- 20 **D.** Each elementary school, as reasonably appropriate, will provide a peanut free/tree-nut free table in
21 the cafeteria. Reasonable efforts will be made for such table to become “free” of other allergens
22 as deemed needed for an individual student through documentation from the student’s primary
23 care physician or board certified allergist. At the middle and high schools appropriate
24 accommodations will be made as needed.
- 25 **E.** The risk involved in allowing students of elementary and middle school age to make unsupervised
26 food choices at bake sales is recognized; therefore, no bake sales will be permitted at elementary
27 or middle schools during the school day. Bake sales conducted outside the school day are limited
28 to those at which only adults are allowed to purchase products.
29 At the high school level, the sale of food products as a fundraiser will be at the discretion of the
30 principal.
- 31 **F.** At the elementary school level, when a student’s medical need to be in an LTA-free environment
32 is clearly documented by a board certified allergist, and clear directions from the allergist are
33 provided, LPS will make reasonable efforts to create LTA-free classrooms for the student. LPS
34 reserves the right to consult with a board certified allergist of its choice to review the
35 recommendation to determine if it will authorize its implementation.
- 36 **G.** Each school’s Crisis Management Plan will include how to respond to an anaphylactic reaction
37 (life-threatening allergic reaction). This plan will be reviewed annually by each building principal
38 and will be part of all LTA-awareness training.
- 39 **H.** Each school will develop and maintain an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) for any student
40 identified with a life-threatening allergy in collaboration with the student’s parent/guardian and
41 primary care physician or board certified allergist.
- 42 **I.** The LPS will maintain records of any life-threatening allergic reaction, the use of an EpiPen, and
43 the call for medical assistance by calling 911. LPS will report all such LTA reactions to the
44 Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), according to department regulations and
45 protocol.
- 46 **J.** Because of the confidentiality of medical records, a student’s parent/guardian has the
47 responsibility for notifying school bus drivers directly of any life threatening allergies of which
48 the bus driver should be aware.

- 1 **K.** For any event outside of the regular school day which is neither sponsored by LPS nor part of the
2 LPS curriculum, the sponsor of such event is responsible for assuring that appropriate provisions
3 concerning LTA's of participants are in place.
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6 **II. EMPLOYEE/CONTRACTOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION**
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- 8 **A.** Life-threatening allergy (LTA) awareness training will be required of all teachers, aides, tutors,
9 secretaries, and student teachers in the school system.
10 **B.** The custodial staff either will be included in staff LTA-awareness training or will be offered
11 informational sessions on life-threatening allergies by the building principal.
12 **C.** All substitute teachers contracted by the LPS will receive LTA-awareness training, following the
13 LPS curriculum. No substitute will be employed in the system who has not received this training.
14 The Director of Human Resources will be responsible for ensuring that contracted services
15 provide LTA-awareness training to substitute teachers.
16 **D.** Food-service personnel contracted by LPS will be given building-based LTA-awareness training
17 annually.
18 **E.** The LPS Business Office will offer to our contracted bus drivers the opportunity for LTA-
19 awareness training annually, and will encourage their participation.
20 **F.** Principals or their designees will be responsible to schedule LTA-awareness training in their
21 schools and to ensure that all appropriate employees are trained.
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