

ANCS Allergy Management Policy

Purpose

Food allergies and other severe allergies can cause anaphylaxis and can be life-threatening. The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe and allergy-friendly learning environment for allergic students and their families and to reduce the risk of accidental exposure in the school environment. Communication, education, and cooperation are the key factors for keeping allergic students safe.

Children with food allergies or intolerances experience food situations in a very different way than a child who can safely eat any food. Foods can be life-threatening, or they can make a child very sick. What others take for granted, a food allergic child must always question in order to be safe. As a result, the child's health, social activities, celebrations, holidays, and activities can be greatly impacted or even impaired. An allergic child can easily feel left-out, different from everyone else, afraid or worried, depressed, and angry or frustrated. Sometimes, their bodies just don't feel right.

ANCS promotes a safe and respectful learning environment for its students. Safety and respect extend to all children, including those with special needs such as food allergies. A food allergic child should feel safe and should physically have a safe place that is allergen-free, if the allergies are severe. Food intolerances, while not life-threatening, can cause illness and should also be taken seriously.

In addition, ANCS has students with other severe allergies, such as insect bite or sting allergies. Insect bite and sting allergies can also be life-threatening and greatly impact a child's comfort and safety outdoors.

Allergy awareness and education are the best precautions ANCS can take against a child having a severe allergic reaction. For example, managing food allergies requires thinking about food in a different way. It requires our school to have some guidelines and processes in place that ensure the safety and care of every ANCS student. The documents *ANCS Allergy Management Guidelines for Elementary Parents and Staff* and *ANCS Allergy Management Guidelines for Middle School Parents and Staff* outline those guidelines and cover the following questions:

- What are allergies and intolerances?
- How does ANCS manage epinephrine auto-injectors and related medications at school? Who administers them? What happens if a student's auto-injectors are misplaced or lost?
- What are the classroom protocols for handling allergies?
- How are allergies managed in the cafeteria, during After School, in Enrichment Programs, and during child-care? What about school-wide events, food sales, and sports clubs?
- How does ANCS handle allergy bullying?
- How does ANCS keep current about food allergy best practices and policies?
- Where can staff and parents find useful resources about food allergies?

These documents are available for all ANCS staff and allergic families.

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Duration

This policy is permanent, but subject to review annually or when new medical information is brought forth to a school administrator or the governing Board.

Policy

This section outlines the general allergy management policy for ANCS. Separate guidelines specific to the elementary and middle school campuses explain how to implement these policies on a day-to-day basis.

[Link to *ANCS Allergy Management Guidelines for Elementary Parents and Staff* and *ANCS Allergy Management Guidelines for Middle School Parents and Staff*]

Being Prepared and Educated

Education and preparedness are necessary to keep an allergic student safe at school and at school-sponsored events. Severe allergies can be triggered by the following allergens:

- Food
- Insect stings and bites
- Chemicals
- Latex
- Other, less common allergens

Epinephrine must be readily available and on-hand immediately for all severely allergic children. ANCS can stock non-specifically prescribed epinephrine auto-injectors for emergency use. ANCS staff are responsible for making sure a student's epinephrine auto-injector (such as EpiPen or Auvi-Q) is with the student at all times. ANCS staff are responsible for using epinephrine when anaphylaxis is suspected, either in a child with a known allergy or in a child that is experiencing a severe and life-threatening allergic reaction for the first time.

All ANCS staff must be trained in and fully understand the following procedures:

- Understand these terms: allergy, allergic reaction, anaphylaxis, food intolerance, epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPen, Auvi-Q, Adrenaclick, etc.), and antihistamine.
- Recognize the signs of a mild allergic reaction.
- Know the signs of anaphylaxis—a serious, life-threatening allergic reaction:
 - Hives
 - Swelling
 - Rash
 - Itchy lips, mouth, or throat
 - Breathing difficulties
 - Coughing and hoarseness
 - Nausea or stomach pain
 - Vomiting
 - Chest pains or tightness
 - Headache
 - Dizziness
 - Low blood pressure
 - Unconsciousness

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- Know when and how to use an epinephrine auto-injector to treat anaphylaxis.
- Follow the procedure for administering epinephrine and calling 911. Time is critical.
 1. Notice the child has signs of anaphylaxis.
 2. Administer the epinephrine auto-injector.
 3. Call 911. Have another adult call 911 while the auto-injector is being given, if at all possible.
 4. If the child is asthmatic and is wheezing, give the child the doctor-prescribed number of puffs from their rescue inhaler.
 5. If the child can take Benadryl and the child's doctor has indicated it, administer Benadryl.
 6. Monitor the child **very** closely until the paramedics arrive. A second injection might be necessary. Never leave the child alone or alone with only a student.
 7. Contact the school nurse as soon as possible **after** the injection. If the nurse can't be located, contact any administrative staff.
 8. Contact the child's parents or guardians.
- Store and carry medicines—such as epinephrine auto-injectors, antihistamines, and asthma inhalers—in designated spots.
- Report when medications are lost or misplaced.

Parents and guardians must also take the following steps:

- Notify the school that a child has an allergy or multiple allergies. Request a meeting with teachers and the school nurse. ANCS requires such a meeting to review the student's specific allergies, needs, and *Allergy or Anaphylaxis Action Plan*.
- Complete and provide all required ANCS paperwork, including:
 - *Clinic Record & Emergency Authorization Form* (online orientation form)
 - *Medication Administration and Release Form* (two total: one online orientation form and one paper form from school nurse)
 - A doctor-signed *Allergy or Anaphylaxis Action Plan* (obtained from the school nurse or the student's allergist or pediatrician; requires a doctor's signature)
- Provide the child's prescribed medications and epinephrine auto-injectors.

Managing Allergies in the Classroom

Guidelines should be set up and followed at both the elementary and middle school campuses to ensure that day-to-day classroom activities are safe for allergic children. These guidelines must cover topics, such as:

- Classroom and advisory communication
- How all food and other allergens are managed in the classroom, grade levels, and advisories
- Epinephrine auto-injector and medicine storage
- Hygiene and safety best practices and logistics
- How students treat peers with allergies

With input provided from the allergic student's parents/guardians, school nurse, and teachers, each classroom also has the option to ban severe allergens from the classroom and from all activities in which that classroom will be engaged. Limiting allergen exposure is vital for keeping a child safe.

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In addition, *all* classrooms and staff must abide by the same guidelines for each allergic child, including:

- Related Arts
- Classrooms in which other subjects are taught
- Academic Assistance
- Special Education

All student and substitute teachers must follow classroom guidelines, as well.

Managing Allergies at School-wide Food Sales and Functions

All fund-raising events and school-wide food sales must follow current school fund-raising policies, which include notifying school officials in a timely manner of what food will be sold or available. Whether the event is through a classroom, organization, or the PTCA, all guidelines must be followed for making the event safe for allergic children.

Managing Allergies in the Cafeteria and During Recess

The school cafeterias and recess time must be safe for allergic students, but allergy management can be challenging in these areas with less teacher and staff monitoring and where food is more readily accessible and shared. Guidelines must provide rules for making these areas safe, including defining:

- Allergen-free areas to eat
- Where epinephrine auto-injectors and other medications should be kept for rapid access
- Cleaning best practices for tables and chairs and hand-washing
- Student etiquette for sharing food
- Methods for obtaining and keeping current served food labels and ingredients information

Managing Allergies for Holidays, Special Occasions, Celebrations, and Projects

Holidays, special occasions and celebrations, class projects, crafts, and science experiments must also be safe for allergic students. ANCS does not wish to ban these celebrations and activities or ban food involvement. However, it is critical that guidelines are followed and that the each allergic child's allergies are taken into consideration for these events and projects, even when related to academics. Any banned allergens may not be served during these times.

Managing Allergies During After School, Enrichment Programs, and Child-care

Allergic students participate in other school-sponsored care and should feel safe and have the same procedures in place to manage allergies as in the classroom. All After School and Enrichment Program staff must be made aware of allergic students in their care and must follow all prescribed classroom guidelines, as well.

A copy of each allergic child's *Allergy or Anaphylaxis Action Plan* must be given to these staff members.

The guidelines must cover the following topics:

- Where medications are stored and how they follow the child
- Where forms are stored
- How and when to administer epinephrine auto-injectors

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Managing Allergies on Field Trips, Walks, and Outside Activities

All of the same precautions must be taken on a field trip or outside of the school building as are taken in the school. Special care and guidelines must also be taken that address the following:

- Where epinephrine auto-injectors and other medication are carried and by whom
- Transportation logistics—whether by foot, bus, or cars
- How to access emergency care at the trip or activity location
- Consideration of allergens when choosing trips

School-organized Sports and Clubs

Epinephrine must be available to all allergic students participating in ANCS sports or clubs. The ANCS sports team staff and coaches must be trained the same as ANCS staff and must be able to administer epinephrine and call 911. Guidelines specific to how sports and clubs are run at each campus should outline the daily responsibilities.

Preventing Allergy Bullying

ANCS anti-bullying and discipline policies are in full effect for allergy bullying. Severe allergies are life-threatening; no bullying will be tolerated. Campus-specific guidelines can address student allergy awareness and support.

Continuing Allergy Education and Awareness

Food allergies are increasing rapidly in school-age children all over the world. Schools and parents must be more aware and educated about the impact of allergies and how to handle them in public environments. ANCS will stay current with allergy management best practices and guidelines through the following means:

- Information the school nurse provides
- Information the PTCA Health and Wellness Committee researches and presents
- Listening to parents and caretakers of allergic children
- Staff training

Specific-campus guidelines will contain up-to-date allergy management and education resources.

Approval

Policy approval date:

Policy effective date:

Policy review date: