

# Guidelines for Managing Students with Severe Food Allergies

Severe food allergies can be life threatening. The risk of accidental exposure to food allergens can be reduced in the school setting if schools partner with students, parents, and physicians to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for severely food-allergic students.

The St. Vrain Valley School District recognizes the growing number of students enrolling in our schools with potentially life-threatening food allergies. As public educators, we recognize our responsibility to develop appropriate health plans for students with food allergies which detail emergency treatment while proactively addressing conditions to prevent exposure to specific allergens.

The St. Vrain Valley School District believes a collaborative partnership between school and family, with guidance from medical professionals, is the best way to achieve this goal while thoughtfully increasing the student's independence to care for him or herself. While the medical and health-related needs are unique for each child, the intention of these guidelines is to establish a clear systemic resource to plan and develop an individualized health plan which best meets individual students' needs.

The St. Vrain Valley School District cannot guarantee that a student will never experience an allergy related event while at school. Because the school district is committed to student safety, the district has created these guidelines to reduce the risk of children with life threatening food allergies experiencing an allergy-related event.

In some cases, a student's allergies may rise to the level of a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"). *In such circumstances, refer to Appendix A: Federal Laws, for more information on the 504 Plan.*

In St. Vrain Valley School District, we believe there is a school community, made up of staff from various departments, who are involved and have a stake in an allergic child's safety. The family and the student have a large role and responsibility in collaborating with the school community and creating a safe environment for all students involved.

The purpose of this document is to provide information regarding the roles and responsibilities of the various key stakeholders within the school community and family.

## St. Vrain Valley School District Health Care Action Plans

A 504 Plan will be developed when a student is identified as having a disability under Section 504. A St. Vrain Valley School District Individualized Health Plan (IHP) or Allergy & Anaphylaxis IHP should be completed when a student has significant food allergies that require a medical response if exposed to the allergen. In most cases, the IHP will address the precautionary needs of the severely allergic student, as well as state the proper treatment procedures if the student becomes symptomatic and list all accommodations. The IHP is attached to the 504 plan and must be reviewed annually. *Refer to Appendix B: District Plans for more information on an Individualized Health Plan (IHP) and Allergy & Anaphylaxis IHP.*

# Guidelines for Managing Students with Severe Food Allergies

## Family's Responsibility

- Notify the appropriate school staff, usually the principal and nurse, of the child's allergies prior to the first day of attendance, preferably in the spring preceding the school year. Allow sufficient time to secure physician signatures on all necessary forms, including the medication administration form.
- Establish and work with the school team, which may consist of the principal, district nurse, classroom teacher, counselor, cafeteria staff, custodial staff, transportation department and others, to develop and implement the appropriate Individualized Health Plan (IHP), that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school year. This plan may include the child's daily needs in the classroom, in the cafeteria, in before or after-care programs, during school-sponsored activities and on the school bus.
- May provide a letter from a health care provider that states your child's diagnosis, history and severity of allergic reactions and medically advisable accommodations.
- May provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a physician using the appropriate health care plan. A photo of the child with this information is recommended.
- Must provide properly labeled medications and replace medications after use or upon expiration. At the end of the school year, pick up medications.
- May provide a list of foods/ingredients to avoid, if desired.
- May review supplies with teacher to ensure they are non-allergenic. Play-dough, finger paint, art projects, science chemicals, and cleaning solutions can all contain food allergens. Parents will provide personal supplies for the child.
- Will provide emergency contact information. Include authorization (consent) for St. Vrain Valley District staff to consult with the student's healthcare provider regarding prevention and treatment.
- Educate the child in age appropriate self-management of their food allergy including:
  - q Safe and unsafe foods
  - q Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods
  - q Symptoms of allergic reactions
  - q How and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy-related problem
  - q How to read food labels (age appropriate)
  - q Review lunch menu together and contact Nutrition Services Director for ingredient listings
  - q No sharing/trading food
  - q No accepting food from anyone unless designated by family.
- Should a reaction occur, review policies/procedures with the school staff, the child's physician, and the child (if age appropriate) following the incident.
- Provide safe meals for lunchtime/snack time should the family determine the cafeteria menu is not safe or the likelihood of accidental exposure is too great. This includes when other parents provide birthday treats, party treats, etc.
- Strongly consider participating in the classroom as a volunteer and/or room parent to organize parties where food may be present.
- Students with life threatening food allergies should be introduced to the bus driver.
- Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to contact the field trip site to ask any questions pertinent to the child's medical needs.
- Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the field trip to assist.

# Guidelines for Managing Students with Severe Food Allergies

## Student's Responsibility

- When age appropriate, attend the Individualized Health Plan and/or 504 Plan meetings so that self-advocacy and food allergy knowledge will continue to increase with age.
- Agree to not share/trade food with others.
- Agree to not eat anything with unknown ingredients or with a known allergen.
- Agree to be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies/intolerance and reactions based on their developmental level. This may include educating their classmates on their limitations.
- Notify an adult immediately if they eat something believed to contain a food allergen.
- Notify an adult immediately if they believe they are experiencing an allergic reaction.
- Once they are approved to self-carry, agree to follow their Self-Carry Contract.
- Students must carefully monitor their food (and likely provide own food) when participating in situations such as athletic events, student sales, celebrations or off-campus trips.

## District Responsibilities

- Be knowledgeable about and in compliance with applicable federal laws including Senate Bill 09-226, ADA, IDEA, Section 504 and FERPA and any state laws and regulations and district policies that apply. *Refer to Appendix A for more information on SB 09-226.*
- Create/review/update district policies and procedures regarding how to properly manage severely allergic students for affected schools in the district to follow.
- Review policies/procedures/training on a periodic basis to those in the student's educational environment to ensure the student's needs are being met.
- If the parent/student believes the 504 Plan/IHP denies FAPE or is discriminatory, the district must ensure the parent/student is aware of the district's grievance policy.

## School's Responsibility

- Be knowledgeable about and in compliance with applicable federal laws including Senate Bill 09-226, ADA, IDEA, Section 504, and FERPA and any state laws or district policies that apply. *Refer to Appendix A for more information on SB 09-226.*
- Determine if child is eligible for a 504 Plan.
- Appropriate Plan(s) must be reviewed at least on an annual basis.
- Inform and educate teachers as far in advance as possible that they will be teaching a student with severe food allergies.
- Assure that all staff that interacts with the student directly understands food allergy, can recognize symptoms, and knows what to do in an emergency.
- Ensure that students with severe allergic/food intolerance are included in all school activities to the extent that reasonable accommodations can be made to provide for their safety. Students should not be excluded from school activities solely based on their food allergy, nor asked to stay home for a day when a school activity involving food is occurring.
- Discourage students from sharing/trading food at lunch.

# Guidelines for Managing Students with Severe Food Allergies

## **Recess, Lunch, Child Care and/or After-School Activity Responsibilities**

- Support staff will participate in team meetings and/or be included in communications to determine how to implement the IHP should the student with life threatening food allergies choose to participate in childcare or after school events.
- Identified personnel may maintain a copy of the IHP and photo (if provided) of student(s) with life threatening allergies with parent/guardian permission.
- 1-2 persons should be available who have been trained in the administration of emergency medications.
- Post all EMS or 911 procedures.
- Allergen-free tables can be established in any SVVSD school cafeteria. Special sanitation buckets and cleaning cloths are used for washing those specific tables.
- If an allergy free table is included in the child's IHP, clearly designate and communicate the allergen-free table(s) to all students and school workers on an ongoing basis (such as 'peanut-free' or 'milk-free' table). Optional, not required for child with food allergies:
  - Thoroughly clean all tables, chairs and floors after each meal.
  - Maintain special sanitation buckets and cleaning cloths that are used for washing allergen-free specific tables.
  - Maintain fresh hospital grade cleaner, #6 Arsenal Vindicator and PH7 all-purpose soap as effective cleaning solutions.
- After school or before school activities sponsored by the school and/or hosted by school programs should follow school practices/procedures.

## **Principal and Site Responsibilities**

- The school principal shall be supportive of staff and parents in the development and implementation of an Individualized Health Plan (IHP).
- The school principal shall ensure the provision and/or implementation of emergency communication devices (walky-talky, cell phones, etc.) for all school activities.

## **District Nurse Responsibilities**

- Once the school/district is notified by the parent or guardian that their child has a life threatening food allergy, develop and write an Individualized Health Plan in collaboration with the student's parent/guardian and primary care provider. This plan will be amended as needed and reviewed at least annually. The health plan will be shared with appropriate staff, as determined by the district nurse, health clerk, parent/guardian and school administrator.
- Conduct trainings, individual or group, regarding food allergy management in the school/classroom, including but not limited to, symptom recognitions and emergency response including medication administration. Staff to be trained will be identified and training schedule developed.
- Train and delegate medication administration in compliance with the Colorado Nurse Practice Act and St. Vrain Valley School District Medication Administration Policy and regulations.

# Guidelines for Managing Students with Severe Food Allergies

- If the parent refuses to agree to the plan (sign) even though the rest of the team has reached consensus, the District will consider the plan as “drafted”, implement the plan as written and allow the student’s attendance.
- Provide ongoing supervision of staff members trained and/or delegated to administer medication.
- Participate in the development of a 504 Plan, when indicated by the school team.
- Train staff in the student’s educational environment to recognize/identify signs of an allergic reaction and how to respond to a life threatening allergic reaction, including administration of epinephrine. The district school nurse will lead this training.
- Maintain training documents for 5 years (Attendance sign-in sheets, training materials, forms, etc.).

## Health Clerk Responsibilities

- Provides proper storage, availability of medications and documentation of medication administration in accordance with state regulations and St. Vrain Valley School District policy.
- Review Individualized Health Plan annually (prior to first day of new school year) and ensure that information related to severely food allergic child has been disseminated to the appropriate staff.
- Maintain easy access to the prescribed emergency medications.
- For field trips, the child’s medicine bag is prepared by the health clerk. Medicine bag must follow the child everywhere on the trip.
- Notify parents when medications expire.
- Notify district nurse when field trips are scheduled.
- In the absence of accompanying parents/guardian/family members or school health clerk, a trained staff member must be assigned the task of watching out for the student’s welfare and for handling any emergency while on a field trip.

## Teacher’s Responsibilities

- Review the Individualized Health Plan (IHP) for any student(s) in your classroom with life threatening food allergies.
- Participate in emergency response and medication training.
- When appropriate, and with permission of student and parent, and in collaboration with district nurse, conduct a lesson about severe allergies for the students the child comes in contact with during a normal school day.
- Keep IHP with photo (if provided) in an accessible format/location for substitutes.
- Substitutes may or may not be trained to administer emergency epinephrine and emergency medications; substitutes will be informed on who to contact to assist in an emergency.
- Collaborate with the parent/guardian/family of the student with life-threatening allergies to develop a relationship that is mutually supportive and beneficial.
- Encourage and adopt a planned, proactive schedule of classroom celebrations and/or non-allergenic food rewards.
- When organizing class parties and special events, consider non-food treats.

# Guidelines for Managing Students with Severe Food Allergies

- When a student exhibits symptoms or an allergic reaction, ensure there is always an escort with allergic child.
- Act as field trip coordinator:
  - Collaborate with the district nurse, school health clerk and parents, prior to planning a field trip.
  - Plan proactively for risk-avoidance before, during and after the field trip.
  - Ensure emergency medications (and instructions) are taken on field trip and remain with student at all times.
  - In the absence of accompanying parents/guardians/family members or school health clerk, a trained staff member must be assigned the task of watching out for the student's welfare and for handling any emergency while on the field trip.

## Department of Nutrition Service Staff Responsibilities

- Attend annual training and learn to recognize symptoms of food allergy reactions and learn role as a responder.
- Know and follow protocol for maintaining an allergen-free table in the cafeteria if included in child's IHP.
- Know and follow protocol for safe food preparation, handling and service of food to avoid cross-contamination.
- SVVSD Department of Nutrition Services can be contacted to provide additional information at (303) 682-7251.
- School menus are posted online monthly and can be accessed through the [SVVSD Department of Nutrition Services: http://www.stvrain.k12.co.us/parents/schoolLunches](http://www.stvrain.k12.co.us/parents/schoolLunches) Ingredient lists available upon request.

## Custodian's Responsibilities

- Will make product information available upon request.
- Attend all necessary training according to the student's IHP.
- Individualized Health Plans may require more frequent cleaning of tabletops, chairs, desks which should be specified in the plan and specific to the student's sensitivity (e.g. before assemblies, emergency response to littering or spills). The IHP will specify who is responsible for cleaning.

## District Transportation Responsibilities

- Bus drivers are notified of child with food allergies and provided with a copy of the IHP including name, picture (if provided) and food allergy information. This document should be kept in a safe place and shared with drivers who may substitute for primary driver and/or shared with team leaders.
- Provide annual training for all school bus drivers on managing life-threatening allergies. Ensure that bus drivers of children with food allergies have knowledge on recognizing symptoms of an allergic reaction and how to respond to a life threatening reaction, which may include administration of epinephrine if indicated in IHP.

# Guidelines for Managing Students with Severe Food Allergies

Many thanks to the committee members who gave their time to provide research and contribute to discussions and revisions to the final document.

Shelly Allen, St. Vrain Valley Nutrition Services  
Dr. Karen Andrews, Allergist  
Kathleen Bahe, Director Boulder Allergy Kids  
Robin Chalker, ACL Advocate  
Jody Clair, Transportation Department  
Shelley Humble, Second Grade Teacher  
Ardis Plaster, Parent  
Mike O'Donnell, Elementary Principal  
Angie Nordstrum, Director, Boulder Allergy Kids  
Belinda Strickland, St. Vrain Valley District Nurse Coordinator  
Jackie Whittington, St. Vrain Valley Student Services  
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## Resources/Acknowledgements

American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology: [www.acaai.org](http://www.acaai.org)

Boulder Allergy Kids Organization  
*Research and Development of Guidelines*  
[www.boulderallergykids.com](http://www.boulderallergykids.com)

Boulder Valley Asthma and Allergy Clinic  
Dr. S. Allan Bock,  
*Clinical Professor of Pediatrics CU Health Sciences Center*  
*Board Certified in Allergy and Immunology and Pediatrics*  
3950 Broadway  
Boulder, CO 80304

Celiac Disease Awareness Campaign, National Institutes of Health (NIH): [www.celiac.nih.gov](http://www.celiac.nih.gov)

Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN)  
*School Food Allergy Program*  
[www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)

The following organizations participated in the development of FAAN's portion included in this document:

American School Food Service Association  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of School Nurses  
National School Boards Association  
The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network

National School Boards Association  
168 Duke Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone: (703) 838-6722  
Fax: (703) 683-7590  
Email: [info@nsba.org](mailto:info@nsba.org)

National Jewish Health  
1400 Jackson St.  
Denver, CO 80206  
Email: <http://www.nationaljewish.org>

# Guidelines for Managing Students with Severe Food Allergies

## Reference Guidelines

Academy School District 20, Colorado  
Nicole Smith, Director of Allergic Child and SB 09-226 Collaborator

Poudre School District, Colorado  
Catherine Teck, director of I-CAN and SB 09-226 Collaborator

Massachusetts Department of Education Food Allergy  
[www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/allergy.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/allergy.pdf)

Ann Arbor, Michigan

# Guidelines for Managing Students with Severe Food Allergies

## Appendix A – Federal Laws

### 504 Plan

- Section 504 is the part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that guarantees specific rights in federally-funded programs and activities to people who qualify as disabled. Section 504 states: *"No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States...shall, solely by reason of his handicap be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance..."*
- Accommodations under Section 504 are determined by a team of professionals and include the parent(s)/guardian of the child. The eligibility process for Section 504 determination is similar to that of the IDEA.

### ADA Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

<http://www.ada.gov/cguidehttp://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm#anchor65610>

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** <http://www.ada.gov>

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (formerly called P.L. 94-142 or the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975) requires public schools to make available to all eligible children with disabilities a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs.

<http://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm#anchor65310>

**The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):** (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

### Complete Senate Bill 09-226:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/nurSB09-226.pdf>

# Guidelines for Managing Students with Severe Food Allergies

## Appendix B – District Plans

**Individualized Health Plan (IHP):** A health plan setting forth the medical orders, precautions, and accommodations, prepared by the district nurse. The agreed to plan is signed by the parent/guardian, district nurse, and when appropriate, health care provider. The plan is updated on an annual basis.

**Allergy & Anaphylaxis IHP:** This state form is used as a health care plan for some students with life threatening allergy.

**Permission to Medicate Form:** This is the authorization and release form for medication administration.

**Self-Carry Contract/Form:** Both of the IHPs, for asthma and severe allergies, address whether the student may carry and self-administer medication. If this is ordered, the Self-Carry Contract is used to assess the student's knowledge and abilities by the nurse or delegated health clerk.

**St. Vrain Valley School District, Students with Food Allergies Policy:**

File: JLCDA Adopted June 9, 2010 – p.59 of The CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE and BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES.

<http://www.stvrain.k12.co.us/parents/disciplineConductEN.pdf>