



# Food Allergy Policy

**UPDATED 12-14-16, INCLUDED IN FAMILY HANDBOOK**

Students with potentially life-threatening food allergies are welcome members of the Emerson School community. We acknowledge our responsibility to develop a plan for these students, which both details emergency treatment and also proactively addresses conditions to prevent exposure to specific allergens. We believe that school and family should act as a team to protect these children, while also thoughtfully encouraging their independence.

We also take seriously our responsibility to educate our families, teachers, and students about life-threatening food allergies, hoping to create a community that sensitively differentiates strategies for food allergies in the same spirit as we support different learning styles and other health-related student needs.

In order to support our students and families, we put forth the following responsibilities:

## **Student responsibilities:**

- Be responsible, as is appropriate for one's age, as much as possible for avoiding known allergens.
- Wash hands before and after eating.
- Do not trade or share food.
- Recognize the symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- Immediately notify an adult if symptoms or exposure to an allergen occur.

## **Family responsibilities:**

- Notify the school of the child's allergies prior to the start of the school year, or as soon as such allergies are diagnosed, whichever comes first.
- Provide the school with all necessary medical paperwork, including an Allergy Action Plan, prior to the start of the school year.
- Provide the school with at least (2) up-to-date epinephrine auto injectors.
- Work collaboratively with school personnel to educate the school community with respect to food allergies and the potentially life-threatening nature of such allergies. This may include co-writing a letter with the classroom teacher to classroom families.
- Work collaboratively with the school to develop a proactive prevention plan that promotes increasing age-appropriate independence as the student grows and matures.
- Be willing to provide allergen-free snacks for your student to keep in the classroom so there is always something your child can choose from during an unplanned special event.
- Be willing to go on your student's off-campus trips if possible and if requested.

## **School responsibilities:**

- Provide and monitor annual training and education for faculty and staff regarding allergens, emergency procedures, and administration of an epinephrine auto-injector.



- Promote an inclusive, sensitive, and responsive school climate for students with life-threatening allergies.
- Be thoughtful about the use of food as reward, and seek alternatives in order to be as inclusive as possible.
- Inform the family if the student experiences an allergic reaction at school.
- Contact parents in the event that the child forgets or loses his/her lunch.
- Provide all employees and substitutes with a list of students with life-threatening allergies.
- Include ESPO in the educational process and when planning for all-school events and fundraisers.
- Seek to have multiple food options available for students, including allergen-free foods, when food is provided.
- Provide advance notice to all families when food options will be made available, and provide advance information on food allergens.
- Provide allergen-free lunch spaces, and notify other students without allergies that they may sit there only if they are eating a lunch that is free of the given allergen.
- Encourage families to attach a list of ingredients to food they bring to school events.

Emerson School emphasizes that all children, including those with life-threatening food allergies, are welcome to participate in all school activities. Parents/guardians of children with these serious allergies should be aware that circumstances may occasionally occur during school events which present a higher than usual risk level. If possible, parents/guardians should provide supervision during these events to keep the risk level as low as possible. These include, but are not limited to: bake sales, events with international foods, potluck meals, catered meals, and all-school social events.

While Emerson School is unable to guarantee that your student with life-threatening allergies will not be exposed accidentally to his/her allergens in the school environment, we will undertake reasonable efforts to keep his/her risks as minimal as possible. Thank you for sharing information about your child to support us in our efforts. Please contact the school immediately if you have any questions or concerns about plans to accommodate your child's needs.