

## **Winchester Public Schools**

### **Life Threatening Allergy Policy Statement**

It is the policy of the Winchester School Committee (WSC) to insure access to a free and appropriate education for all students within the Town of Winchester. In order to insure full access for all students, the WSC will insure access to Preschool — Grade 12 education for students who present with life threatening allergies (LTAs).

It is the policy of the WSC to establish age appropriate procedures and guidelines for students and schools within the Winchester Public School that minimize the risk for students with life threatening allergies. The procedures and guidelines on LTAs are presented at both the district and school building based levels.

It is the WSC's expectations that both the district and building-based procedures and guidelines will take into account the health needs and well-being of all students without discrimination or isolation of any student. It is also the policy of the WSC that the procedures and guidelines shift as the student advances from preschool to elementary grades and through the secondary grades.

The WSC recognizes that parents have the primary responsibility for the health of their children. It is parents' responsibility to inform the school district when a child's medical condition might affect the child's welfare or safety. The school district will cooperate with parents and appropriate health professionals. Effective communication is vital between all parties.

In order to minimize the risk of students with LTAs to exposure to offending allergens that may trigger a life threatening reaction, the WSC will support LTA procedures and guidelines that include:

- appropriate education of staff to roles and responsibilities,
- building — based general medical emergency plans,
- LTA emergency plans for specific students,
- availability of medical equipment for quick response, and resources for ongoing support and implementation of this policy.

### **Background**

Allergic reactions can result from a variety of causes and can span a wide range of severity of symptoms from mild to life threatening. One of the more severe and potentially life threatening reaction is anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a sudden, severe, potentially fatal, systemic allergic reaction that can involve various areas of the body. Symptoms typically occur within minutes to two hours after contact with the allergen, but in rare instances may occur up to four hours later. People of any age can suffer LTAs, but the most common causes of anaphylaxis in children include allergies to:

- Foods (most commonly peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish)
- Insect stings (yellow jackets, bees, wasps and hornets)
- Medications
- Latex

The Massachusetts Department of Education (MDOE) has established guidelines (“*Managing Life Threatening Food Allergies in Schools*”) that focus on food allergies in the school setting. The guidelines emphasize that the treatment of anaphylaxis is the same regardless of cause.

## **Purpose and Scope**

The Winchester Public Schools cannot guarantee to provide an allergen-free environment for all students with LTAs, or prevent any harm to students in emergencies. The goal is to work towards minimizing the risk of exposure to food allergens that pose a threat to those students, educate the community, maintain and regularly update a system-wide protocol for responding to their needs. A system-wide effort requires the cooperation of all parties within the system.

The goal of the Winchester Public Schools is to engage in a system-wide effort to:

- Prevent any occurrence of LTA reactions
- Prepare for any allergic reactions
- Respond appropriately to any allergy emergencies

In accordance with the following procedures and protocols, an Emergency Allergy Action Plan (EAAP) and an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) will be developed for each student after receipt of written notification from the student’s parent of a physician-diagnosed LTA. Additionally, the school physician has written the standing orders for treatment by the school nurse for individuals with unknown LTAs.

The following procedures and protocols shall be reviewed and updated every two years. Whenever the term “parent” is used in this document, it shall mean the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the student, as applicable.

The sections below highlight the major responsibilities for the various groups, but each child’s plan will be individualized, and therefore, not all responsibilities can be spelled out in this protocol.