

Syosset Central School District

Updated September 15, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As we have begun to implement new procedures concerning food allergies, we are striving to evaluate their effectiveness and clarity. In the interest of this objective, you are receiving a revised food allergy letter and pre-approved birthday snack list.

Many of our students have food allergies that have the potential for a wide-range of reactions from mild (gastro-intestinal discomfort; itchy eyes, nose, and skin) to severe and life-threatening (respiratory and cardiac). The level of sensitivity to allergens varies as well from ingestion of a food item to merely smelling it.

Foods that most commonly cause allergy symptoms in children are peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, eggs, soy, fish, shellfish, wheat, and sesame.

The Syosset Central School District has a strong commitment to keeping students safe and healthy. Over the past year, the District adopted new policies and procedures with the goal of reducing the potential for accidental exposure and maximizing our ability to respond effectively should such an exposure occur. Keeping all our students safe is a shared responsibility, one that will benefit from the cooperation of everyone in the community, whether their own child has an allergy or not.

This fall, the District will begin training its personnel both on food allergies themselves, but also on how to respond in the event of an emergency. Emergency response devices (epinephrine auto-injectors a.k.a. “Epi-Pens”) will be made available in multiple locations in every building. Teachers will discuss with students, in an age appropriate manner, the seriousness of life-threatening allergies and the importance of not sharing or trading snack or party food with classmates.

We recognize that we cannot completely eliminate the potential for accidental exposure, and attempting to do so would create a false sense of security. Nevertheless, we can take steps that reduce the potential for accidental exposure, ensure that all children can participate in group activities, and protect the privacy of each child’s health status. The consistent application of the following guidelines across all elementary schools will best ensure that both of these objectives are met, no matter where in the District a child might live.

Some important highlights are as follows:

- Food should not be used as an instructional incentive or reward. If a school chooses to have birthday celebrations that include food, they should occur no more than once per

month, with other means employed to make students feel special on their actual birthday. During the food-based celebration, the school will establish food choices in advance that include at least one food safe for any student in the class.

- At least one table in each cafeteria will be established for students bringing peanut or tree nut-based lunches (peanut butter, almond butter, peanut containing granola, etc.). Thus every effort will be made to isolate these sometimes airborne allergens, and special cleaning procedures will be used for that table. While this will reduce exposure elsewhere, such efforts cannot ensure that all other tables are free of allergens.
- Each teacher who has a student with a life threatening allergy enrolled in his/her class will keep this information in his/her emergency folder.
- At the secondary schools, each classroom will include chair(s) identified as reduced allergen chairs. Students consuming food with known allergens will be asked to avoid the chairs, and special cleaning procedures will be used on them.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to report a child's life-threatening allergy to their child's school nurse or administrator in order for the School District to accommodate the student within the school environment. Thus, parents are urged to read and become familiar with the newly revised Student Health Services Policy.

Below are some key elements of the section on life-threatening allergies and anaphylaxis management:

- Parent/guardians should teach their allergic child to recognize first symptoms, to communicate these to staff, to not share snacks, lunches, drinks, and utensils
- Upon notification by the parent and/or guardian, a conference may be held to develop an Individual Health Plan (IHP), Emergency Care Plan, or a Section 504 accommodation plan if the student is eligible for an accommodation based on the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Students' life-threatening allergies should be included in the emergency green card for parents/guardians to complete and return to the school.
- A pre-approved snack list will be available on the School District's website and will be distributed to parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year and updated as necessary.

We realize that these new procedures may require some adjustment and we appreciate your patience as we do so.

It is our hope that you and your family enjoy the remaining days of summer. We look forward to a safe and prosperous school year.

Sincerely,

The Syosset Central School District

