



Neighborhood House Charter School Allergy Policy

The Neighborhood House Charter School has adopted the following guidelines and procedures in recognition of the prevalence of allergies and the fact that they can be life-threatening. These guidelines and procedures are designed to do the following:

- 1) Minimize exposure to allergens for individuals with allergies and reduce the likelihood of a severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reaction during school.
- 2) Educate all members of the school community about the risks associated with allergies and how to manage them.
- 3) Ensure that food allergic students are able to participate in all school activities.
- 4) As age-appropriate, build students' ability to assume more individual responsibility for their health as they get older.
- 5) Respond rapidly and effectively in the event of a severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reaction.

Most common allergens:

90% of food related allergies are caused by reactions to 8 specific foods. They are as follows:

- Cow's milk
- Eggs
- Fish
- Peanuts
- Shellfish
- Soy
- Tree nuts, such as cashews or walnuts
- Wheat

Other non-food related allergens can also cause severe or potentially life-threatening reactions. Most commonly these can be caused by insect stings, exposure to latex, and reactions to specific medications.



General:

Annually a document containing the names and photographs of all Neighborhood House students with allergies with a specific list of each student’s allergens will be generated by the school nurse. This list will be distributed to all staff and posted in the dining hall food prep areas, in the nurses’ offices, and in the afterschool program office.

Education and Training:

Neighborhood House Charter School will provide annual education and training to all members of its staff, including afterschool staff. This training will cover prevention, allergen awareness, how to recognize the signs of an allergic reaction, and protocols for what to do in the case of an allergic reaction. All staff members who work directly with students will be trained in how to administer an Epi-Pen.

Individualized Planning:

For each student that has a severe allergy, an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) as well as an Allergy Action Plan (AAP) will be developed by the school nurse in conjunction with the family. A copy of the IHCP and the AAP will be provided to the child’s teachers, and when additional related training is necessary it will be provided.

Dining Hall Protocols:

Food service staff must make reasonable efforts to ensure that food offered to a student is free of life-threatening allergens and to minimize the possibility of cross-contamination. One table in the dining-hall is designated a “nut-free” table. Students with nut allergies may sit at this table and may bring a friend as long as he or she does not have any food potentially containing nuts or traces of nuts. We will expand the designation of the table to include other allergens should a specific student’s allergies necessitate doing so.

All tables in the dining hall are thoroughly cleaned at least once a day with a disinfectant cleaner.

Classroom Protocols:

In all preK – 4th grade classrooms, food sharing is prohibited and students are encouraged to clean their hands before and after eating snacks or meals. For an individual student or students with life-threatening allergies, a specific classroom or classrooms can be designated “allergen free” as necessary in consultation with the school’s Director of Student Services and the school nurse. In this case, the classroom teachers will receive specific training from the school nurse and with input from the family of the food-allergic child. A letter providing notification of allowable foods as well as restrictions will be sent to all families with children in that classroom. Additional classroom-specific protocols regarding the management of food in the classroom will be implemented where appropriate.



Recognizing the increasing independence and capacity of students in grades 5 – 12 to read and monitor food labels, food sharing is not expressly prohibited in these grades and classrooms are less likely to be designated “allergen free.” However, in some cases, for example for children with airborne allergies, this restriction may be implemented at the discretion of the school’s Director of Student Services and the school nurse in consultation with the family of the allergic child. Additional classroom-specific protocols, including notifications to other families, will be implemented where appropriate.

Celebrations:

There are many learning celebrations throughout the year that give families an opportunity to celebrate student learning. Some examples include Kindergarten ‘Bee the Change’ learning celebration, First Grade Tall Tales Living Museum and Second Grade Heroes who Change the World. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend. Individual classroom teachers will also arrange classroom celebrations throughout the year.

No food is allowed into classrooms for celebrations at any time of the year. Classrooms may opt to celebrate student birthdays at the teacher’s discretion; however, **no food may be brought to the classrooms for birthday parties.**

Teachers and Afterschool staff must be mindful of the severity of food-related medical issues, and even if no students in their class or group are known to have such issues, they must obtain approval for any food-related activities from the Principal or Out of School Time Manager and ensure advance consultation with the school nurse.

No food will be provided for students as rewards or incentives. School employees are encouraged to use physical activities (e.g., extra recess, physical education time, etc.) as direct rewards for academic performance and/or good behavior.

Field Trips:

When planning for field trips during the school day or during the afterschool program, teachers and staff will coordinate with the school nurse to ensure that appropriate safety considerations, as outlined by a child’s Allergy Action Plan, are in place. These include but are not limited to plans for carrying an Epi-Pen as needed.

Afterschool:



Snacks provided by the afterschool program will be free of the most common allergens, including peanuts and tree nuts, as will foods that are used for any cooking projects. Parents/guardians are welcome to provide alternative snacks and keep special foods in the Out of School Time Manager's office. Parents/guardians may also request that a student not participate in clubs or activities that involve food.

Emergency Response Protocols:

All staff members supervising students with life-threatening allergies must have a means of communication to call for assistance. In case of a life-threatening allergic reaction, staff members must immediately notify the school nurse or another school staff member trained to administer epinephrine in accordance with 105 CMR 210 and then must call 911. Every effort must be made to notify the child's family as soon as possible. In case on a non-life-threatening allergic reaction, a staff member must call for the school nurse and/or personally escort the student to the nurse's office. A child having an allergic reaction should never be left unattended or sent independently or with another child to seek help.



Epi-Pens:

Both school buildings must maintain a current supply of epinephrine by auto-injector (Epi-Pens) and must comply with Department of Public Health regulations regarding the administration, storage, and record keeping concerning Epi-Pens. The school nurse will annually train all school personnel who work directly with children to administer epinephrine and will inform them regarding the location of the Epi-Pens, which must be maintained in a convenient and unlocked location.

Policies regarding students' self-administration:

The school nurse may permit self-medication of epinephrine by auto-injector when the following requirements are met:

- the student, school nurse and parent/guardian, where appropriate, enter into an agreement which specifies the conditions under which epinephrine by auto-injector may be self-administered;
- the school nurse, as appropriate, develops a medication administration plan (105 CMR 2 10.005(E) which contains only those elements necessary to ensure safe self-administration of the medication;
- the school nurse evaluates the student's health status and abilities and deems self-administration safe and appropriate;
- there is written authorization from the student's parent or guardian that the student may self-administer, unless the student has consented to treatment under M.G.L c. 112, § 12F or other authority permitting the student to consent to medical treatment without parental permission;
- if requested by the school nurse, the licensed prescriber provides a written order for self-administration.