Food Allergy Protection Policy

I. Purpose

Milford Christian Academy recognizes that food allergies can cause serious and potentially life-threatening allergic reactions. The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures to protect students with food allergies, reduce the risk of exposure to known allergens, provide appropriate emergency response, and promote a safe and supportive school environment.

Milford Christian Academy will work cooperatively with students, parents/guardians, healthcare providers, teachers, cafeteria personnel, and other school personnel to minimize the risk of allergic reactions and respond promptly when an allergic reaction occurs.

II. Notification and Documentation

A. Parent/Guardian Responsibility

Parents/guardians of a student with a diagnosed food allergy are responsible for notifying the school of the allergy and providing the school with current medical information.

Parents/guardians shall provide:

1. Written notification of the student's food allergy;
2. The specific allergen(s) and, when known, the severity of the allergy;
3. A current statement or order from the student's licensed healthcare provider;
4. A completed Food Allergy/Anaphylaxis Emergency Action Plan or other school-approved medical plan;
5. Written authorization and instructions for medication, including epinephrine, when applicable;
6. The student's prescribed epinephrine delivery system, when applicable;
7. A backup epinephrine delivery system when required by law;
8. Current emergency contact information; and
9. Any additional information reasonably necessary to protect the student.

Parents/guardians shall promptly notify the school of any changes in the student's allergy, medication, treatment plan, emergency contact information, or healthcare provider instructions.

B. Medical Documentation

A current emergency action plan shall be maintained for each student with a significant food allergy. The plan should identify, as applicable:

- The student's diagnosed allergy;
- Known allergens;
- Signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction;
- Emergency response procedures;
- When epinephrine should be administered;
- Medication and dosage;
- Whether the student may self-administer epinephrine;

- Instructions if the student is unable to self-administer;
- Emergency medical procedures;
- Parent/guardian emergency contacts;
- Healthcare provider contact information; and
- Any necessary accommodations or restrictions.

Medical plans shall be reviewed annually and whenever there is a significant change in the student's medical condition or treatment.

C. Individualized Student Plan

When appropriate, the school will develop an Individualized Food Allergy/Safety Plan for the student. The plan will identify the student's individual needs and reasonable measures to reduce the risk of allergen exposure.

The plan may include:

- Classroom precautions;
- Cafeteria procedures;
- Field trip and extracurricular activity procedures;
- Transportation considerations;
- Medication location and accessibility;
- Staff members responsible for implementing the plan;
- Emergency response procedures;
- Communication procedures;
- Cleaning and sanitation precautions; and
- Procedures for returning to normal activities following an allergic reaction.

The plan shall be shared only with employees and other individuals who have a legitimate need to know in order to protect the student.

III. Medication Management and Epinephrine

A. General Medication Requirements

All medication maintained or administered by the school shall comply with applicable Ohio law, the school's medication procedures, and the written instructions of the student's healthcare provider.

Medication shall be stored in a manner that allows it to be accessed promptly in an emergency while also protecting the medication from unauthorized use.

Medication shall be checked periodically for expiration and replaced as necessary.

B. Student Possession and Self-Administration of Epinephrine

Ohio law permits a student enrolled in a chartered nonpublic school to possess and use an epinephrine delivery system to treat anaphylaxis when the statutory requirements are satisfied.

A student may possess and use prescribed epinephrine at school and at school-sponsored activities when the school has received the documentation required by ORC 3313.718, including:

1. Written approval from the student's prescriber;
2. Written approval from the parent/guardian when the student is a minor;
3. Prescriber documentation that the student is capable of appropriately possessing and using the device and has been trained in its use;
4. Specific instructions regarding when the device should be used;
5. Instructions for school employees if the student cannot administer the medication or does not obtain expected relief;
6. Emergency contact information;
7. Any other special instructions from the prescriber;
8. Copies of the required approvals provided to the principal and, when applicable, the school nurse; and
9. A backup epinephrine delivery system provided to the school by the parent/guardian or student as required by law.

When these requirements have been satisfied, Milford Christian Academy shall permit the student to possess and use the prescribed epinephrine delivery system as authorized by law.

C. Emergency Administration

If a student experiences symptoms of anaphylaxis, school personnel shall follow the student's emergency action plan and applicable school emergency procedures.

Emergency medical services shall be contacted immediately whenever a student uses an epinephrine delivery system at school or a school-sponsored activity, or when a school employee administers epinephrine to a student through a device possessed by the student pursuant to ORC 3313.718.

The school shall notify the student's parent/guardian as soon as reasonably possible following the emergency response.

An incident involving administration of epinephrine shall be documented according to school procedures.

IV. School Environment and Food Safety

Milford Christian Academy will take reasonable measures to reduce students' exposure to known food allergens. Because complete elimination of allergen exposure may not always be possible, the school will focus on reasonable prevention, preparedness, and rapid emergency response.

A. Classrooms

Teachers and staff shall:

- Be informed of students with significant food allergies in their care;
- Follow the student's individualized allergy plan;
- Take reasonable precautions to prevent exposure to identified allergens;
- Avoid using known allergens in classroom activities when the activity could reasonably expose the student;
- Require appropriate handwashing following food-related activities;
- Clean food preparation and eating surfaces appropriately;
- Prevent students from intentionally sharing food;

- Teach students age-appropriate food allergy safety practices; and
- Know how to respond if an allergic reaction occurs.

Classroom food restrictions may be established when necessary to protect a student with a documented, significant allergy. Such restrictions shall be based on the student's individual circumstances and medical documentation rather than a blanket prohibition whenever a more targeted precaution is appropriate.

B. Cafeteria and Food Service

Cafeteria personnel shall:

- Be informed of students' documented food allergies on a need-to-know basis;
- Follow applicable food safety and sanitation requirements;
- Review ingredient information when necessary to identify potential allergens;
- Take reasonable precautions to prevent cross-contact;
- Follow the student's individualized allergy plan;
- Provide appropriate information concerning menu items when requested;
- Avoid representing food as allergen-free unless the school has sufficient information to make that determination; and
- Follow emergency procedures when a student exhibits signs of an allergic reaction.

Ohio's guidance emphasizes collaboration among families, healthcare providers, educators, and cafeteria personnel to reduce exposure risks and ensure students' nutritional needs are appropriately addressed.

C. Food Sharing

Students shall not share food, beverages, utensils, or eating equipment with a student who has a documented food allergy when doing so could create a risk of allergen exposure.

Students shall be taught age-appropriate food allergy safety expectations.

D. School Activities, Field Trips, and Events

Food allergy considerations shall be addressed for:

- Field trips;
- Athletic events;
- Class parties;
- School celebrations;
- After-school programs;
- Overnight activities;
- Off-campus school activities; and
- Other school-sponsored events.

When necessary, the student's emergency medication and individualized allergy plan shall accompany the student.

V. Staff Training and Awareness

Milford Christian Academy will provide appropriate training and information to employees responsible for supervising students with food allergies.

Training may include:

- Understanding food allergies;
- Common food allergens;
- Signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis;
- Prevention of allergic reactions;
- Avoiding allergen exposure;
- Proper use and administration of epinephrine;
- Student self-administration procedures;
- Emergency response procedures;
- Communication and notification procedures; and
- Documentation and follow-up requirements.

Ohio law specifically authorizes training for school staff and age-appropriate instruction for students in kindergarten through grade twelve regarding food allergies and assistance to individuals experiencing allergic reactions. Training may address food allergies, anaphylaxis, prevention, epinephrine administration, and follow-up/reporting procedures.

Staff members who have direct responsibility for a student with a severe food allergy shall receive information necessary to implement the student's individualized plan.

Substitute teachers, volunteers, coaches, cafeteria employees, and other personnel who may supervise the student shall receive appropriate information when their responsibilities require it.

VI. Student Responsibilities

Students with food allergies are expected, as developmentally appropriate, to:

1. Understand their allergy and avoid known allergens;
2. Follow their individualized safety plan;
3. Not share food or eating utensils;
4. Notify an adult immediately if they believe they have been exposed to an allergen or are experiencing symptoms;
5. Carry and use prescribed emergency medication when authorized to self-carry;
6. Follow healthcare provider instructions regarding epinephrine;
7. Participate in age-appropriate allergy education; and
8. Treat classmates with food allergies respectfully and without teasing, bullying, or intentional exposure to allergens.

The school recognizes that younger students may require greater adult assistance and supervision.

VII. School Responsibilities

Milford Christian Academy shall:

1. Maintain a written food allergy protection policy;
2. Develop the policy in consultation with appropriate members of the school community as required by Ohio law;
3. Maintain appropriate medical and emergency documentation;
4. Develop individualized plans when necessary;
5. Communicate relevant information to personnel responsible for student safety;
6. Provide appropriate staff training and education;
7. Establish procedures for emergency response;
8. Ensure appropriate access to prescribed epinephrine;
9. Follow applicable Ohio requirements governing student possession and self-administration of epinephrine;
10. Take reasonable measures to reduce exposure to known allergens;
11. Coordinate, when appropriate, with parents/guardians, healthcare providers, cafeteria personnel, and other school personnel;
12. Document allergic reactions and medication administration according to school procedures;
13. Review allergy plans and procedures annually; and
14. Evaluate and revise procedures following a significant allergic reaction or other incident when appropriate.

VIII. Confidentiality

Information concerning a student's medical condition and food allergy shall be treated as confidential student information.

Information shall be shared only with school employees, volunteers, or other individuals who have a legitimate need to know in order to protect the student or carry out the student's individualized plan.

Students shall not be identified publicly as having a food allergy except when necessary for their safety.

IX. Emergency Response

When a student exhibits signs or symptoms consistent with anaphylaxis:

1. Follow the student's emergency action plan.
2. Administer epinephrine as authorized and directed.
3. Immediately activate emergency medical services when required by Ohio law.
4. Notify the parent/guardian.
5. Do not leave the student unattended.
6. Follow emergency medical personnel's instructions.
7. Document the incident and actions taken.
8. Review the incident and determine whether the student's individualized plan or school procedures should be revised.

Because anaphylaxis can progress rapidly, school personnel should not delay emergency response while attempting to obtain additional information from a parent or guardian.

X. Annual Review

Milford Christian Academy shall review this policy at least annually and revise it as necessary to reflect:

- Changes in Ohio law;
- Changes in school procedures;
- Current medical guidance;
- Lessons learned from allergic reactions or near-miss incidents;
- Changes in emergency medication practices; and
- Recommendations from parents, healthcare providers, school personnel, and other appropriate stakeholders.

Individual student allergy plans shall be reviewed at least annually and whenever updated medical information is received.

XI. Related Forms and Documentation

Milford Christian Academy should maintain the following documents as part of its food allergy management process:

- Food Allergy Notification Form
- Food Allergy/Anaphylaxis Emergency Action Plan
- Individualized Food Allergy/Safety Plan
- Medication Authorization Form
- Epinephrine Self-Carry/Self-Administration Authorization
- Emergency Contact Information
- Epinephrine/Medication Administration Record
- Allergic Reaction Incident Report
- Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment