



SEVERE ALLERGIES & SCHOOL SAFETY

SPEAKING TO SCHOOL STAFF ABOUT FOOD ALLERGY BULLYING

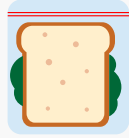
Children with food allergies are vulnerable to bullying at school simply because they cannot eat a certain food. Food allergy bullying negatively impacts a child's social development and self-esteem and can range from verbal teasing to deliberate exposure to a food allergen.¹

There are no national standards for food allergy protocols and policies vary widely between schools.² Parents should speak to their child's teachers and administrators to ensure they are aware of the allergy and knowledgeable about the potentially life-threatening risks caused by food allergy bullying.

School staff are often the first line of defense in creating an allergy-friendly environment, and according to some expert opinions, they can also help parents watch for signs that a student may be dealing with food allergy bullying, including³:



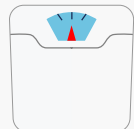
A sudden reluctance or fear of going to school



Not eating at school or bringing home a full lunchbox



Unexplained anxiety or depression



Weight loss



Changes in sleep patterns



Underachievement in school

Many children may not report bullying on their own, often because of concerns it may make the situation worse or fear of retaliation.⁴

To learn more visit [NoAppetiteForBullying.com](https://www.noappetiteforbullying.com) and help raise awareness of the campaign by using [#NoAppetiteforBullying](https://twitter.com/NoAppetiteforBullying).

This content was developed by the No Appetite for Bullying founding partners and represents the views of these groups.

Help Keep Your Child Safe - Tips from NAFB Partners

Tips to Ensure School Staff are Prepared for Food Allergy Bullying & Allergic Emergencies

1 Speak to school staff (teachers, administrators, nurses, etc.):

Discuss ways to develop a school culture of support and respect and encourage staff to speak with students about the severity of food allergies. When children understand why classmates have certain dietary restrictions and that food allergies are potentially life-threatening, they may become more accepting and supportive.

2 Ensure appropriate protocols are in place.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights encourages all schools to make 504 plans for individuals with disabilities and health conditions, including those with life-threatening food allergies.⁵ Parents should work with school officials to ensure a customized plan is developed for their child to ensure a safe school environment, including the higher risks associated with food allergy bullying.

3 Provide a detailed list of food allergens to school staff.

Provide this list at the beginning of the school year for all school staff that may encounter your child. It's also helpful to provide this list to parents of other students so they know what foods to avoid when bringing in snacks for the classroom.

4 Be prepared for an anaphylaxis emergency.

Your pediatrician can help you prepare an anaphylaxis action plan that you can distribute to staff so they know how to properly care for your child during an allergic emergency. In addition, make sure your child is careful about what they eat and ensure they always carry an epinephrine auto-injector at school, if prescribed.



As a school educator, I highly encourage parents of children with life-threatening allergies to speak with school staff about their child. There is not enough support out there about the severity of food allergies, and the more school staff understand it, the better they can advocate to ensure everyone remains safe and foster an anti-bullying classroom culture.



- Allie Bahn, Allergy & Asthma Network



1. Shemesh E, Annunziato RA, Ambrose MA, et al. Child and parental reports of bullying in a consecutive sample of children with food allergy. *Pediatrics*. 2013;131(1):10-17. doi:10.1542/peds.2012-1180 2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services; 2013. 3. American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology. Bullying and food allergy: What can allergists do? Available at: <https://acaai.org/resources/connect/letters-editor/bullyingandfoodallergywhatacanallergistsdo>. Accessed September 2020. 4. Parker-Roerdon L, Rudewick D, Gorton D. Direct From the Field: A Guide to Bullying Prevention. Commonwealth of Mass. 2007:6. Available at: <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/07/wx/bullying-prevent-guide.pdf>. Accessed September 2020. 5. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. The Civil Rights of Students with Hidden Disabilities Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Available at: <https://www.2ed.gov/about/office/list/ocr/docs/hq5269.html>. Accessed September 2020.