

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

ALLERGEN CONTROL IN THE SCHOOLS

5167

Procedure No.

July 1, 2013

Date

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- I. **PURPOSE:** To protect pupils against exposure to allergens and conditions affecting pupil's health or well-being.

 - II. **INFORMATION:** Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) use many materials and items which students handle or to which they are exposed. Steps can be taken in the purchase of materials, maintenance and cleaning, and class or extra curricular participation by pupils, which will minimize allergen exposure. These procedures:
 - A. Stress the need for attention to allergen control.
 - B. Provide for the identification of pupils sensitive to allergens.
 - C. Suggest options limiting the presence of allergens in schools.
 - D. List maintenance steps limiting allergen exposure during school hours.
 - E. Stipulate a framework for restricting pupils at events or sites when allergens are present.

 - III. **DEFINITIONS:** The following definitions apply to these Administrative Procedures:

Allergen – a substance that induces allergy.

Allergy – an abnormal reaction to substances ordinarily harmless. These may be taken into the body by being inhaled, by being swallowed, or by contact with the skin.

Controlled – to be avoided or limited whenever possible.

 - IV. **PROCEDURES:** Because of the individual nature of situations which might trigger an allergic reaction with pupils, each situation may require an evaluation and a decision as to whether a pupil should remain in a specific area of a school. The following are general procedures which are intended to provide control over situations that could precipitate an allergic reaction in a student.
 - A. **KNOWLEDGE OF ALLERGENS.** Common allergens should be recognized by teachers and aides. The principal of each school will advise teachers and other appropriate staff of this Administrative Procedures.
 - B. **ALLERGENS TO BE CONTROLLED IN THE SCHOOL SETTING.**

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1. Allergens to be controlled in PGCPS.
 - a. Animal hair carpet under padding.
 - b. Washed animal hair carpet and under padding.
 - c. Coated animal hair under padding.
 - d. Synthetic fibers not properly heat-treated.
 - e. Kapoc.
 - f. Cotton linters.
 - g. Feathers and down.
 - h. Animals and/or birds.

2. Allergens to be controlled in the maintenance processes of PGCPS.
 - a. Dust – air carried caused by vacuuming or other cleaning processes.
 - b. Paint fumes.
 - c. Insecticide fumes.
 - d. Pyrethrum – used insect sprays.
 - e. Sawdust.
 - f. Paint thinners, turpentine, and mineral spirits.
 - g. Chemical sprays with camphor or tar.
 - h. Excessively hot classrooms.
 - i. Excessively damp classrooms.
 - j. Outside activities where mold may exist.
 - k. Excessive air-carried dust (poor or inoperative filters in air systems).

C. IDENTIFICATION OF ALLERGIC PUPILS.

1. Parental Responsibility. Parents are encouraged to advise the school principal, health aide, and classroom teacher of the child's allergy.

2. Allergic Pupils. Pupils and their specific allergies will be identified so that teachers can make adjustments to teaching or scheduling arrangements. Pupils allergic to birds or animals, for instance, should not be exposed to them.

D. RECOGNITION OF ALLERGIC REACTIONS IN PUPILS. Early recognition of a pupil undergoing an allergic reaction is of great importance; parents are to provide teachers and/or health aide with information about symptom recognition. Examples of behavior which may involve allergies are:

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1. Tension –fatigue syndrome: excessive or unusual irritability, or drowsiness.
 2. Evidence of a hearing loss (due to blockage of eustachian tubes).
 3. Dizziness and/or inability to coordinate in normal manner.
- E. LIMITATION OF MATERIALS OF ALLERGIC NATURE.
1. Purchasing Procedures. Specifications or materials to be purchased should carefully avoid known allergens.
 2. Materials in Service. Where materials are now in service which are equal to or similar to allergens listed, replacement will be made with non-allergic materials when appropriate.
 3. Food Items. Items such as chocolate milk and seafoods are examples of foods that may be allergens to some pupils. Food menus should ensure that alternate non-allergic food items of similar nature are available.
- F. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS. The following represent general factors applicable to all school settings which will reduce the presence of allergens:
1. Temperature controls will be kept in operating condition to maintain classroom and office spaces in accordance with existing energy conservation policies.
 2. Humidity controls will be kept effective to provide proper relative humidity where equipment is available.
 3. Air purification through maintenance of existing air filters in heating and air conditioning systems will be kept effective.
 4. Dust reduction through regular routine cleaning and upkeep, sweeping, vacuuming, and/or maintenance work involving raising industrial dust, will be scheduled, as applicable, outside of school hours.
 5. Insecticide/pesticide spraying will be scheduled, as practicable, outside of school hours.

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- G. MAINTENANCE CONTROL AND SCHEDULING. In those classrooms where a teacher and/or student is known to be acutely allergic, the following operations will be avoided during school hours, where practicable. If there is an emergency need for service in a particular classroom where a person with an acute allergy is assigned, alternate arrangements should be made.
1. Painting.
 2. Spraying of paints, insecticides, etc.
 3. Woodworking repairs, generating large amounts of dust, sawdust, or other air-carried particles.
 4. Welding, brazing, and metal burning operations.
 5. Concrete break-ups, mortar, and plaster demolition.
- H. ANIMALS, BIRDS, FISH, PETS, AND INSECTS AS PART OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM. Pupils known to have related allergies should be excused from all associated activities involving animals, birds, fish and/or insects.
- I. CLASSES WITH KNOWN ALLERGIC EXPOSURE PROBABILITY.
1. Physical Education Classes or Recess.
 - a. Elementary school pupils recovering from asthmatic episodes or illness associated with allergies, or sensitive to molds in damp weather, will be allowed to stay inside with responsible adult supervision when outdoor activities are scheduled, if requested by parents, and recommended in writing by the family doctor.
 - b. Junior high or senior high school students with allergies may be allowed to determine the extent to which they can participate in physical Activities, if such flexibility is in writing and is recommended by the family doctor.
 2. Woodworking, Welding, Brazing, Grinding, etc. Excuse pupils with related Allergies from the immediate area where sawdust, welding fumes, grinding dust, etc., are present.

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3. Counseling should be made available to allergic students to provide alternatives to school courses.
- J. GENERAL INFORMATION RELATIVE TO PROTECTION OF AN ALLERGIC CHILD TO SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT ALLERGENS.
- Things to be aware of in schools:
1. Many elementary school science kits contain feathers.
 2. Laundry detergents are often used in art projects.
 3. Animals are sometimes housed in classrooms.
 4. Carpet under padding can be made of animal hair.
 5. Building renovations can be excessively dusty.
 6. Resurfacing of driveways or tarring of roofs can cause problems due to strong fumes.
 7. An allergic child should not be asked to clean erasers, since chalk can bring on a reaction; and he/she should not be seated near the chalkboard.
 8. Exercise out-of-doors on cold or windy days, or during air pollution alerts, can cause problems with asthmatic children.
 9. In a multi-storied school, asthmatic students should be scheduled so they do not have to rush from the first to the top floor in a short span of time between classes.
 10. Grass cutting during outdoor physical education periods can bother students with mold and grass sensitivities.
 11. Mold may be present in potted plants and in rugs that never dry out, such as in areas around sinks.
 12. Used furniture with old decaying stuffing and old carpets and rugs that cannot be washed should be avoided.
 13. Holiday and birthday treats, as well as rewards of candy, can cause problems for allergic children.

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14. Strong odors from paints, chemical sprays, perfumes, hairsprays, cigarette smoke, cleaning agents, insect sprays and mimeographing equipment can precipitate an allergic reaction.
15. Exterminating should not be done during school hours.
16. Field trips to farms, zoos, and greenhouses can cause problems for some allergic students. Check with parents of the allergic child if questionable.
17. Chemistry and other labs should be well ventilated.

K. COMMUNICATIONS.

1. School-Parent Communications. It is vital in allergy control that parents be aware of their role in advising teachers and/or health aides of their child's allergy.
 - a. School/PTA publications should be encouraged to provide general allergy information.
 - b. Parents and/or principal may request that the health aide assigned to the school provide follow-up with parents if problems exist in understanding, recognizing, or managing a child's allergy at school.
2. Community Health Nurse Involvement.
 - a. Health aides should suggest that parents contact the allergic student's family physician or the community health nurse if there is an apparent need for further understanding and/or guidance concerning allergies. This does not constitute a formal referral.
 - b. Community health nurses are available to conduct in-service for school staffs in conjunction with understanding the asthmatic/allergic students in the school setting.
 - c. If a student has a severe allergic condition which interferes with learning in the school setting, the case should be referred to the SIT and/or SST, if necessary.
 - d. The community health nurse will attempt to identify children with allergic conditions during SHIP screening and alert the principal and health aide, as appropriate.

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3. Coordination and Contact with the Local Chapter of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America and Other Agencies. The local chapter of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America has personnel available to provide in-service training to teachers. The community health nurses, Prince George's County Health Department, in conjunction with the Lung Association of Southern Maryland, provide in-service to all teachers concerning allergies/asthma.

 - V. **RELATED PROCEDURES:** Administrative Procedure 5162, Emergency Care in Schools and Administrative Procedure 5163, Handling Medication Brought to School.

 - VI. **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** These procedures originate with the Division of Academics and Student Services, Office of Health Education and Health Services, and questions should be referred to that office.

 - VII. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES:** These Administrative Procedures cancel and supersede Administrative Procedures, dated August 26, 1981.

 - VIII. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2013.

Distribution: Lists 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9 and 10.