



Saint Vincent's Primary School

ALLERGY AWARENESS and ANAPHYLAXIS

Policy

In most schools some children are anaphylactic. We are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for our students and have therefore adopted an allergy awareness policy to protect students who are at risk of a severe allergic reaction.

What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction. It occurs when a person is exposed to an allergen (such as a food or insect bite). Although death is rare, an anaphylactic reaction always requires an emergency response. Prompt treatment with injected adrenaline is required to halt progression and can be life saving. Fortunately, anaphylactic reactions are usually preventable by implementing strategies for avoiding allergens

Common allergens for anaphylaxis are:

- foods (eg peanuts and nuts, shellfish and fish, milk and egg)
- insect bites (eg bee, wasp, jumper ants)
- medications (eg antibiotics, aspirin)
- latex (eg rubber gloves, balloons, swimming caps).

The severity of an anaphylactic reaction is influenced by a number of factors, such as exercise, hot weather and in the case of food allergens, the amount eaten. In the case of severe food allergies, an anaphylactic reaction is usually triggered by ingestion of the food.

The school can help by assisting the student to avoid allergens and by ensuring that an emergency response plan is in place for all activities. Early recognition of the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis may save lives, thus allowing the earlier administration of first aid and contact of the appropriate emergency medical services.

Recognising an anaphylactic reaction

- Reactions usually begin within minutes of exposure and can progress rapidly at any time over a period of two hours. A student at risk of anaphylaxis will often recognise the early symptoms of an allergic reaction before any other signs are observable. Common symptoms are:
- flushing and/or swelling of the face
- itching and/or swelling of the lips, tongue or mouth
- itching and/or a sense of tightness in the throat, hoarseness, difficulty breathing and/or swallowing
- hives, itchy rash and/or swelling about the face, body or extremities
- nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting
- shortness of breath, repetitive coughing and/or wheezing
- faint, light headedness, rapid pulse, low blood pressure, collapse
- distress, anxiety and/or a sense of dread.

Peanut & nut allergies

Peanuts and nuts are the most likely foods to cause anaphylaxis. Foods that contain peanuts and nuts (even trace amounts) can trigger a reaction in an allergic child.

Student Responsibilities

- All students must eat inside their classroom or designated area and only ever from their own lunchbox.
- Students must notify a teacher if they become aware of a student who has food containing nuts.

Parent Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school if their child is at risk of an anaphylactic reaction either at the time of enrolment or, if the student is enrolled, as soon after diagnosis as possible.

As with other health conditions, schools provide support to assist the parent in the management of their child's health. For this support to be effective it is important that:

- a partnership is established between the parent and the school to share information and clarify expectations
- every reasonable effort is made to minimise the exposure of students at risk of an allergic reaction to known allergens within the school environment (refer Examples of Strategies to Avoid Allergens)
- Medical Doctor complete a Medical Alert / Anaphylaxis Action Plan Form that includes what medications are required for treatment
- parents must supply an EpiPen or EpiPen Junior and/or other medications to the school and are responsible to check the expiry dates as well as keeping the medications current.
- parents are to remind the class teacher of medications that must accompany your child on class excursions

All diagnosed anaphylactic students must be made aware of their condition and the processes involved if an allergic reaction occurs at school.

The enrolment package contains a letter to prospective parents notifying them of the school's allergy awareness policy. This advises parents of the food limitations imposed before accepting an offer of placement.

Staff Responsibilities

Educating a student's peers about anaphylaxis is important as a way to gain their support for preventing exposure to allergens. Education is also important to ensure that the affected student is protected from any teasing or provocation that may result in risk taking associated with allergens.

Staff are to remind all students that they must eat only from their own lunchbox and supervise eating at all times.

If a child has been diagnosed with an allergy, the school should organise a meeting between the Principal, the child's teacher and the parents to discuss the child's needs further. At this meeting: consideration is given to routine classroom activities, including lessons in other locations around the school; non-routine classroom activities and non-routine school activities; before school, recess, lunchtime, other break or play times; sport or other programmed out of school activities and excursions.

- provide parents with the school's allergy awareness policy
- Ensure that they complete and return relevant forms (Appendix 4, 5, 6 & 7) for the administration of medication at school
- discuss strategies to avoid potential exposure to allergens in the student's routine
- discuss issues to be addressed in implementing an emergency response plan in these situations.
- Regularly remind all parents that the school has an allergy awareness policy and provide information about allergies and anaphylaxis (see Appendix 1) and they must not send peanut and nut products to school in lunches and snacks. It is most important that parents impress upon their children the importance of following this request.

- Ensure the Canteen adheres to the allergy awareness policy.
- Discuss the allergy awareness policy with students.
- Ensure that parents provide the school with an Anaphylaxis Action Plan (Appendix 7) that has been completed by the prescribing doctor for each child who has been diagnosed with an allergy. This form must include a recent head & shoulders photograph of the child. Place a copy of this plan in the student's file, the classroom, the Front Office/Sick Bay and the staff room
- Ensure that medications (eg EpiPen) are clearly marked with the student's name and kept alongside their personal information in Sick Bay and their classroom along with accompanying anti-histamine medication (eg Clarantyne).
- Review Anaphylaxis Policy annually at a specified time (eg beginning of the school year) and at any other time where there are changes in the student's health needs, staffing or other factors that affect the plan, for example, when an anaphylactic event occurs.
- Ensure all staff attend a training course on an annual basis.
- In each staff duty pack is a yellow ASSISTANCE REQUIRED CARD, which is to be sent to the Front Office or staff room when help is required. A list of all anaphylactic children is included in the staff duty pack. In case of any incident do not wait for allergy symptoms to present themselves – phone for an ambulance immediately and be ready to administer the Epi-Pen if necessary.
- Inform any parent/carer whose child brings food which may cause an allergic reaction. Remove the product in question from the immediate environment.

STEP BY STEP APPROACH IN CASE OF INCIDENT

- Check Student condition, analyse situation, remove food responsible for incident if possible [but do not dispose of as medical staff may require]
- Immediately return Red Card or Card with child's name to Front Office or Staff Room
- Duty teacher to administer medicine as necessary, in line with instructions and training [eg anti histamine or Epi-Pen, these will in found in duty bag] send for additional staff assistance.
- Duty teacher to immediately call 000 from the mobile phone in the duty bag and ask for an Ambulance.
- If necessary continue to use medicines in line with instructions
- Ensure staff member at front of school to meet ambulance and is aware of location of affected student
- Contact parents of student

References

Anaphylaxis <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/a/pdf/anaphylaxis.pdf>

EpiPen http://www.epipen.com/epipen_main.aspx

Allergy <http://www.allergy.org.au/pospapers/anaphylaxis.htm>

Further Information

www.allergy.org.au

www.allergyfacts.org.au

www.ceo.cg.catholic.edu.au/policies/anaphylaxis.htm

WAYS TO REDUCE ALLERGENS

Risk	Strategy	Who?
<p>Minimising risk – food allergies:</p> <p>Sharing lunches</p>	<p>Regular discussions with relevant classes about the importance of eating your own food and not sharing</p> <p>Class has lunch in specified area which is a focus of supervision</p> <p>Encourage parent of child to be involved on special days that involve food</p>	<p>Class teacher</p> <p>Class teacher</p> <p>Principal or nominated teacher</p>
<p>Trigger food in the canteen (eg milk)</p>	<p>Inform canteen staff of student with allergy and foods to which they are allergic</p> <p>Place a copy of the emergency response plan on the wall of the canteen</p> <p>Identify foods that contain or are likely to contain trigger substances and replace with other nutritious foods</p>	<p>Canteen manager</p> <p>Principal</p> <p>Canteen manager</p>
<p>Class parties</p>	<p>Advise parent of the student at risk of food allergies ahead of time so that they can provide suitable food</p> <p>Food for allergic student should only be approved and provided by the student's parent</p> <p>Inform other class members' parents of trigger substances and request that these foods are avoided</p> <p>Consider non-food rewards</p> <p>Cupcakes, as replacement for a piece of birthday cake, can be stored in identifiable container (labelled with child's details) in a freezer</p>	<p>Class teacher</p> <p>Class teacher</p> <p>Class teacher</p> <p>Class teacher</p> <p>Class teacher</p>
<p>Class activities</p>	<p>Be aware that craft items can be risk items eg egg cartons, milk containers, peanut butter jars</p>	<p>Class teacher</p>
<p>Insect bite allergies</p> <p>Grassed and garden areas</p>	<p>Specify play areas that are lowest risk to the student and encourage the student and his or her peers to play in this area</p> <p>Decrease number of plants in school grounds that attract bees</p> <p>Ensure allergic students wear shoes at all times</p> <p>When using isolation as part of discipline ensure student is not next to flowering plants</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Principal</p> <p>Class Teacher</p> <p>Class Teacher</p>
<p>Medication allergies</p> <p>Students sharing their medication with</p>	<p>Inform school community of policy about administration of medications</p> <p>Monitor implementation of policy to minimise students bringing unauthorised medications</p> <p>Educate student and peers about medication allergies and the importance of taking medication prescribed only for them</p> <p>Encourage affected students to wear medic alert bracelet or necklace</p> <p>Implement effective procedures for administering prescribed medications at school</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Principal</p> <p>Class teacher</p> <p>Class teacher</p> <p>First Aid Officer</p>
<p>Latex allergies</p>	<p>Avoid use of party balloons</p> <p>Avoid contact with swimming caps and latex gloves</p>	<p>Class teacher</p> <p>Sport teacher</p>