



Allergy Awareness Policy

Background

An allergic reaction occurs when the immune system reacts to substances in the environment which are harmless to most people. Anaphylaxis is a severe, rapidly progressive allergic reaction that is potentially life threatening. It develops in approximately 1-2% of the population, but the numbers of small children with food allergies is increasing, and this is evident in the higher numbers of children in lower primary years who have one or more severe food allergies.

The most common allergens in school children are peanuts, eggs, tree nuts, cow's milk, fish and shellfish, soy, sesame, wheat and some types of insect stings (e.g. bee stings). However, other things can also cause severe allergic reactions, including medications, latex and pollen.

The key to prevention of anaphylaxis is knowledge of those students who have been diagnosed at risk, awareness of triggers (allergens), and prevention of exposure to those triggers. A partnership approach between schools and parents is vitally important to ensure the safety of children with severe allergies at school.

The most effective first aid treatment for anaphylaxis is Adrenaline, given through an EpiPen® or Anapen autoinjector to the muscle of the outer mid-thigh.

The school acknowledges that due to current food processing practices, it is impractical to eliminate all allergens entirely from an environment where there is food. It is assumed that any product may have traces of nut or other food allergy ingredients unless confirmed otherwise. The emphasis is therefore on providing a safe school environment that takes into consideration the needs of all students, including those suffering from anaphylaxis, raising awareness, adopting reasonable procedures and risk minimisation strategies and considering students with severe allergies at an early stage of planning activities.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- To provide a safe learning environment for the whole Magill School Community that takes into consideration the needs of all students, including those suffering from anaphylaxis.
- To raise the awareness of severe allergies (anaphylaxis) and the school's anaphylaxis management policy/ guidelines within the whole Magill School community.
- To engage with parents/ guardians of each student at risk of anaphylaxis in assessing risks and developing risk minimisation strategies.
- To ensure that staff have knowledge about allergies, anaphylaxis and the school's first aid guidelines and procedures in responding to an anaphylactic reaction.
- To further develop student knowledge about allergies and understand their role in ensuring that Magill School is safe for all students with allergies.
- To assist in the provision of support and best practice to students with severe allergies.

Responsibilities

Students

Will be encouraged to **Be a MATE: MAKE ALLERGY TREATMENT EASIER**

(Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia - <https://allergyfacts.org.au>)

- Always take food allergies seriously.
- Don't share food.
- Wash hands after eating.
- Ask a friend what they are allergic to.
- Get help immediately if a schoolmate has a reaction.

Parents/Caregivers of students with allergies

- Must inform the school of their child's diagnosis and provide information on which allergens need to be avoided.
- Must provide a copy of the ASCIA Action Plan or health care plan and immediately inform the school on changes to the medical condition or management of the anaphylaxis, providing an updated plan if necessary. A review of plans should be on a 12 monthly basis, or earlier, if the student's condition changes.
- Must provide an adrenaline autoinjector (i.e. EpiPen) and/or other medication that has been prescribed, and ensure they are clearly labelled and within date.
- Must replace their child's adrenaline autoinjector and any other medication as needed, before the expiry date or when used.
- Must take their child's adrenaline autoinjector home over the summer holiday period to avoid the medication perishing in the heat, and then return the adrenaline autoinjector on the first day of school the following year.
- Must provide written permission for their child to consume food and drinks that are not provided from home

Parents/Caregivers of all students

- Maybe requested NOT to send foods containing specific allergens to school that have been identified as posing a significant risk to children in the class or school.
- Are requested to check with their child's teacher before providing food to share with the class, for information about allergens within the class.

School Leadership

- Responsible for providing information to all staff, students and parents/ guardians about anaphylaxis and the development of the school's allergy management policy
- Should develop an emergency procedure that sets out clear roles and responsibilities in the event of an anaphylactic reaction.

Staff

- Will be made aware of students who have severe allergies (Medic alert posters, duty bag binders, EDSAS and Sentral). (TRTs will have medical details available in the class folder).
- Will supervise eating at lunchtime.
- Will encourage students not to share food.
- Will participate in training from a registered organisation in understanding and dealing with severe allergic reactions / anaphylaxis when necessary.
- Will provide information regarding allergens within the classroom for any activities that may involve shared food, cooking activities, camps, excursions etc and liaise accordingly with families of children with allergies.
- Will advise families at the beginning of the school year and again at the commencement of each term thereafter of foods to avoid when sending food to school for special events and celebrations.
- Will consider the allergens and other dietary needs of students in planning classroom activities (including craft using food containers/ boxes/ bottles etc.) and rewards.

First Aid

- First aid protocols ensure safe secure storage and immediate access to a child's Epi-pen and other first aid equipment.
- First aid protocols encourage self-management while acknowledging that staff are responsible for managing first aid emergencies.
- All anaphylaxis medication will be taken on excursions and camps and stored safely (including at the correct temperature) at these times.
- Anaphylactic reactions will be treated immediately, according to the child's ASCIA plan. Emergency services will be contacted as required under the plan, and parents/ guardians of the child will be contacted as a matter of urgency.

Promotion

This policy will be promoted by: School newsletter, School website, School Stream, acquaintance nights, Facebook.

Review

This policy will be reviewed by staff and Governing Council every two years, or earlier if warranted.

Success of the policy will be determined by measuring:

- All at risk children have the correct ASCIA Action Plans and medication provided to the front office.
- Proportion of staff with appropriate first aid training that meets Department requirements.
- Awareness of the school community

References/ resources

Health Support Planning: Anaphylaxis and severe allergies in education and care, August 2018. Department for Education
Be a Mate – Making Allergy Treatment Easier. Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia
<https://allergyfacts.org.au>

Approved May 2019