



Woonona East Public School Allergy Awareness Policy

Peanut & Nut Allergy and Anaphylaxis

Rationale

In most schools some children are anaphylactic. We are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for our students and have adopted an allergy awareness policy to protect students who are at risk of an allergic reaction, particularly those with an allergy to peanut and nut products.

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 (refer Examples of Strategies to Avoid Allergens).

Common allergens for anaphylaxis are:

- foods (e.g. peanuts and nuts, shellfish and fish, milk and egg)
- insect bites (e.g. bee, wasp, jumper ants)
- medications (e.g. antibiotics, aspirin)
- latex (e.g. 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.

How can you recognise 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 allergy

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 need to be aware that they must eat only from their own lunchbox.
- Students must understand the importance of washing hands before and after eating.
- 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, e.g. nuts.

Parent Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school that 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 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
2. All diagnosed anaphylactic students must be made aware of their condition and the procedures involved if an allergic reaction occurs at school.
 3. 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.

School Responsibilities

1. 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:

- provide the school's Allergy Awareness Policy to parents of an allergic child.
 - Ensure that they complete and return relevant forms for the administration of medication at school.
 - discuss strategies to avoid potential exposure to allergens in the student's routine and issues to be addressed in implementing an emergency response plan in these situations
 - Consider:
 - 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 activities and excursions.
2. Regularly remind all parents:
 - that the school has an Allergy Awareness Policy and provide information about allergies and anaphylaxis.
 - to refrain from sending 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.
 3. Ensure the Canteen adheres to the Allergy Awareness Policy.
 4. Discuss the Allergy Awareness Policy with the class and supervise eating.
 5. Ensure that parents provide the school with a Medical Alert/ Anaphylaxis Action Plan 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 office/sick bay and the staff room
 - the class green attendance slip folder so that relief teachers are made aware of the child's condition
 - with the parent's permission, a copy of the Action Plan in the Canteen so that staff are aware of the student's allergy (or allergies) and can serve them food accordingly.
 6. Ensure that medications (e.g. EpiPen) are clearly marked with the student's name and kept alongside their personal information in the office and their classroom along with accompanying anti-histamine medication (eg Clarantyne).
 7. Review Anaphylaxis Policy annually at a specified time (e.g. beginning of the school year) and at any other time where there are changes in:
 - the student's health needs
 - staff (e.g. class teacher)
 - other factors that affect the plan, for example, when an anaphylactic event occurs.
 8. Ensure all staff attend a training course, covering allergy awareness, anaphylaxis and the use of an EpiPen on an annual basis.

9. Each staff member to have a red **ASSISTANCE REQUIRED CARD**, which is to be sent to the office or staff room when help is required on playground duty.
10. Inform any parent/carer whose child brings food, which may cause an allergic reaction. Remove the product in question from the immediate environment.

Examples of strategies to avoid 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 (e.g. 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 coordinator</p> <p>Principal</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 e.g. 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 not to stand student next to flowering plants</p>	<p>Principal</p>
<p>Medication allergies</p> <p>Students taking other students medication</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</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Principal</p> <p>Class teacher</p> <p>Class teacher</p>

brought from home without staff knowledge	<p>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>	Staff member responsible for administering prescribed medication
Latex allergies	<p>Avoid use of party balloons</p> <p>Avoid contact with swimming caps and latex gloves</p>	<p>Class teacher</p> <p>Sports teacher</p>

References

Anaphylaxis – Guidelines for schools [Internet] Available from:
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/a/pdf/anaphylaxis.pdf> [Accessed 16 March 2006]

About EpiPen [Internet] Available from: http://www.epipen.com/epipen_main.aspx
[Accessed 30 March 2006]

ASCIA Guidelines for prevention of food anaphylactic reactions in schools, preschools and childcare centres [Internet] Available from:
<http://www.allergy.org.au/pospapers/anaphylaxis.htm> [Accessed 30 March 2006]

Further Information

The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy Inc (ASCIA)
www.allergy.org.au

Anaphylaxis Australia Inc (formerly FACTS)
www.allergyfacts.org.au



STEP BY STEP APPROACH IN CASE OF INCIDENT

1. Check Student condition, analyse situation, remove food responsible for incident if possible [but do not dispose of as medical staff may require]
2. Immediately return Yellow Assistance Card or Card with child's name to Front Office or Staff Room
3. 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]
4. Front Office to immediately call an Ambulance, send additional staff assistance to help duty teacher
5. If necessary continue to use medicines in line with instructions
6. Ensure staff member at front of school to meet ambulance and is aware of location of affected student
7. Contact parents/carers of student



Form 1: Be Peanut and Nut Allergy Aware

St Vincent's Primary School is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for students. We have adopted an allergy awareness policy to protect students who have severe allergies (anaphylaxis), particularly those allergic to peanuts and nuts.

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction that occurs when a person is exposed to an allergen. Anaphylaxis is potentially life threatening and always requires an emergency response. Symptoms of anaphylactic shock may include hives, itching, swelling, coughing, wheezing, throat tightness/closing, difficulty swallowing, difficulty breathing, nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting, low blood pressure, feeling faint, collapse, distress, anxiety or a sense of dread. Anaphylactic reactions are uncommon and usually preventable.

It is the aim of this school to provide a **peanut and nut free environment** for the safety of children who have anaphylactic reactions. We are asking for your support in not sending to school any food products that contain peanuts or nuts.

Peanut and nut products that pose a risk include peanut butter, and any type of nut spread. Other foods that are not so obvious include (but are not limited to) chocolate and muesli bars, pastries, cakes and biscuits. If parents could check food labels to ensure that peanuts and nuts are NOT stated in the ingredients list before buying products for school lunches it would be greatly appreciated.

It is also important to remind children of the need to wash hands before and after eating and to not share food. Staff will continue to remind children of this as well as educating students about allergies and how they can help keep their peers safe. We will continue to remind parents of our allergy awareness policy and promote this serious issue throughout the school year in an effort to minimise the risk for children affected by allergies.

As anaphylaxis is a treatable condition all staff undergo regular training, which includes the use of an EpiPen^{®1} in the event that emergency treatment be required.

If you wish to discuss this matter further do not hesitate to contact me on 6251 2442.

Mr John Vance
Principal

¹ EpiPen[®] is an auto-injector that administers epinephrine, the definitive emergency treatment for severe allergic reactions.



Form 2: Letter of Explanation to Parents

Dear Parents

Please find attached the Forms that need to be completed so that medication can be administered to your child during the school day.

These Forms comply with the procedure recommended by the Archdiocese of Canberra/Goulburn Catholic Education Office and have been designed to ensure the safety of your child and to protect the school staff who do not have medical training.

Forms 4, 5 and 6 are to be completed by you and Form 7 by the Prescribing Doctor. Please return all these forms to the school as soon as possible.

I am aware that this may seem a complicated process but please be assured that the school will give you every assistance in this matter.

In this instance, and as an interim measure only, we will undertake to administer medication to your child without the required documentation for a period of 10 days from initial notification.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Vance
Principal



**Form 3: Acknowledgement of Request to Administer Medication
(To be completed by School)**

Dear: (Name of Parent/Guardian)

I have considered your request to administer medication to your child:

..... (Full name of Student)

The school will render whatever aid is necessary to administer the medication, but it should be clearly understood that this aid will be administered by a lay person with First Aid training.

To comply with your request, the following conditions should be strictly observed:

- 1 It is the parent's responsibility to provide the medication and equipment for its administration, and to ensure its immediate replenishment after use, or when it requires replacement (e.g. expiry date).
- 2 The attached form must be completed before any changes to the medication and its administration can be implemented.
- 3 The parent gives permission for the information provided by them and the prescribing doctor to be discussed by the Principal with other members of the school staff.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Vance
Principal

Dated:



Form 4: Notification and Request by Parent/Guardian for the Administration of Medication During School Hours.
(To be completed by Parent/Guardian)

I request that my child:
(Full name of Student)

be allowed to take medication at school according to instructions from:

Full name of Prescribing Doctor:

Address and Phone Number of Prescribing Doctor:
.....

Telephone No:

The medication has been prescribed for the following reason/condition:
.....

I hereby give permission to the Principal to obtain relevant information from the Prescribing Doctor.

I accept and agree to observe the conditions imposed by the school and understand and agree that it is my responsibility to inform the Principal of any changes involving the administration of the medicine. I agree to indemnify the School and related parties on the terms of the attached Deed of Indemnity.

SIGNED: (Parent/Guardian) DATE:



**Form 5: Deed of Indemnity
(To be completed by Parent/Guardian)**

In consideration of the members of staff at St Vincent's Primary School, Aranda at my request administering medication to my son/daughter:

.....
(Full name of Student)

I hereby indemnify and agree to keep indemnified

the Archdiocese of Canberra/Goulburn Catholic Education Office

and its employees and agents, and

St Vincent's Primary School, Aranda

from and against all actions, suits, claims, demands, complaints and causes of action (including for or in respect of death, personal injury or any alleged infringement of the rights of any person) and the costs thereof in respect of or arising directly or indirectly out of such administration of medication.

Signed, sealed and delivered by the said:

(Parent/Guardian)

In the presence of:

(Signature of Witness)

.....
(Name of Witness - please print)



**Form 6: Permission for Prescribing Doctor to Release Medical Details
(To be completed by Parent/Guardian)**

Dear: (Name of Prescribing Doctor)

Initial and Surname of Parent/Guardian:

Of (Address):
.....

has informed me that his/her child:
(Full name of Student)

requires the administration of medication during school hours.

Please complete the details on the attached form to assist the school staff to ensure that the student named above receives the necessary attention.

You will note (see below) that the parent/guardian has given permission for the information to be released.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Vance
Principal

I hereby give permission for the
(Parent/Guardian)
release of information to the Principal of St Vincent's Primary School, Aranda.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____



**Form 7 : Medical Alert / Anaphylaxis Action Plan
(Medical Doctor to Complete)**

**ST. VINCENT'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
ARANDA**

**PHOTOGRAPH
OF
STUDENT
(Head &
Shoulders)**

Student's Name	
D. O.B	
Details of Condition / Allergy	1.
	2.
	3.
	4. Other health problems:
Symptoms of past allergic reactions	
Instructions for Care	
Emergency Action Plan	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.
	5.
	6.
	7.

Medication Details

Condition name	Medication name	Dosage	Time/s of Administration	Special instructions	Self-Admin. (Yes/No)

CONTACT DETAILS (Please Print Clearly)

Parents / Guardians		Phone	
		Phone	
Other		Phone	

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date: _____

Doctor's Name & Contact Details

Doctor's: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature