



Allergy Aware College

Overview

William Clarke College is an allergy aware College. It is not declared a nut-free area and acknowledges that due to food processing practices, it is impractical to eliminate nuts or nut products entirely from an environment where there is food. Every effort will be taken by the College to ensure the safety of the students concerned.

It is estimated that up to 2% of adults, one in 10 babies and 6% of children have a food allergy and some of them will experience a life-threatening allergic reaction (anaphylaxis)¹. The most common food allergies involve peanuts, tree nuts (walnuts, almonds, cashews etc), cow's milk, soy, seafood and eggs². Most food reactions, even to highly allergenic foods such as peanuts, are not anaphylactic. Deaths from anaphylaxis are rare. Teenagers are more at risk of death; rarely do deaths from anaphylaxis occur in young children³.

The Problem with Nuts

- Peanuts and other nuts are the most likely foods to cause anaphylaxis.
- Nuts are hard to avoid due to their widespread use.
- Nut allergies tend to persist. That is, less than one in five children will 'outgrow' their nut allergy.
- Only a small amount can trigger symptoms (in some cases only as much as the size of a sesame seed).

Why is it Important that Schools become Allergy Aware and Allergy Friendly?

- In Australia, more than 90% of fatal reactions to food have occurred in children aged five years and older.
- Of those who have died from anaphylaxis, 90% have been allergic to nuts, and the exposure was accidental and usually away from the home (including at school).

We need to accept that food allergies *are* serious and that food allergies *can* be fatal.

As a result of this situation we are taking steps to become an allergy aware College by informing staff, parents/carers and students about the associated risks of these food allergies. Included in this document are guidelines that will assist parents/carers, students and staff to maintain an awareness of these allergies.

Note: The College is not 'free' of any product. Such a guarantee cannot be given.

Management of Students with Diagnosed Anaphylactic Reactions

- It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to notify the College that their child is at risk of an anaphylactic reaction either at the time of enrolment, or if the student is enrolled, as soon as possible after diagnosis.
- If written information provided by the parent/carer confirms that their child has been assessed as being at risk of anaphylaxis, the College will follow the NSW Department of Education and Communities *Anaphylaxis: Procedures for Schools 2012*⁴, including formulating an individual health care plan in consultation with the parent/carer and staff. The individual health care plan will incorporate an emergency response plan and a plan for the avoidance of known allergens, based on advice from the student's parent/carer and medical practitioner.



Note: Severe allergic reactions or anaphylaxis can occur when there is no history of known allergies. This situation should be treated like any other emergency. An ambulance should be called and first aid provided until expert help arrives.

General Management

The College will encourage the exclusion of all nuts and nut products, including:

- any type of nut
- peanut butter
- Nutella or similar spreads
- muesli bars containing actual nuts
- nut biscuits
- any food item containing nut products.

Recess and Lunchtime

- Bottles, other drinks and lunchboxes should be clearly labelled with the name of the child for which they are intended.
- The importance of not sharing food is discussed regularly with all students.
- Junior School students have lunch in a specified area with staff supervision (it is not recommended that the allergic child be physically isolated from other children).
- All students are encouraged to wash their hands after eating.
- If a teacher identifies a possible risk with food, the student with this food needs to be taken away from the 'at-risk' student(s) and the other students to eat their recess/lunch. The student in question should then wash out their mouth and wash their hands before re-joining the class. A note will be sent home reminding the family that the College has children who can suffer a severe allergic reaction which could be fatal, requesting again that they do not supply the nut product to their child during school.

The College Canteen

- The College Canteen will not knowingly supply foods that contain nuts.
- Parents/carers and staff must inform Canteen staff of students with allergies and the foods they are allergic to.
- Canteen staff will identify high-risk foods and replace with other nutritious foods.
- Food preparation personnel (paid and voluntary) will be trained about measures necessary to prevent cross-contamination during the handling, preparation and serving of food.
- Canteen staff will plan menus in conjunction with parents/carers of 'at-risk' child/ren, and food will be prepared according to parents'/carers' instructions. Alternatively, the parent/carer provides all of the food for the 'at-risk child'.
- There will be separate storage of foods containing known allergens, and safe food handling, preparation and serving practices will be used to minimise the risk of cross-contamination. This includes hygiene of surfaces in kitchen and food utensils and containers.
- 'At-risk' students will only be served food prepared specifically for them.

Class Parties and Special Events

- No nut products should be included in food supplied by parents/carers to celebrate birthdays.
- Food brought to the College should be clearly labelled with its ingredients. There will be occasions when the College will require the parent/carer to supply the food or treats for the allergic student to ensure their safety.



In the Classroom

- Craft items can be risk items (for example, egg cartons, milk containers, peanut butter jars), and these items will be avoided.
- Recipes will be chosen that do not contain high-risk ingredients for food preparation and cooking lessons.
- Only non-food rewards are given.

On Camps and Excursions

- If students with severe allergies are participating in a camp or excursion, high-risk foods should not be taken or supplied (consistent with the risk minimisation policy in the College Canteen).
- The College will liaise with service providers for camps and excursions to do everything reasonably possible to minimise risk to students with nut and other allergies. Each child's emergency kit will be taken on excursions and field trips attended (including incursions at the College that extend beyond the boundaries of the immediate campus).

Staff

- Staff participate in anaphylaxis training on an annual basis.
- Staffrooms K-12 and first-aid rooms will contain photographs and information about each student diagnosed with allergies and potential anaphylaxis reactions. New staff will be advised of this policy during their induction.
- Teachers will be asked to avoid bringing high-risk foods to the College.

Promotion

The policy and any changes to it will be promoted in the following ways:

- Parents and carers are informed via Connect.
- New families to the College community are informed via the Enrolment Information Package and at Orientation.
- Staff are informed annually and provided with training opportunities.
- Students are informed via teachers, signs, Assembly and Connect.

References

¹ 'What is Anaphylaxis' Help Sheet

<https://allergyfacts.org.au/images/pdf/WHATISA.pdf>

² Allergy Capital (2003). Food allergy and anaphylaxis in schools – why the fuss?

³ Food allergies and anaphylaxis – Information for Schools

https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/files/factsheets/allergy_-_food_allergies_and_anaphylaxis_-_information_for_schools-en.pdf

⁴ NSW Department of Education and Communities (2012). *Anaphylaxis: Procedures for Schools 2012*.