

Grace Lutheran Primary School



Statement on Managing Food Related Allergies in Students

Grace Lutheran Primary School aims to minimise the risk of any student suffering allergy-induced anaphylaxis whilst at school or attending any school related activity. The School believes the avoidance of specific triggers is the best way to prevent allergen reactions. Age appropriate education of the child and his/her peers, as well as education of all school staff, is also important. Grace Lutheran Primary School's position is not to guarantee a completely allergen free environment; rather to minimise the risk of exposure, encourage self-responsibility, and plan for effective response to possible emergencies.

Our guiding principles are:

- The provision of a safe school environment in keeping with our Workplace Health and Safety Policy and Guidelines.
- The establishment of effective risk management practices to minimise the exposure of any student to foods identified as causing a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) in that student. Examples of foods that cause severe allergic reactions include peanuts, tree nuts and eggs.
- Appropriate education for students and staff regarding allergy awareness and self-responsibility.
- Age appropriate education of students with severe allergies.
- Responses to a student who suffers an anaphylactic reaction are outlined in the school's First Aid Policy and Procedures.

It is expected that parents or guardians will not send **whole** foods (**eg whole egg, nuts, peanut butter**) to school if they are a known allergen to a student of the school and have the potential to cause anaphylaxis. The rule of thumb is 'if in doubt it is better not to send the food product to school'. Any expectations of foods to avoid will be communicated to the school community through letters, newsletters and handbooks.

The school's activities, including tuckshop, excursions and camps, will comply with this position statement. It is the responsibility of the co-ordinating group of any school based activity (eg school staff, P&F executive) to ensure the activity complies with the school's position.

Questions relating to suitability of food products are to be directed to the Principal who will refer to relevant student medical information and action plans.

Allergies and Anaphylaxis

What is an allergy?

- An allergy is when someone has a reaction to something (usually a protein) which is either ingested, inhaled, injected or placed on the skin.
- Symptoms of an allergic reaction may be local or general.
- Anaphylaxis is the most sudden and severe form of generalised allergic reaction.
- Food, medication and insect venom are the commonest severe allergic triggers.
- Asthmatic individuals have more severe allergic reactions if they have an underlying food, medication, or insect venom allergy.

What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction. It occurs when a person is exposed to an allergen to which they are sensitive. The most common allergens or trigger substances that may cause anaphylaxis in school-aged children are peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, egg, cow's milk, sesame, soy, insect stings, latex and certain medications.

Symptoms and signs of anaphylaxis

The symptoms and signs of anaphylaxis, usually but not always, occur within the first 20 minutes after exposure but in some cases can be delayed up to 2 hours or more. Rapid onset and development of potentially life-threatening clinical effects are characteristic markers of anaphylaxis.

Symptoms and signs of anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction) may include one or more of the following:

- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness in the throat
- Difficulty talking or hoarse voice
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Dizzy/light headed
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young child).

Symptoms and signs of a mild to moderate allergic reaction may include one or more of the following:

- Tingling of the mouth
- Hives, welts or body redness
- Swelling of the face, lips, eyes
- Vomiting, abdominal pain

Anaphylaxis is potentially life threatening and always requires an emergency response.