St Agnes’ Catholic Primary School
Highett
Anaphylaxis Policy

1. Introduction

This policy has been prepared to assist in preventing life threatening anaphylaxis and is based on advice from the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) and takes account of the published literature at the time of publication. It is not intended to replace professional medical advice.

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and is potentially life threatening. It must be treated as a medical emergency, requiring immediate treatment and urgent medical attention.

Anaphylaxis is a generalised allergic reaction, which often involves more than one body system (e.g. skin, respiratory, gastro-intestinal, cardiovascular). A severe allergic reaction usually occurs within 20 minutes of exposure to the trigger and can rapidly become life threatening.

St Agnes’ School will adopt a Risk Minimisation approach with regard to particular foods (peanuts and tree nuts) which are the most likely foods to cause anaphylaxis.

The implementation of blanket food bans or attempts to prohibit the entry of food substances into schools is not recommended. Therefore St Agnes does not endorse the implementation of blanket food bans or attempts to prohibit the entry of food substances into the school.

Issues considered in not recommending blanket food bans include:

- the practicalities of such measures
- the issue that for school age children an essential step is to develop strategies for avoidance in the wider community as well as at school
- the lack of evidence of the effectiveness of such measures
- other guidelines and position statements and experts do not recommend such measures
- some guidelines state that such a policy should be "considered" for a specific foodstuff such as peanut rather than recommended
- food bans at schools are not recommended by allergy consumer organisations
- the risk of complacency about avoidance strategies if a food is banned.

Research clearly shows that although allergic reactions to food are common in children, severe life threatening reactions are uncommon and deaths are rare.

- The majority of food reactions, even to highly allergenic foods such as peanuts are not anaphylactic
- However more than 90% of fatal reactions to foods have occurred in children aged 5 years and older. This indicates the importance of food avoidance for those school age children considered to be at risk.
- The risk of anaphylaxis in an individual case depends on a number of factors including the age of the child, the particular food involved, the amount of the food ingested and the presence of asthma.
- Peanuts and other nuts are the most likely foods to cause anaphylaxis.
- Anaphylaxis is very unlikely to occur from skin contact or exposure to food odours.

2. The four steps in the prevention of food anaphylactic reactions in children at risk in schools

1. Obtaining medical information about children at risk by school personnel.
2. Education of those responsible for the care of children concerning the risk of food anaphylaxis.
3. Implementation of practical strategies to avoid exposure to known triggers.
4. Age appropriate education of children with severe food allergies.
2.1 Obtaining medical information

Parents of children with allergies are asked to provide medical information at the time of enrolment such as an ASCIA Anaphylaxis Action Plan which has been completed by a registered medical practitioner and includes the following:

- Clear identification of the child (photo)
- Documentation of the allergic triggers
- Documentation of the first aid response including any prescribed medication
- Identification and contact details of the doctor who has signed the action plan.
- As food allergies or allergic triggers may change with time it is important that parents provide the school with an updated action plan as soon as a change is made and also at the start of each school year.

2.2 Education of carers/staff

Recognition of the risk and understanding the steps that can be taken to minimise food anaphylaxis by all those responsible for the care of children in schools, is the basis of prevention. Important topics to be addressed in the educational process are:

- What is allergy?
- What is anaphylaxis?
- What are the triggers for allergy and anaphylaxis?
- How is anaphylaxis recognised?
- How can anaphylaxis be prevented?
- What should be done in the event of a child having a severe allergic reaction?
- Instruction on EpiPen® use

Education of all staff on these topics will be provided by appropriately qualified professionals such as allergy nurse educators, doctors or qualified first aid trainers and reinforced at the commencement of each school year and as necessary.

Parents of Anaphylaxis students will sign a letter giving permission for their child’s medical condition to be discussed with all teaching staff and other adults as necessary. Parents will give permission for their child’s anaphylaxis plan to be displayed in classrooms and administration areas.

In a medical emergency and a child’s EpiPen is not available another child’s EpiPen may be used.

2.3 Practical strategies to avoid exposure to known triggers

- Avoidance of specific triggers is the basis of anaphylaxis prevention.
- Appropriate avoidance measures are critically dependant on education of the child, his/her peers and all school personnel.
- As a general principle children with a food allergy will not be physically isolated from other children. In some circumstances it may be appropriate that a highly allergic child does not sit at the table where others consume food or drink containing or potentially containing the allergen.

2.4 Age appropriate education of children with severe food allergies

Whilst it is primarily the responsibility of parents that the child is taught to care for themself, the school also has a role to implement the care plan and reinforce appropriate avoidance and management strategies. As children mature they are able to take more responsibility for their own care.
3. Food policy measures

Students are to be encouraged not to trade and share food, food utensils and food containers. We encourage all parents to label bottles, other drinks and lunch boxes provided by the parents with their child’s name.

1. Students with severe food allergies must only eat food including lunches/snacks and treats that has been prepared at home or provided or consented by the parent.

2. Photos of all students with severe allergies requiring epipen management will be kept in a medical folder in each classroom, playground duty bags, staffroom, office and first aid room.

3. The use of food in crafts, cooking classes and science experiments may need to be restricted depending on the allergies of particular children.

4. The risk of a life threatening anaphylaxis from casual skin contact, even with highly allergenic foods such as peanuts, appears to be very low. On occasions casual skin contact will provoke urticarial reactions (hives). Simple hygiene measures such as hand washing and bench-top washing are considered appropriate

5. Our risk minimisation approach also includes asking parents of classmates to use alternatives to peanut butter and nutella on sandwiches and lunches and avoid sending raw nuts and muesli bars that contain nuts if a class member has a peanut allergy. (see Appendix 1)

6. On school camps where there are children with a severe nut allergy, it will be requested that foods containing nuts are not taken or supplied, consistent with the nut minimisation policy.

Special Days (Fun Lunches) organised by the Parents and Friends

7. Parent volunteers assisting with Fun Lunches will be instructed in the procedure for distributing food to classes by the P&F member in charge of the Fun Lunch

8. Due to the wide variety of allergies to food and due to the complex nature of allergies and other food related medical conditions, the Parents and Friends will not be responsible for providing Fun Lunches to students with food allergies.

9. Parents of students with allergies and other food related medical conditions have the option of providing alternative food on Fun Lunch Days to support the inclusion of those students. (see Appendix 1)

Policy developed by staff and Education Advisory Board and ratified by the Education Advisory Board in May 2008

Review date: This policy will be reviewed and amended by staff at the commencement of each year and or as necessary.

Reviewed and amended by the Education Advisory Board in May 2013

Reference:
ASCIA Guidelines for prevention of food anaphylactic reactions in schools, preschools and childcare centres. (June 2004) The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) is the peak professional body of Clinical Allergists and Immunologists in Australia and New Zealand.
29th April, 2013

Dear Parents,

I am writing to inform you that students in _____ have **life threatening allergies to nuts, dairy, fish or eggs.** We therefore request your cooperation in refraining from sending foods that contain peanuts or nuts to school. Children who have anaphylaxis do eat in the same room as their classmates.

We realize that this request may inconvenience you when preparing your child’s snack and lunch, and we express appreciation for your support and understanding about this issue.

Thank you for your assistance.

Mr Andrew Butler
Principal
The Provision and Distribution of Food at St Agnes’

All volunteers assisting in the preparation and distribution of food at St Agnes’ School must read and understand the following:

**Fun Lunches**

- The Parents and Friends will organise and provide optional Fun Lunches for students. Due to the complex nature of allergies and other food related medical conditions the Parents and Friends are not able to cater for students with food allergies. The parents of students with allergies or food related conditions will be given the option to provide an alternative lunch to support the inclusion of these students.
- Fun Lunches organised by the Parents and Friends will be delivered to each class by the parent helpers. The Parents and Friends will provide a list of the names of students receiving Fun Lunches on the day for each class. The class teacher will be responsible for the distribution of lunches to students with the assistance of the parent volunteer. Fun lunches need to be distributed to classes by parent volunteers before the first lunchtime eating bell at 1:25pm.

**Lunch Orders**

- Student representatives from each class will collect their class lunches at the designated location before the first lunchtime eating bell at 1:25pm. These lunch orders must clearly state the name of the student. These lunches will then be distributed in the classroom under the supervision of the classroom teacher.

**Events Outside School Hours**

- Parents and carers are responsible for supervising the food consumed by their children at school events where food is available. Parents and carers are requested to supply alternative food for their children if required.