

ALLERGY AWARENESS GUIDELINES

This is an information document only. In respect to anaphylaxis, staff should refer to the *Anaphylaxis – Managing Anaphylaxis at School* policy. In the event of any inconsistency in documentation the *Anaphylaxis – Managing Anaphylaxis at School* policy and its Appendices shall take precedence.

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

OVERVIEW

William Clarke College is an Allergy Aware College.

However, our College is **not declared a nut free area** because we acknowledge 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 maintain the safety of the students at the College. The College will adopt industry best practice for independent schools in the management of students with allergies.

It is estimated that up to 2% of adults, 1 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 are 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. Approximately 10 people die from anaphylactic reactions each year in Australia³.

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 1 in 5 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 5 years and older
- Of those who have died from anaphylaxis, 90% have been allergic to nuts, 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.

MANAGEMENT

Students with diagnosed Anaphylactic reactions should be managed in accordance with the *Anaphylaxis – Managing Anaphylaxis at School* policy.

General Management

The College will encourage the exclusion of all nuts and nut products where students are present, including:

- Any type of nut
- Peanut butter
- Nutella or similar spreads
- Muesli bars containing actual nuts
- Nut biscuits
- Any food item containing nut products

At staff only events, or staff only locations, products that include nuts are able to be present and consumed as adult staff are responsible for managing their own food intake.

Recess and Lunch Time

- Bottles, other drinks and lunch boxes 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
- Primary 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 in question needs to be taken away from the risk student(s) and the other students to eat their lunch. The student in question should then wash out their mouth and wash their hands before re-joining the class. A note should be sent home by the Head of Sub School 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 their ingredients. Parents and students should be told not to bring in food containing nuts. There will be occasions when the College will require the parent/carer to supply the food or treats for the allergic student to enable them to participate in the class parties and special events safely. This is communicated to parents/carers by the classroom teacher.

In the Classroom

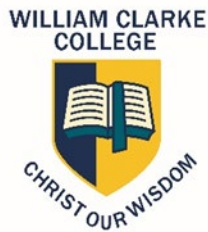
- Craft items can be risk items (for example, egg cartons, milk containers, peanut butter jars) and these items will be avoided
- Recipes will be chosen that do not contain high-risk ingredients for food preparation and cooking lessons
- Only non-food rewards are given.

On Camp 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). More information is included in the Anaphylaxis Documentation: Appendix 9 and -Managing Anaphylaxis at School policy.
- The College's Anaphylaxis procedures also encompass camps and excursions

Staff Resources

- Staff participate in Anaphylaxis training every two years, or more frequently on the basis of:



- Turnover of staff
- Enrolment of new students
- Changing needs of students
- Updates made to students' Individual Health Care Plans.
- 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
- Staff will be asked to not bring high-risk foods to the College if students are to be present.

PROMOTION

Information about allergies will be promoted by:

- Parents and caregivers being informed via Connect
- New families to the College community are informed via the Connect and the College website
- Staff are trained every two years in Anaphylaxis management
- Students being informed via teachers, signs, Assembly and via Connect.

References

¹Food Allergy Basics Helpsheet Food Allergy - Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (allergyfacts.org.au)

² Food Allergy - [Food Allergy - Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia \(allergyfacts.org.au\)](http://allergyfacts.org.au)

³ What is Anaphylaxis? <https://allergyfacts.org.au/allergy-anaphylaxis/what-is-anaphylaxis>

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