

ALLERGY AND ANAPHYLAXIS MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE CURRICULUM P-12

PROCEDURES

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1. Managing allergies and anaphylaxis within the curriculum

Schools must not use peanuts, tree nuts or any nut products in curriculum or extracurricular activities.

This does not include foods labelled as “may contain traces of nuts”.

These procedures support the [Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools](#) and are mandatory for all NSW government schools and preschools.

The procedures apply to **all** curriculum and extracurricular activities and are designed to assist all teachers when planning activities which may involve students in the preparation and/or sharing of food, to protect the health and safety of students and to implement requirements of the [Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools](#).

Within the school curriculum there is a potential risk of exposure to food allergens posed by all food preparation and food sharing activities. Such activities are an integral part of teaching and learning in Technology (Mandatory), Food Technology and VET Hospitality. Many other areas also provide students with food preparation, sharing or tasting opportunities including PDHPE, Languages, Science and Technology, History and Geography.

Some examples of extracurricular food related activities include:

- Multicultural Day and Harmony Day
- History Feast days, Language or cultural days
- Orientation days, transition programs and graduation events or celebrations
- Debating, public speaking, mock trial, and study days
- Musicals and other performances
- Workplace learning programs, including work placement and work experience
- Preschools preparing routine meals and snacks and cooking experiences for children.

This is not an exhaustive list. Schools are to assess all curriculum and extracurricular activities and events where students are involved in the preparation, sharing or tasting of food to ensure these activities comply with the *Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management within the Curriculum P-12 – Procedures*.

Additional care will be required where students from another school are involved and where activities are held out of school hours or during holidays as fewer staff may be available to supervise and assist in case of an emergency.

For advice about food related activities that are not curriculum based, such as the practice of parents providing birthday cakes, schools should refer to [Appendix 9](#) of *Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools* which provides strategies for minimising risk.

1.1 Rationale

Peanuts and tree nuts have been responsible for the highest number of fatal anaphylactic reactions in schools. Schools must not use peanuts¹, tree nuts² or any nut products in curriculum or extracurricular activities. This does not include foods labelled as “may contain traces of nuts”.

Students and their parents will not always be aware that they have a severe food allergy.

Anaphylactic reactions are usually preventable by implementing strategies for avoiding contact with allergens. For students diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis, it remains important that schools put in place strategies to minimise the risk of exposure to known allergens as part of individual health care planning.

Schools should not claim to be peanut or nut free or to have banned peanuts or tree nuts. Blanket food bans across a school are not recommended by health agencies.

There is a lack of evidence of the effectiveness of this measure and food bans can lead to a false sense of security and complacency about avoidance strategies. Schools cannot provide certainty about what parents and students may bring to school, even if they request peanuts and tree nuts not be sent.

2. Information about allergies and anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sometimes sudden allergic reaction. It can occur when a susceptible person is exposed to an allergen (such as a food or an insect sting). Reactions usually begin within minutes of exposure and can progress rapidly over a period of up to two hours or more.

Anaphylaxis is potentially life threatening and always requires an emergency response. Using an autoinjector to administer adrenaline and calling an ambulance is the emergency response for anaphylaxis.

Medical advice suggests that the incidence of anaphylaxis is increasing.

While deaths from food allergy are rare in Australia, peanuts and tree nuts have been responsible for the greatest number of fatal reactions. Almost any food can trigger a severe allergic response with more than 170 foods identified as the cause of an anaphylactic reaction including kiwi fruit, banana, chicken, mustard and celery.

There are 9 foods that account for 90% of all allergic reactions. They are:

- **peanuts¹**
- **tree nuts²**
- **milk**
- **egg**
- **fish**
- **shellfish**
- **sesame**
- **soy**
- **wheat**

Further information is available on the [Anaphylaxis page](#) of the Public Schools website and in the [Procedures](#) in [Appendix 9: Examples of strategies for minimising risk](#).

¹ Peanuts grow under the ground and are a legume and therefore from a different botanical family from tree nuts that grow on trees.

² Tree nuts (includes almonds, brazil nuts, cashews, chestnuts, hazelnuts, hickory nuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, walnuts and others)

2.1 Food bans

Blanket food bans or attempts to prohibit the entry of particular foods, such as peanuts and tree nuts, into schools are not recommended.

- They are difficult to enforce.
- They may produce a false sense of security for students with allergies and their parents when a “nut free” environment is promoted.
- There is a lack of evidence to support the effectiveness of such measures.
- They do not help educate students with allergies about how to manage their condition through avoidance strategies.

Schools need to deal with allergy cases on an individual basis and develop strategies to minimise the risk of a student with severe food allergies being exposed to known allergens.

2.2 Food sharing

The Department has given close consideration to whether it should develop or require schools to develop a policy that seeks to prohibit students from sharing food.

The Department has determined that:

- it is impracticable to enforce such a policy, particularly amongst secondary students
- there is a potential risk that a no food sharing policy approach will send food sharing ‘underground’ and could make students reluctant to advise a teacher if they feel unwell after ‘breaking a school rule’ and sharing food
- a no food sharing policy approach does not align with the principle that schools support students to develop independence in managing their own health care needs
- any claim that food sharing is banned at a school may lead to a false sense of security by students with severe allergies and their parents and to complacency about strategies to minimise exposure to known allergens for students with severe allergies.

3. Implications for teaching and learning activities

Planning is the key to minimising the risk of exposure for students diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis.

All staff should be familiar with the requirements of the *Allergies and Anaphylaxis Management within the Curriculum P-12 - Procedures*.

It is essential that staff understand that **peanuts, tree nuts or any nut products must not be provided or used** in any form in schools. This does not include foods labelled as “may contain traces of nuts”.

Ensure all staff understand that peanuts, tree nuts or nut products must not be used in any way in teaching and learning activities, including as rewards or treats. Staff should also be familiar with the [Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools](#) and the strategies for minimising risk and have completed mandatory training.

3.1 Processes and practices should be in place that:

- are consistent with the school’s management of allergies and anaphylaxis
- allow all staff, including school administrative staff, to manage and support a student diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis
- set aside meeting time to focus on supporting the management of anaphylaxis
- assist teachers in implementing the requirement to remove peanuts, nuts and nut products from all curriculum and extracurricular activities.
- identify how individual student needs will be integrated in curriculum planning and programming processes including planned excursions
- enable age appropriate education and [awareness raising](#) about anaphylaxis for all students
- monitor the understanding of students identified as being at risk of anaphylaxis and the appropriateness of risk mitigation strategies
- include ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the school’s management of allergies and anaphylaxis.
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3.2 Teachers including casual and practicum teachers:

- are aware how to respond in an emergency situation
- are aware of each student at risk of anaphylaxis, the substances they have a confirmed allergy to, the agreed strategies to minimise the student’s exposure to known allergens and where their adrenaline autoinjector is located and how to use it
- are aware that in addition to diagnosed students having their individual adrenaline autoinjector, the school has general use autoinjectors for use in an emergency and where they are located
- can easily access a copy of each student’s ASCIA ([Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy](#)) Action Plan for Anaphylaxis.

3.3 Support staff:

- are aware of students at risk of anaphylaxis and the foods (and/or other substances) to which they are allergic
- have completed required anaphylaxis [mandatory training](#).

Teachers and support staff should read [Appendix 9: Examples of strategies for minimising risk](#).

3.4 Key Considerations

Consider individual student needs in curriculum planning and programming processes, during unit and lesson planning and in teaching. Make adjustments to class and school activities.

Be aware of the students who have been diagnosed as allergic to identified allergens in your class and become familiar with their individual health care plan that takes account of the student's full range of learning and support needs.

Develop processes for activities that include the participation of students from other schools.

Ensure that students at risk of anaphylaxis are not excluded from activities or events. Some students are self-conscious about their condition and do not like to stand out or be seen to be treated differently in front of their peers. However, this must not compromise their safety.

Communicate the risk and severity of anaphylaxis to all students in your classes.

Reinforce to students the message that if they think a student is having an allergic reaction they should tell a teacher immediately. Do not advocate diagnosing the problem or providing emergency first aid treatment.

3.5 Communicating with parents

Communication with parents and raising awareness of the risks associated with food allergies and anaphylaxis is essential to ensure the safety of our students.

You may choose to include the following statement in permission and/or notification forms for curriculum or extracurricular activities involving students in the preparation and/or sharing of food:

In accordance with the policy of the Department, peanuts, tree nuts and nut products will be excluded from (the activity). This does not include foods labelled "may contain traces of nuts".

If food is being provided from home for (the activity) please ensure that peanuts, tree nuts and nut products are not used as ingredients.

You may choose to ask parents to provide a list of ingredients for food provided from home

4. Checklist when planning activities involving food

- I am familiar with the [Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools](#).
- I am familiar with systems for managing anaphylaxis within my school and faculty/stage.
- I know which students in my class/es have been diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis.
- I have communicated with the student/s in my classes diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis and their parents/carers, to ensure I am well informed about their condition.
- I have you completed anaphylaxis training requirements.
- I know where the school's general use [adrenaline autoinjectors](#) are stored.
- I have practised using the school's training autoinjector to familiarise myself with how to use the adrenaline autoinjector if required.
- Curriculum and extracurricular materials have been reviewed to make sure that peanuts, tree nuts and nut products have been eliminated.
- Procedures are in place for checking ingredient labels.
- Specific work practices, such as separate equipment, are in place for students at high risk of anaphylaxis.
- Teachers regularly discuss the risks associated with food sharing with students.
- Teachers regularly discuss the risks associated with anaphylaxis with students and remind them to immediately seek adult help if someone becomes sick or unwell.
- Students' personal [ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis](#) are clearly displayed in an easily accessible area for staff.
- A process is in place to ensure all support staff, casual staff and practicum teachers are familiar with your school and faculty/stage systems for managing anaphylaxis.
- A process is in place to ensure all support staff, casual staff and practicum teachers are informed of students diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis.
- A process is in place to ensure guest presenters and visitors are informed of students diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis.
- A process is in place for activities that include the participation of students from other schools.

Before the activity:

- I have ensured that all students have returned a signed permission/notification form for the activity/course
- I have checked the permission/notification forms and collated information
- I have identified each student at risk of anaphylaxis involved in the activity and their known allergens
- I have checked ingredient labels
- I have modified recipes/activities/work practices for students with identified food allergies eg. by eliminating or substituting ingredients
- I have discussed the modification to ingredients/activities and work practices with student/s with food allergies to ensure they understand why changes have been made. [This is a valuable part of their education in learning to manage their condition.]

During the activity:

- I have reminded all students of the risks associated with anaphylaxis and appropriate modification to ingredients and work practices that have been implemented to reduce the risk of exposure or cross-contamination.
- I have reminded students about the risks associated with food sharing and any protocols or procedures required by the school.

5. Technology (Mandatory), Food Technology and VET Hospitality food preparation classes

The most effective approach to preventing anaphylaxis is the avoidance of known allergens.

In all food preparation classes this means:

- **Do not use peanuts, tree nuts or any nut products** as ingredients in practical food preparation. This does not include foods labelled as “may contain traces of nuts”.
- Develop and implement strategies that minimise the risk of exposure to known allergens for any student who is diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis.

There are no syllabus requirements for the use of peanuts, tree nuts or nut products in Stage 4 Technology (Mandatory) or Stage 5 or Stage 6 Food Technology.

There are no curriculum requirements to use peanuts, tree nuts or nut products in VET Hospitality ([Hospitality Industry Curriculum Framework SIT12 V1.1](#)). It is unlikely that the elimination of peanuts, tree nuts and nut products from practical experiences would have any negative impact on learning outcomes in these subjects.

Students make subject choices at this stage of their education that may impact on future study and careers. Students diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis and their parents need to be provided with clear information and sound advice to help them make informed subject choices for Stages 5 and 6.

5.1 Workplace learning

NSW secondary schools offer two main types of workplace learning program – work experience and work placement. Activities related to workplace learning may involve students in the preparation, sharing and/or tasting of food.

Teachers will need to ensure that a student diagnosed as being at risk of anaphylaxis has identified this on the Student Placement Record, a copy of which is given to employers. Students and their parents have a responsibility to also notify whether or not the student needs to carry an adrenaline auto injector when involved in work place learning. When necessary, a copy of a student’s ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis will be provided to employers.

The use of peanuts, tree nuts and nut products during work placements in commercial establishments cannot be restricted. As a result, schools need to make informed decisions about the suitability of work places for students diagnosed as being at risk of anaphylaxis. Effective and ongoing communication with employers who provide work place learning opportunities for these students is essential.

Learning to implement avoidance strategies and manage their allergy condition beyond school is a valuable part of the student’s education.

6. Resources and support documents

6.1 Teacher resources

[Anaphylaxis: food preparation and sharing](#) is an online learning resource, developed by the Department and targeted at Year 7 – 10 students who engage in subjects with a food preparation and/or food sharing component. It has been developed to:

- raise student awareness of food allergies and recognition of anaphylaxis as a potentially life threatening condition
- increase student knowledge of the signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction
- ensure students know how to respond if an anaphylactic reaction is suspected
- raise student awareness of issues surrounding food sharing and the implications for students diagnosed as being at risk of anaphylaxis.

A teacher guided approach is recommended as this will provide opportunities to share thoughts and experiences, explore alternatives, consider 'what ifs', suggest how best to respond, and discuss the reasons behind any decisions.

6.2 Support documents

NSW Department of Education and Communities, Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/studentsupport/studenthealth/conditions/anaphylaxis/guidelines/anaphylaxis-procedures.pdf>

NSW Public Schools, Student Health, Anaphylaxis

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/conditions/anaphylaxis/index.php

NSW Department of Education and Communities, Preventing and responding to Anaphylaxis

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/newsbuzz/yr2012/nov/anaphylaxis.htm>

NSW Department of Education and Communities, What do schools need to do?

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/studentsupport/studenthealth/conditions/anaphylaxis/what-schools-need-to-do.pdf

NSW Department of Education and Communities, Workplace Learning Policy

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/worklearn/worklearnpolicy.html>

NSW Health, Factsheet Allergies and Anaphylaxis

www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2009/pdf/sa_reaction.pdf

Sydney Children's Hospital Factsheet: Allergy – Peanut

www.sch.edu.au/health/factsheets/joint/?peanut_allergy.htm

Sydney Children's Hospital Factsheet: Allergy – Tree Nut (Almond, Brazil, Cashew, Hazelnut, Macadamia, Pecan, Pine, Pistachio and Walnut)

www.sch.edu.au/health/factsheets/joint/?tree_nut_allergy.htm

Further factsheets cover egg, fish, fruit and vegetables, milk, latex and soy allergies

Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia

www.allergyfacts.org.au

(The charity also sells resources to support teaching and learning activities.

www.allergyfacts.org.au/links/online-store)

Be a MATE (Make Allergy Treatment Easier) program www.allergyfacts.org.au/images/pdf/mateinfo.pdf

Contact information

For further information about *Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools* contact your Educational Services Team, Disability Programs Consultant or the Student Engagement and Interagency Partnerships Unit.
