

Managing anaphylaxis (severe allergic reactions) at school

Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools 2012 are mandatory for NSW government schools and preschools.

What is 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.** Further information about anaphylaxis is found at Appendix 5.

Providing support to students at risk of anaphylaxis

It is the responsibility of the parent¹ to notify the school that their child has an allergy and is at risk of anaphylaxis. This notification should occur either at the time of enrolment, or if the student is already enrolled, as soon after diagnosis as possible.

As with other serious health conditions, it is important that schools put in place strategies to manage a student at risk of anaphylaxis at school or while the student is engaged in school related activities. For this support to be effective it is important that:

- a partnership is established between the parent and the school to share information and clarify expectations
- every reasonable effort is made to minimise the exposure of a student who is at risk of anaphylaxis to known allergens within the school environment and during school related activities (Appendices 8 and 9)
- the full range of the student's learning and support needs are identified in relation to their anaphylaxis
- an ASCIA² Action Plan for Anaphylaxis, signed and dated by the student's doctor is provided to the school by the parent for the individual student (Appendix 7).

If written information provided by the parent from a doctor confirms that their child has been assessed as being at risk of anaphylaxis, an individual health care plan (Appendices 6, 7 and 8) must be formulated by the principal or their delegated executive staff in consultation with the parent and relevant staff, and where practicable, the student and their doctor.

The individual health care plan must include an ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis for the individual student signed by their doctor (Appendix 7) and a plan for the avoidance of known allergens (Appendix 8), developed by the school with regard to their particular environment and drawing on advice from the student where practicable, and the student's parent and

¹ In this document the term parent is used to refer to parent, parents or carer or if the student is living independently the student.

² ASCIA- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy

doctor. Planning must take into account the student's full range of learning and support needs including their age, maturity, ability to understand their condition, and any factors that may affect the student's health, safety and wellbeing while at school, for example, learning difficulties or an intellectual disability. In addition, the severity of an anaphylactic reaction can be influenced by the presence of asthma.

Educating other students and their parents about anaphylaxis is important:

- to gain their support in minimising the risk of the affected student's exposure to allergens
- to alert other students to the need to immediately inform a teacher if they become aware a classmate has come into contact with an allergen
- to minimise the potential for teasing or provocation that may result in risk taking associated with allergens, e.g. peanuts. (Appendix 9).

Note: Symptoms of severe allergic reactions or anaphylaxis can occur when there is no history of known allergies. This situation should be treated as an emergency. An adrenaline autoinjector should be administered, if available, an ambulance called and first aid provided until expert help arrives.