

Allergies and Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction. It occurs when a person is exposed to an allergen to which they are sensitive.

Allergens or trigger substances that may cause anaphylaxis in school-aged children are: peanuts; tree nuts; fish; shellfish; eggs; cow's milk; insect stings; certain medications. Other potential allergens may include soy, sesame, wheat, seeds, coconut and latex.

While we suggest that parents are mindful of the foods they pack in lunch boxes and the dangers they may pose to students with anaphylactic reactions, it is important for all parents and community members to understand that we do NOT claim to be a 'Nut-Free' or 'Egg-Free' school. This is consistent with the Education Queensland Anaphylaxis Guidelines for Queensland State Schools, which state:

“Although it may be possible to minimise students' exposure to potential allergens within the school environment, the implementation of blanket food bans or attempts to prohibit the entry of particular food substances into schools is not supported by Education Queensland, Queensland Health and the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA). Schools should not make claims that their school is 'peanut/nut free' as this is impossible to guarantee and may lead to a false sense of security about exposure to allergens.” As students can be allergic to several foods it is not possible, nor practical, to remove all food allergens from schools. Nor is it possible to remove all insects that students are allergic to.

Our school has strategies in place to minimise the risks posed by anaphylaxis. Some of these include:

- We maintain a minimum of one school adrenaline auto-injector stored within a school first aid kit.
- We encourage children to wash hands before and after eating.
- We teach students that sharing food and utensils is not permitted.
- The tuckshop coordinator is aware of issues related to anaphylaxis and measures to reduce the incidence of an emergency event.
- Students with anaphylaxis have Anaphylaxis Action Plans.
- All staff members are trained in anaphylaxis management and in administering an adrenaline auto-injector.