



Nut Free School Policy

What is Anaphylaxis?

This term refers to a number of reactions within the body, including hives, itching, swelling, watery eyes, runny nose, vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach cramps, coughing, wheezing, throat tightness/closing, difficulty swallowing, difficulty breathing, dizziness, fainting, loss of consciousness or a change of skin colour. The most dangerous symptoms are breathing difficulties or a drop in blood pressure, which can be potentially fatal.

What is our responsibility as a school?

Anaphylaxis is rare, but preventable and treatable. It is the aim of St. Joseph's to establish and maintain a nut-free environment, for the safety of children who are anaphylactic to nuts and for those children who have unknown allergies to these products. The school will provide staff with training in the recognition, prevention and necessary treatment of anaphylaxis in children under their care. It is recognised that this is a life-long and potentially fatal disability, which is to be treated with the highest priority.

How can Anaphylaxis be prevented?

If the school is advised that a child has been medically diagnosed as anaphylactic to nuts, he/she will be identified to staff and emergency action plan procedures developed. The action/treatment plan will identify known triggers and symptoms where these are advised by a medical practitioner and provided by the parents/guardians of the child. (The parents/guardians of the child may choose to provide a MedicAlert bracelet or necklace for identification of the particular allergy concerned).

An action/treatment plan will include a photograph of the child, the child's name, emergency contact details, specific allergy, warning signs of reaction and emergency treatment required. The action/treatment plan will be displayed in the Principal's office and a photograph of the child will be displayed in the staffroom.

The parents/guardians should provide adrenalin (in the form of a self-administering Epipen) for storage at the school. The responsibility of providing an action/treatment plan and Epipens (there should always be two Epipens as part of the child's treatment pack) is that of the parents/guardians of the child concerned. It is also their responsibility to ensure the medication is within the prescribed use-by period and the action/treatment plan is up to date.

The Epipen and any medicines will be stored in the Office with the child's treatment plan. It should be stored at room temperature away from bright light. If stored in a cupboard or drawer, this should not be locked, to ensure easy access if required. If the child is old enough, he/she should carry an Epipen with them at all times.

How can we control exposure to the allergen?

- There should be no trading or sharing of food, food utensils or food containers.
- Surfaces such as tables/equipment will be washed clean of contaminating foods.
- The use of food in crafts and cooking classes may need to be restricted.

- Staff will be trained annually in the use of an EpiPen and of the importance in recognising a potential anaphylactic reaction. Preparation for this training should be done prior to the commencement of a new school year.
- Children attending the school will be educated on the danger of allergies and anaphylaxis, both in general interaction and more formal education such as classroom discussion and video explanation. This will be done annually.
- Ingredients labelled “may contain nuts” are not to be provided to the allergic child but are safe for consumption by children in his/her vicinity.
- Parents/guardians of children will be requested and encouraged to not provide food containing nut products within the school grounds.
- Should a child bring food containing nuts to school, the food should be taken away, placed in a sealable plastic bag and disposed of. Alternative food should be provided from the canteen and a note sent home with the child explaining the reason for enforcing a nut free environment at our school.

Note: The adrenalin within an EpiPen will not cause permanent damaging side effects if administered unnecessarily. Known side effects are increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, nausea or headache. The risk of not giving adrenalin is greater than any potential risk of giving it.