

# Wallaroo Primary School

## Nut & Allergies Awareness Policy

### **Rationale**

The policy is founded on the belief that DECD requires schools to promote and construct learning environments that are safe and supportive. Students and staff may have anaphylactic (severe allergic) conditions that include nut allergies. This means that exposure at school may constitute a risk to their health and wellbeing. It is not possible to guarantee that the environment will be completely free of potential hazards due to current food processing practices. The emphasis is therefore on raising awareness and adopting the reasonable procedures termed as 'Nut Awareness'.

This policy has been developed using the Australian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) *Guidelines for Prevention of Food Anaphylactic Reactions in Schools, Preschools and Childcare Centres*

### **Aims**

- To raise awareness of severe allergies for all members of the school community and show care and concern for others within our community
- To provide a safe school environment for all members of the school community
- To reduce the incidence of nut products brought to school
- To support families of children who send their child to school and try to allow them to have as normal a childhood as possible
- To support students in developing strategies for managing their severe allergy in the wider community as well as at school

### **Management:**

Where a parent of a child with a allergy to nuts or nut products has alerted the school to this fact (backed by medical evidence / documentation), the school will manage the situation in the following way:

### **Role of the Leadership team**

- To inform parents of the Allergies and Nut Awareness Policy when they enrol their children
- School community regularly informed via newsletters and other correspondence about the Allergies and Nut Awareness Policy
- Governing Council being informed and giving approval and support to this policy
- Staff being informed and participate in training opportunities to understand how to deal with Anaphylaxis (severe allergic reactions)
- Raise awareness with staff about suitable food being brought in for morning tea and food available for staff consumption during the day in the staff room
- Ensure staff are made aware of students or staff members who have anaphylactic responses, including nut allergy, action plan with students photo
- Ensure that signage is placed in prominent areas e.g Front Office, Canteen, Gymnasium stating that the school acknowledges that due to food processing practices it is impractical to eliminate nut or nut products entirely from an environment where there is food, thus the school is "Nut Aware"
- Ensure that all staff have a copy of the proforma that teachers can use to send home if a product containing nuts is sent to school
- Ensure the school website is updated with information relating to this policy

### **Role of Teachers**

- Supervise students during lunch eating time and being vigilant in regard to this policy. Students who bring food to school that contains nuts or nut products will be asked to eat food away from other students and to wash hands before going to play. Family will be contacted to explain our policy and offer support in providing alternatives for food at school
- To be vigilant and respond appropriately to students who tease, harass or bully students about their allergy
- Encourage students not to share food
- Inform students and their families about this policy
- Inform students and their families when there is a student in the class with severe allergic reaction
- Ensure information about the policy is included in notes that go home about shared food opportunities e.g. class parties
- Participate in training to understand procedures related to anaphylaxis as the need arises
- Encourage students to wash hands after eating
- Provide education to students with - modified first aid course / session with a component on anaphylaxis with the advise of a direct health care professional to provide age appropriate education

### **Role of students**

- To have an understanding of the need to provide a safe environment for all students through participation in educational programs incorporated within the curriculum
- To not share food unless there is a class party where class teachers and other trusted adults supervise
- To take responsibility for their own behaviours and not tease, harass or bully students about their allergy

### **Role of Parents / Caregivers**

- Requested not to send food to school that contain nuts or nut products. This includes products such as peanut paste, 'Nutella', most nuts, peanut cooking oil and other foods that may contain nuts. This information will be distributed regularly throughout the year through school newsletters, class newsletters, on the school website and through school enrolment packs.
- Understand that students bringing food that contains nuts or nut products will be asked to eat that food away from any other students
- Supply frozen "party food" eg. Cake etc for events such as birthdays & class parties
- If parents choose to supply birthday cake etc remind them of nut awareness policy

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed by staff and Governing Council every two years, or when a enrolled child or a new enrolling child is / has a diagnosed food / nut allergy.

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed with students, parents and community input as part of the school's review cycle.

*This school acknowledges that due to food processing practices it is impractical to eliminate nuts or nut products entirely from an environment where there is food. Many food packaging labels include the phrase 'may contain traces of nuts'. Foods with packaging labels that contain the phrase 'may contain traces of nuts' are acceptable. Thus 'Nut Aware' school.*

## INFORMATION

### What Happens When a Person Has a Nut or Peanut Allergy?

When a person with a nut or peanut allergy eats a nut, peanut, or a food that contains nuts or peanuts, the immune system unleashes an army of chemicals to protect the body. The release of these chemicals can affect the respiratory system, gastrointestinal tract, skin, and the cardiovascular system — causing allergy symptoms like wheezing, nausea, headache, stomach-ache, and itchy hives.

People with food/nut and peanut allergies could have a mild reaction - or it could be more severe. People also react differently in terms of how quickly they may have symptoms of an allergy. A reaction to a particular food could take place immediately, or a person may not feel anything until a few hours after eating it. Most reactions last less than a day and may affect any of three body systems:

- **the skin** — in the form of red, bumpy rashes (hives), eczema, or redness and swelling around the mouth
- **the gastrointestinal tract** — in the form of belly cramps, diarrhoea, nausea, or vomiting
- **the respiratory tract** — symptoms can range from a runny nose, itchy, watery eyes, and sneezing to the triggering of asthma with coughing and wheezing

People have different allergic reactions to food/nuts and peanuts. Some people may not even recognise an allergic reaction. In fact, people sometimes confuse an allergy with a cold, especially if it's the first time it happens.

In really bad cases, nut and peanut allergies can cause a condition called **anaphylaxis** (pronounced: ah-nuh-fuh-lak-sus). This is a sudden, potentially severe allergic reaction that can involve various systems in the body (such as the skin, respiratory tract, gastrointestinal tract, and cardiovascular system). **This can cause a person's blood pressure to drop, airways to narrow, and tongue to swell, resulting in serious breathing difficulty, loss of consciousness, and, in some cases, even death.** Anaphylaxis usually occurs minutes after exposure to a triggering substance, such as a peanut, but some reactions may be delayed by as long as 4 hours.

Some people may be so sensitive to nuts and peanuts that they get an allergic reaction just from breathing in small particles of that food. If you are one of these people, just being around nuts and peanuts can cause you to have an allergic reaction, even if you don't touch them or know they are there. This is the reason why some airlines have stopped serving peanuts to their passengers.

Although some people outgrow certain food allergies (like milk or egg allergy) over time, this doesn't usually happen in people who have nut and peanut allergies. But the good news is that, over time, people with nut and peanut allergies usually become really good at avoiding the foods that make them sick.