

MacKillop Catholic College

Allergy Awareness and Management Policy

Overview

This policy is concerned with a whole school approach to the health care management of those members of the school community suffering from specific allergies. MacKillop Catholic College adheres to the Health Support Guidelines developed by the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), South Australia.

Rationale

MacKillop Catholic College is committed to ensuring that all students, staff and volunteers in our care are safe and that their well-being is maintained. Allergies are becoming a more frequent occurrence in our community ⁽²⁾. Consequently, we must be more vigilant in responding to the needs of those students, staff and volunteers with identified allergies.

Given the variety of possible allergens, banning products does not safeguard the school community from environmental risks with confidence.

Our College's position, and the intent of the policy, is to minimise the risk of exposure to allergens by any adult or child suffering allergy-induced anaphylaxis whilst at school or attending any school related activity, encourage self-responsibility, and plan for effective responses to possible emergencies.

The common causes of allergies relevant to this policy are nuts (in particular peanuts), dairy products, eggs, wasps, bees and ants. An allergic reaction to nuts is the most common high-risk allergy, and as such it demands more rigorous controls throughout the policy.

MacKillop Catholic College is committed to applying five key principles in developing an allergy-aware environment and in the management of allergic reactions. These are:

- Obtaining medical information relevant to known allergies;
- The establishment of effective risk management practices to minimise the student, staff, parent and visitor exposure to known triggers where possible;
- Staff training and education to ensure effective emergency response to any allergic reaction situation;
- Age-appropriate student education on allergy awareness and self-responsibility; and,
- Regular review and monitoring of all Health Management Plans.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the MacKillop Catholic College community, including:

- Students;
- College Staff;
- Parents/Guardians;
- Volunteers;
- Canteen Staff;
- Relief Staff; and,
- Out-of-School-Hours Care Staff.

Definitions

Allergy	A condition in which the body has an exaggerated response to a substance (e.g. food or drug). This is also known as hypersensitivity.
Allergen	A normally harmless substance that triggers an allergic reaction in the immune system of a susceptible person.
Anaphylaxis	Anaphylaxis, or anaphylactic shock, is a sudden, severe, and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction to food, stings, bites or medicines.
EpiPen	Brand name for syringe style device containing the drug Adrenalin, which is ready for immediate inter-muscular administration.
Minimised-Risk Environment	An environment where risk management practices (e.g. Risk assessment forms) have minimised the risk of allergen exposure.
Health Management Plan	A detailed document outlining an individual student's condition and treatment, and action plan for location of the EpiPen.

Key Strategies

General Strategies

- The involvement of parents, staff and the student in establishing individual **Health Management Plans**;
- The establishment and maintenance of practices for effectively communicating individual student medical plans to all relevant staff;
- The incorporation of **Allergy Management Strategies** into the risk assessments for all school events, excursions and sporting activities;
- Staff training in anaphylaxis management, including awareness of triggers and first aid procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency;

- Age-appropriate education of the children with severe food allergies; and,
- Parents/Guardians being requested to carefully consider eliminating allergenic foodstuffs from their child's lunch boxes and celebratory events.

Nut-Related Strategies

- The canteen, P&F Association and outside caterers are made aware of the **Allergy Management Policy** and requested to eliminate nuts and food items with nuts as ingredient from their operations;
- Classroom teachers promote hand washing before and after eating;
- Commitment to a no food and drink sharing policy;
- All parents are asked to not send foods in school lunches that contain nuts, peanuts, tree nuts or 'nut traces'; and,
- Age-appropriate education of the children with severe nut allergies - peanut and tree nut.

Dairy and Egg-Related Strategies

- Students with dairy product or egg allergies are managed by the school in consultation with the parents/guardians on a case by case basis; and,
- Age-appropriate education of the children with the severe dairy/egg allergy.

Insect-Related Strategies

- Diligent management of wasp and ant nests on school grounds;
- Education of students to report significant presence of insects in play areas; and,
- Age-appropriate education of the children with severe insect allergies.

Procedures and Responsibilities for Allergy Management

1. Medical Information

- Employees, volunteers and parents of children are responsible for providing, in writing, ongoing accurate and current medical information to the school. The school will seek updated information via medical form at the commencement of each calendar year. Furthermore, any change in an employee's, volunteer's or child's medical condition during the year must be reported to the school.
- For students with an allergic condition, the school requires parents /guardians to provide written evidence from a doctor (GP), which explains the condition, defines the allergy triggers and any required medication.
- The **School Administration Team** will ensure there is an effective system for the management of medical information.
- The **School Administration Team** will ensure that a **Health Management Plan** (Action Plan) is established and updated for each child with a known allergy.

- Teachers and teacher aids of those students and key staff are required to review and familiarise themselves with the medical information.
- Each class teacher will receive an **Ascertained and Medical Alert** document in his /her class folder.
- Action Plans with a recent photograph for any students with allergies will be posted in relevant rooms (including canteen) with parental permission.
- Where students with known allergies are participating in **camps and/or excursions**, the risk assessments and safety management plans for those camps and excursion will include each student's individual allergy **Health Management Plan** (Action Plan).
- Relevant sports coaches are provided with medical information and individual **Health Management Plan** for any student with a known allergy prior to undertaking the activity.
- The wearing of a medic-alert bracelet is recommended by the College.

2. EpiPens

Where EpiPens (Adrenalin) are required in the **Health Management Plan**:

- **Parents/Guardians are responsible for the provision and timely replacement of the EpiPens;**
- The EpiPens are located securely in relevant locations approved by the principal; and,
- Student EpiPens will be located in relevant classrooms and in the First Aid room. All teachers are required to take their classroom keys in order to access classrooms.

3. Minimised-Nut-Environment

MacKillop will promote the following food allergy information through the school website, parent handbook, class letters, newsletter articles, and parent support meetings including P&F Meetings.

Whole-School Responsibility Regarding Food from Home

Parents are urged to pack student snacks and lunches that contain:

- No peanuts;
- No nuts of any type;
- No foods with peanut or nut derivatives or ingredients (e.g. Nutella); and,
- No foods that contain some traces of peanut (where possible).

Canteen

Canteen management will be consulted, and work with the school administration team in preparing foods under the following guidelines:

- No peanuts;
- No nuts of any type;
- No foods with peanut or nut derivative or ingredient (e.g. Nutella); and,
- No foods that contain some traces of peanut (where possible).

It is expected that canteen staff are made aware of the risk of cross-contamination when preparing foods.

Parents are expected to make themselves aware of tuckshop foods and train their children to avoid any products they consider 'unsafe'

Camps / Excursion

- The teacher coordinating the activity shall check with any food provider and ensure 'safe' food is provided, or that an effective control is in place to minimise risk of exposure.
- Where a student is prescribed an EpiPen, all staff present during the activity shall be made aware of the appropriate medical treatment as outlined in the students individual **Health Management Plan**.

Barbecues and Celebrations

Where a barbecue or celebration is planned, the coordinating group (e.g. P&F) are responsible for ensuring that peanuts, peanut products or peanut oil are not used.

After School Study in the Library

- The director and staff member coordinating the activity shall check with any food provider and ensure 'safe' food is provided, or that an effective control is in place to minimise risk of exposure.
- Where a student is prescribed an EpiPen, all staff present during the activity shall be made aware of the appropriate medical treatment as outlined in the students individual **Health Management Plan**.

References & Acknowledgements

1. Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) website (www.chess.sa.edu.au)
2. Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) website.
3. Brisbane Catholic Education – Health and Safety Services
4. Interim Anaphylaxis Guidelines for Queensland schools (Education Queensland)
5. Anaphylaxis Australia Organisation
6. Anaphylaxis in Education and Children's Services publication

Adapted from the St. Therese School Colonel Light Gardens Allergy Management Draft Policy (May 2011) and from policies of the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), South Australia.