

Allergy Aware School Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to address the serious nature of Food Allergies and the steps Sidrah Gardens School is taking to become an 'Allergy Aware' school, by informing staff, parents and students about the associated risks of these food allergies.

POLICY

Food allergies are real. Currently, there is no cure for food allergies. Avoidance of the food is the only way to prevent a reaction. A food allergic reaction can quickly become life-threatening. The number of children with food allergies in Australia is increasing and it is estimated that 1 in 20 have a food allergy and 1 in 50 have a peanut allergy. The most common food allergies are peanuts, tree nuts (walnuts, almonds, cashews, etc.), cow's milk, soy, seafood, wheat and eggs. Many children will 'outgrow' their food allergies; however, reactions to nuts, honey, seeds and seafood tend to be lifelong. The symptoms of food allergy range from mild to life-threatening and anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction.

Why are nuts a problem?

Peanuts and other nuts are the most likely foods to cause anaphylaxis.

Nuts are hard to avoid due to their widespread use.

Nut allergies tend to persist. That is, less than 1 in 5 children will 'outgrow' their nut allergy.

The slightest trace can trigger symptoms, for example, handling a receptacle in which nuts have been stored.

Why is it important that schools become allergy aware and allergy friendly?

In Australia, more than 90% of fatal reactions to food have occurred in children aged 5 years and older. Of those who have died from anaphylaxis, 90% have been allergic to nuts, the exposure was accidental and usually away from the home (including at school). We need to accept that food allergies are serious and that food allergies can be fatal.

The symptoms of a mild to moderate allergic reaction can include:

swelling of the lips, face and

eyes hives or welts abdominal

pain and/or vomiting

Symptoms of anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction) can

include: difficulty breathing or noisy breathing swelling of the

tongue swelling/tightness in the throat

difficulty talking and/or a hoarse voice
wheezing or persistent coughing loss of
consciousness and/or collapse young
children may appear pale and floppy

At Sidrah Gardens as a result of this situation, we are taking steps to become an 'Allergy Aware' school, by informing staff, parents and students about the associated risks of these food allergies.

While Sidrah Gardens strives to be a 'nut free' environment, the School cannot guarantee it is entirely free of allergy producing products.

Our recommendation is that, whilst at school, any child who suffers from a nut allergy or any other severe food allergy should only eat food prepared at home.

Sidrah Gardens asks that parents of children with food allergies educate them in safe eating and food handling habits, including not accepting food from others.

Sidrah Gardens requires that parents/carers inform the School either at enrolment or diagnosis of the student's allergies and whether the student has been diagnosed as being at risk of anaphylaxis.

Below are some guidelines, which will assist parents, students and staff to maintain an awareness of these allergies.

The following information is based on guidelines produced by the Australian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia and the Heart Foundation. They are practical strategies, which require small changes to provide a much safer environment for children with allergies.

Sidrah Gardens promotes healthy eating and food allergy awareness related to food.

Sidrah Gardens urges students, parents and guardians not to send high risk foods to school.

Sidrah Gardens will ensure that food preparation in the School /kitchen is carried out by trained food handlers.

At Sidrah Gardens staff are informed as to the medical conditions of potential anaphylactic and other severe food allergic students.

At Sidrah Gardens, staff are advised of the potential hazards of some materials likely to be used in an educational setting.

Where students from Sidrah Gardens are involved in an overnight stay, Sidrah Gardens ensures that staff and providers are made aware of student allergies as notified to the School on medical forms.

Sidrah Gardens has trained staff in anaphylaxis awareness, including the use of epi-pens and will ensure that such training occurs regularly.

All parents at Sidrah Gardens should provide accurate, current medical information to the School, including medical plans for the management of severe food and other allergies. These should be kept current and updated regularly where necessary.

www.allergyfacts.org.au