ALLERGY AWARENESS AND MANAGEMENT POLICY
SENIOR SCHOOL

Rationale
In most schools, some students have an allergy and are anaphylactic – a condition that can be life-threatening. Committed to providing a safe environment for all students, Saint Ignatius’ College has adopted an allergy-awareness policy to support students who are at risk of an allergic reaction.

What is anaphylaxis?
Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction. It occurs when a person is exposed to an allergen (such as a food or an insect bite). An anaphylactic reaction requires an emergency response. Prompt treatment with injected adrenaline is required to halt progression; this can be life-saving. Fortunately, anaphylactic reactions are usually preventable through implementation of strategies for avoiding allergens (refer to Specific risk minimisation strategies to avoid allergens).

Common allergens for anaphylaxis are:
• foods (e.g., peanuts and nuts, shellfish and fish, milk, egg)
• insect bites (e.g., bee, wasp, jumper ants)
• medications (e.g., antibiotics, aspirin)
• latex (e.g., rubber gloves, balloons, swimming caps).

The severity of an anaphylactic reaction is influenced by a number of factors, such as exercise, hot weather, and, in the case of food allergens, the amount to which the person is exposed, whether ingested, touched, or inhaled. In the case of severe food allergies, an anaphylactic reaction is usually (but not always) triggered by ingestion of the food.

The College can help by assisting students to avoid allergens and by ensuring that an emergency response plan is in place. Furthermore, staff can assist in preventing allergic reactions in children at risk by enacting protocols designed to minimise the risk of students being exposed to potentially dangerous allergens. In addition, the early recognition of the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis may save lives, thus allowing prompt administration of first aid and contact of the appropriate emergency medical services.

How can you recognise an anaphylactic reaction?
Reactions usually begin within minutes of exposure, and can progress rapidly at any time over a period of two hours. A student at risk of anaphylaxis will often recognise the early symptoms of an allergic reaction before any other signs are observable.

Common symptoms are:
• flushing and/or swelling of the face
• itching and/or swelling of the lips, tongue, or mouth
• itching and/or a sense of tightness in the throat, hoarseness, difficulty breathing and/or swallowing
• hives, itchy rash and/or swelling about the face, body, or extremities
• nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting
• shortness of breath, repetitive coughing and/or wheezing
• faintness, light-headedness, rapid pulse, low blood pressure, collapse
• distress, anxiety and/or a sense of dread.

Family Responsibilities

1. All diagnosed anaphylactic students must be made aware of their condition and the procedures involved if an allergic reaction occurs at school. “As children mature they are able to take more responsibility for their own care. It is primarily the responsibility of parents to teach allergic children to care for themselves as they mature.” (Vale, Smith, Said, Mullins and Loh, ASCIA guidelines for prevention of anaphylaxis in schools, preschools and childcare 2015 update).

2. Parents must notify the College that their child is at risk of anaphylactic reaction either at the time of enrolment or, if the student is enrolled, as soon as possible after diagnosis. As with other health conditions, schools provide support to assist the parents in the management of their child’s health. For this support to be effective, it is important that:

• a partnership be established between the parent and the College to share information and clarify expectations
• the child’s medical doctor complete a Medical Alert/Anaphylaxis Action Plan Form that includes what medications are required for treatment
• parents supply an EpiPen(s) and/or other medications to the College and be responsible to check the expiry dates and keep the medications current
• parents remind Student Services, who will liaise with the teacher in charge, of medications that must accompany their child on class excursions and off-campus events
• parents maintain communication with Home Group Teacher, Year Level Coordinator, subject teachers, and other staff regarding specific risk-minimisation strategies to avoid allergens in relation to class and College activities and events.

College Responsibilities

1. Every reasonable effort will be made to minimise the exposure of students at risk of an allergic reaction to known allergens within the College environment (refer to Specific risk minimisation strategies to avoid allergens).

2. If a child has been diagnosed with a potentially life-threatening allergy, a meeting between the Year Level Coordinator, the child’s teachers, and the parents will occur to:

• discuss the College’s Allergy Awareness Policy with parents of an allergic child
• ensure parents complete and return relevant forms for the administration of medication at school (e.g., Action Plan)
• discuss strategies to avoid potential exposure to allergens in the student’s routine and issues to be addressed in implementing an emergency response plan in these situations.

• Consideration should be given to:
• routine classroom activities, including lessons in other locations around the College
• non-routine classroom activities and non-routine College activities on and off campus
• excursions
• before school, recess, lunchtime, and other breaks
• co-curricular sport and arts and activities.

3. Educate all students about anaphylaxis to help prevent exposure to allergens and to foster understanding and empathy for students who are at risk, and discuss the Allergy Awareness Policy in home groups.

https://nationalallergystrategy.org.au/images/doc/Allergy_Aware.presentation_seconda.ry_school_FINAL.pdf

4. At the start of each school year (and at other times where appropriate), remind all families that the College has an Allergy Awareness Policy, and provide information about allergies and anaphylaxis.

5. Ensure the tuckshop adheres to the Allergy Awareness Policy.

6. Ensure that parents provide the College with a current Medical Alert/Anaphylaxis Action Plan that has been completed by the prescribing doctor for each child who has been diagnosed with an allergy. This form must include a recent head-and-shoulders photograph of the child. A copy of the Action Plan will be:

• provided to the Year Level Coordinator, Home Group Teacher, subject teachers, and co-curricular coaches/managers
• readily accessible in the student file on College Database
• provided to the tuckshop (see separate tuckshop procedures)
• provided to the office of the Administrative Dean for relief teachers.

7. Ensure that all medications including EpiPens are clearly marked with the student’s name, and kept with their personal information in the infirmary and in other locations, as discussed with parents.

8. At the time of enrolment, prospective parents are to be notified of the College’s Allergy Awareness Policy.

9. Review Anaphylaxis Policy annually (medical information is updated each year) and at any other time where there are changes in:
• the student’s health needs
• staffing
• other factors that affect the plan; for example, when an anaphylactic reaction occurs.

10. As well as mandatory BELS training, provide additional opportunities for all staff to undergo training of allergy awareness, anaphylaxis, and the use of an EpiPen.

Step-By-Step Approach in Case of Incident

1. Enact individual student action plan.

2. Immediately alert Student Services, check student condition, assess situation. In the case of a reaction as a result of food, remove food responsible for incident (but do not dispose of, as medical staff may require).

3. Administer medication as necessary, in line with instructions and training (e.g., anti-histamine or Epi-Pen – these will be found in yard duty bag).

4. Student Services to immediately call an ambulance.

5. Contact parents/carers of student.

6. If necessary, continue to use medicines according to instructions.

7. Ensure ambulance is directed immediately to affected student.

8. Complete all required paperwork, including an Incident Report, and submit to Student Services staff.

Specific Risk Minimisation Strategies to Avoid Allergens

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<tr>
<th>For</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Who?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General Policy Issues</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>All staff and College community</strong></td>
<td>• Communication about severe allergies and the risk of anaphylaxis to families and staff at the beginning of each year via Ed Smart.</td>
<td>Office Manager/Infirmary</td>
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<td>• All staff are provided with information about children at risk of anaphylaxis and made aware of the anaphylaxis management plan at the College.</td>
<td>Infirmary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• As well as mandatory BELS training, allocate time for key staff to receive training in anaphylaxis management and emergency treatment. <a href="https://www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/anaphylaxis-resources/how-to-give-epipen">https://www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/anaphylaxis-resources/how-to-give-epipen</a> This course can also be undertaken as refresher training. ASCIA anaphylaxis e-training for child care is ACECQA-approved.</td>
<td>Administrative Dean</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Casual relief teachers</strong></td>
<td>• All staff, including casual relief teachers, to be provided with information about students at risk of anaphylaxis and made aware of the anaphylaxis management plan at the College.</td>
<td>Infirmary/Administrative Dean</td>
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| Fundraising events/special events/cultural days | Consider children with food allergy when planning any fundraisers, cultural days, or stalls for fair/fete days, breakfast mornings, etc.  
Notices may need to be sent to parent community discouraging specific food products (e.g., nuts) where appropriate.  
Where food is for sale, a list of ingredients should be available for each food.  
Staff to liaise with parents of any child at risk of anaphylaxis and alert them of an upcoming event. | Staff responsible for events |
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<tr>
<td>Minimising risk – food allergies</td>
<td>Educate all students about anaphylaxis to help prevent exposure to allergens and to foster understanding and empathy for students who are at risk, and discuss the Allergy Awareness Policy in home groups. This includes information about washing hands before and after meals, cleanliness around food, and not sharing lunches.</td>
<td>Year Level Coordinator/Home Group Teacher</td>
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### The Tuckshop

| Trigger foods in the tuckshop | Foods that ‘may contain traces of’ are suitable for sale in the tuckshop. However, it is advisable that students at risk not come into contact with these foods. Be familiar with tuckshop stock, read food labels, and identify which foods display advisory statements.  
Check food labels every time new stock arrives.  
Students with allergies should place lunch orders only through flexischools where the ‘Allergy Alert’ box needs to be ticked. It is recommended that in the case of severe allergy, as an added precaution, parents email the SS Tuckshop Manager to notify her/him of an order being placed.  
Food allergies can be transferred from one food to another during preparation, storage, and handling. All orders for students at risk will be processed first, with the use of separate equipment and utensils.  
Ensure all equipment used during food preparation is thoroughly washed after each use, and the area is cleaned.  
An ‘Allergy Board’ will be set up in the tuckshop with information of allergy, action plan, and photograph of students at risk. This will also record what the students at risk have ordered and consumed. | Student at risk and tuckshop staff  
Tuckshop Manager and staff  
Parent/students at risk  
Tuckshop Manager and staff |
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Administering medication</strong></th>
<th>• Teachers/staff to only administer medication to student according to Medical Action Plan</th>
<th>Staff member who administers prescribed medication</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Insect bite allergies in grassed and garden areas</strong></td>
<td>• Liaise with students about outdoor areas that are lowest risk.</td>
<td>Home Group Teacher/Year Level Coordinator and students at risk</td>
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<td>• Monitor number of plants in College grounds that attract bees.</td>
<td>Grounds staff</td>
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### In the Classroom

| **Food rewards** | • If food rewards are being used by teachers, students at risk of anaphylaxis should not be excluded. Liaise with parents so that suitable food can be provided for students at risk.  
• Remind other class members of trigger foods, and request that these foods be avoided.  
• Consider non-food rewards. | Home Group Teacher/Subject Teachers |
| **Class parties and celebrations** | As above. | Home Group Teacher/Subject Teachers |
| **Class activities** | **Cooking**  
• Engage parents of students at risk in discussions prior to cooking sessions and activities using food.  
• Remind all children to not share food they have cooked with others at school, including during recess and lunch breaks. | Staff responsible for activity/lesson and students at risk |
| | **Science Experiments**  
• Engage parents in discussion prior to experiments containing foods. | |
| | **Music**  
• There should be no sharing of wind instruments (e.g., recorders). | |
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<th><strong>Art and Craft</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher should discuss with the parent or guardian about providing the child’s own instrument if required.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ensure</strong> containers used by students at risk of anaphylaxis do not contain allergens (e.g., egg white or yolk on an egg carton).</td>
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<td>If bringing in materials to use in lessons, make sure they have been cleaned.</td>
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<td>Activities such as face painting or mask making (when moulded on the face of the students), should be discussed with parents prior to the event, as products used may contain food allergens such as peanut, tree nut, milk, or egg.</td>
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<td>Care should be taken with moulding clay, etc. Check that nut oils have not been used in their manufacture. Discuss options with parents or guardians of wheat/nut-allergic students. If unable to use certain materials, provide an alternative material for the students to use.</td>
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All teachers will need to consider students at risk of anaphylaxis when planning activities that involve food or other allergens in any teaching area, regardless of whether or not they currently have in their class a student who is at risk.

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<th><strong>Animal allergies</strong></th>
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<td>Animal feed may contain food allergens (e.g., nuts in birdseed and cow feed, milk and egg in dog food, fish in fish food). Be mindful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exposure to animals such as chickens, dogs, cats, rabbits, rats, mice, guinea pigs, and horses may trigger contact rashes, allergic rhinitis (hay fever), and sometimes asthma. Students with allergies to eggs may need to be particularly mindful around the chicken run.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff are advised to make contact with parents before any event involving contact with animals to ascertain if any precautions need to be taken to minimise any chance of allergic reaction.</td>
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<td>Families and staff are asked not to bring any animals or pets into the College grounds.</td>
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<th><strong>Excursions and other events</strong></th>
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<td>Anaphylaxis Action Plans and medication to accompany staff/students at risk on all excursions and events.</td>
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<td>Teachers organising/attending excursions or sporting events should provide a risk assessment that includes the roles and responsibilities of staff attending, should an anaphylaxis reaction occur.</td>
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All staff

Staff responsible for activity/lesson and students at risk

Staff responsible/Infirmary
• If excursion/event includes a food-related activity, liaise with parents of students at risk.

**College Camps**

• Parents of children at risk of anaphylaxis should meet with the Year Level Coordinator/camp coordinator prior to the camp to discuss procedures, clearly outlining the roles and responsibilities of staff, students, and parents in relation to prevention strategies and emergency response procedures in the event of an anaphylactic reaction.

• Discussions by College staff and parents of students at risk with the operators of the camp should be undertaken well in advance of the camp. Topics that need to be discussed include:
  ▪ the possibility of removal of food allergens from the menu for the duration of the camp
  ▪ strategies to help reduce the risk of an allergic reaction where the allergen cannot be removed (e.g., egg, milk, wheat)
  ▪ awareness of cross-contamination of allergens (e.g., during storage, preparation, and serving of food)
  ▪ discussion of the menu for the duration of the camp, including morning and afternoon teas and suppers
  ▪ the possibility of parents of students at risk providing all food for their child for the duration of the camp. If this is the case, storage and preparation of this food needs to be discussed.

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<th><strong>Latex allergies</strong></th>
<th>If a student in your class has an allergy to latex:</th>
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<td>• avoid the use of party balloons</td>
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<td>• avoid contact with swimming caps and latex gloves</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**References**

Anaphylaxis management guidelines for schools, pre-schools and childcare services

ASCIA Guidelines for prevention of food anaphylactic reactions in schools, preschools and childcare centres [Internet] Available from:
The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy Inc (ASCIA)
www.allergy.org.au
Anaphylaxis Australia Inc
www.allergyfacts.org.au