



# 618 - Allergies Policy

## Rationale

According to the Department of Education and Training's duty of care obligations to students, schools must ensure all students feel safe and supported at school. This includes supporting and responding to students with mild to moderate allergies.

This policy applies to students with a diagnosed food, insect or medication allergy who have a mild to moderate allergic reaction to an allergen. Students with a known food or insect sting allergy who have had a previous severe reaction are usually diagnosed as being at risk of having a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis). Please see the school's Anaphylaxis Policy for information on how to manage severe allergies.

## Aim

- To ensure the school is able to effectively manage students with mild to moderate allergies.
- To outline the processes and procedures in place to support students who are at risk of allergic reactions.
- To ensure students with mild to moderate allergies have an appropriate green Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCI) Action Plan for Allergic Reactions and an Individual Allergic Reaction Management Plan (see appendix 1).

## Implementation

### Overview

- An allergy occurs when a person's immune system reacts to substances in the environment that are harmless for most people. These substances are known as allergens and are found in foods, insects, some medicines, house dust mites, pets, and pollen.
- Children with allergies who are not considered to have anaphylaxis should have an ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (green plan).
- Children with concomitant food allergy and significant asthma are at increased risk for more severe allergic reactions. Where a child with a food allergy has active asthma (wheeze or cough with exertion or at night requiring regular treatment with a bronchodilator) it is imperative that this is identified and managed accordingly.
- Although children with an ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (green) plan are assessed as being at less risk for anaphylaxis, it is important to note that anaphylaxis can occur in any child with food/insect allergy at any time.
- Students who have an ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis and a prescribed adrenaline autoinjector should NOT also have an ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions if they have some milder allergies as well as severe allergy - these will be included in the Action Plan for Anaphylaxis. General use adrenaline autoinjectors held by the school will be administered in the event of anaphylaxis occurring in these children.
- As part of the school's annual processes, all staff will be familiarised with the school's Anaphylaxis plan and the Department of Education's Guidelines for Managing Anaphylaxis in all Victorian Schools.

### Allergens

- Common allergens include but are not limited to:
  - peanuts
  - tree nuts such as cashews
  - eggs
  - cow's milk
  - wheat
  - soy
  - fish and shellfish
  - sesame
  - insect stings and bites
  - medications.

## Signs and Symptoms

- Signs of a mild to moderate allergic reaction include:
  - hives or welts
  - swelling of the lips, face and eyes
  - tingling mouth.
- Children with allergies may still progress to having a severe reaction or anaphylaxis. As this cannot be predicted, children with mild to moderate allergic reactions should be monitored carefully after any reaction.
- Signs of anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction) can include but are not limited to **any one** of the following:
  - difficult/noisy breathing
  - swelling of tongue
  - swelling/tightness in throat
  - difficulty talking and/or hoarse voice
  - wheeze or persistent cough
  - persistent dizziness or collapse
  - pale and floppy (young children)
  - abdominal pain and/or vomiting (these are commonly signs of a severe allergic reaction to insects).
- Mild to moderate allergic reactions (such as hives or swelling) may not always occur before anaphylaxis.
- If a student appears to be having a severe allergic reaction, but has not been previously diagnosed with an allergy or being at risk of anaphylaxis, school staff should follow the school's anaphylaxis first aid procedures and administer the child's adrenaline autoinjector or the school's adrenaline autoinjector for general use.

## ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions

- The ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (**green plan**) outlines the student's known mild to moderate food, insect or medication allergies and the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an allergic reaction.
- Students with a mild or moderate allergy to a food or insect and those with medication allergy must have an ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (**green plan**).
- Students with a **severe** reaction to allergies should have an ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis (**red plan**).
- An ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (**green plan**) should be developed by a medical professional in conjunction with the student's parents/carers.
- A colour copy of a student's ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (**green plan**) must be provided to the school by the student's parents/carers and they are responsible for providing an updated copy, any time the plan is adjusted.

## Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plan

- After the school is informed that a student has a diagnosed food, insect or medication allergy and upon receiving a student's ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (**green plan**), a meeting will be convened with the student's parents/carers to develop an Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plan. Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plans will be reviewed annually.
- An Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plan includes:
  - The ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (green plan)
  - Strategies to prevent exposure to the student's known allergens.

## Prevention strategies

- The school will consult and consider the information provided in the *Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia Risk Minimisation Strategies in School and/or Childcare* (see appendix 2) document to identify appropriate prevention strategies in response to the existing allergies of children and staff currently enrolled in the school.
- The Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plan will be developed and annually reviewed in consultation with the student's parents/carers and will include prevention strategies used by the school to minimise the risk of exposure to known food, insect and medication allergens.

## Communication Plan

- A sound communication plan provides information to all school staff, students and parents/carers about the school's response to students with a confirmed food, insect or medication allergy.
- This Allergies Policy will be made available on the school's website.
- At the beginning of each school year, all stakeholders in our school community will be reminded of the school's Allergy Policy.

- Any adjustments made to the school's strategies to minimise the risk of exposure to known food, insect and medication allergens will be communicated to all stakeholders through following avenues:
  - Staff – in the school's initial staff meeting for the year
  - Students – in classroom meetings
  - Parents/carers – through the school newsletter and Compass parent portal.

#### Emergency response

- The school's existing processes for responding to emergency situations will be implemented in the event of an allergic reaction during in-school and out-of-school activities, including school camps.
- Parents/carers of students at risk of exposure to known food, insect and medication allergens will be consulted with regards to their child's allergy when planning for in-school and out-of-school activities that may pose a risk to the student.

#### Staff response

- All school staff with a duty of care responsibility for the wellbeing of students with a confirmed allergy will:
  - Be informed at the beginning of the school year of any allergy need
  - Be provided with information to assist them to recognise and respond to an allergic reaction
  - Be provided with a copy of Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plans for each student in their care
  - Consult with parents/carers regarding in-school and out-of-school activities that may pose a risk to the student.

#### Encouraging camps and special event participation

- Parents/carers of all students attending school camps and/or special events are required to complete the Department's Confidential Medical Information for School Council Approved School Excursions form.
- Each student's Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plan will be reviewed immediately prior to any excursion or camp in which the student is participating with the teacher in charge and any other relevant persons.
- The school will consult with the parents/carers of students at risk of exposure to known food, insect and medication allergens on relevant strategies to facilitate participation.
  - Particular consideration will be given to the food provided on the school camp and /or special event.
- The school will annually review its first aid response procedures for all in-school and out-of-school environments such as excursions and camps.

#### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-yearly policy review process.

*This policy was last ratified by school council in November 2017*