



MELBOURNE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL
AN ANGLICAN SCHOOL

Allergy Awareness Policy

Introduction

There is an identifiable and growing proportion of the community who suffer from allergies, which can result in serious health issues if exposure to an allergen occurs. Allergies occur when the immune system reacts to substances (allergens) in the environment, which are usually harmless. Examples include proteins, pollens, dust mites and insect venoms.

This policy outlines the School's approach to raising awareness of student allergies and should be read in conjunction with the School's Anaphylaxis Policy, which is available on the School Website.

Policy Statement

Melbourne Grammar School is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students. Whilst it is not possible to be allergen free, the School is committed to minimising the risk of allergen exposure. It is the School's policy:

- To provide, as far as practicable, a safe and supportive environment in which students at risk of allergies can participate equally in all aspects of the student's schooling;
- To raise awareness about the management of allergies and anaphylaxis in the School community;
- To engage with parents/guardians of students at risk of allergies to ensure appropriate allergy management; and
- To ensure that staff have knowledge about allergies, anaphylaxis and the School's procedures in responding to an allergic or anaphylactic reaction.

Rationale

Given the vast number of foods to which a student may be allergic, it is not possible to remove all allergens. The School's goal is to prevent allergic reactions as far as possible and allergy awareness is a key part of this strategy. In operating an educational environment, families of children with specific allergies must make the School fully aware of these allergies. The primary responsibility for this lies with the family of the allergy sufferer. The family concerned should also endeavour to inform other families with whom their children come into regular contact out of School hours.

Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- Staff training and supervision;
- Allergy and Anaphylaxis management procedures;
- Maintenance of medical records;
- Effective incident notification procedures;
- Premises inspections (to identify wasp and bee hives);
- Effective communication procedures with the student's parents/guardians; and
- Effective communication procedures with the broader School community



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Specifically, the School will:

- Maintain a database of students with allergies and retain a copy of their yearly updated treatment plan, as specified by the child's medical practitioner and provided by the parents.
- Provide relevant staff with a list of students in their care who suffer from allergies along with specific details of their respective condition(s), i.e. severity and treatment.
- Undertake staff anaphylaxis briefings twice yearly. Educate applicable staff to the matter of dealing with allergies through professional development.
- Encourage students not to share food and to practice appropriate hand washing and food hygiene behaviours.
- Endeavour to educate parents, students and affiliated bodies such as the Old Melburnians Society and the Friends of Grammar of its Allergy Awareness Policy.
- Place a copy of the Allergy Awareness Policy in the Parent Handbook, on the School's Website and in the School's kitchen food preparation areas.
- Display an Allergen Statement where food is being served to the School Community.

Training

- Staff involved in the preparation/cooking of food must undertake food safety and allergen awareness training through the School's Catering Department.
- Volunteers involved in the preparation/cooking of food for students during the School day will be urged to undertake food safety and allergen awareness training through the School's Catering Department. Volunteers who have not undertaken the training may not be involved in such food preparation/cooking until they have done so.

Food Sharing

During normal School hours from Monday to Friday, the School seeks to adopt an age appropriate approach to allergen management.

- At Grimwade House, any food for sharing during school hours or After-School/Before-School Care, must be provided by the School or its caterers but only with the prior approval of the Head of Grimwade House..
- At Wadhurst, prior parental notification must be provided of any proposed food sharing arrangement during school hours, seeking confirmation as to any dietary allergies/requirements of the student.
- At Senior School, prior notification is not required.

At all campuses, food brought in for sharing must be accompanied by an ingredient list. The teacher in charge must review this list against known allergens of students. Similar precautions must be taken for excursions involving food. Campus canteens must also provide or be in a position to provide ingredient lists for foods served and display allergen signs (where food is available to be purchased directly by students).

Peer support and understanding is important for students at risk of allergies (in particular anaphylaxis). Staff should raise awareness through fact sheets, support groups or posters displayed in hallways, canteens and classrooms or in class lessons.



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School Catering Department

The School Catering Department will be made aware of any special dietary requirements of boarding students.

The Catering Department will endeavour to accommodate requests for special meals for students, staff and visitors who have food allergies, however the School cannot guarantee completely allergy-free meals. This is due to the potential of trace allergens in the working environment and supplied ingredients. It is recommended that any person who suffers from a food allergy arrange to speak with the Catering Manager prior to the meal service.

Nut Allergies

Whilst the Melbourne Grammar School does not purport to be "nut-free", neither the School, nor any of its catering contractors or affiliated bodies, will knowingly use nuts or nut based products in any of its food or food preparations that are distributed or sold to students. Peanut butter and Nutella will not be supplied to boarders in the Luxton Dining Hall nor will it be supplied in the School Tuckshops.

Parents/guardians are requested not to provide food for students to be consumed at School or on camps/excursions which contain nuts or nut products listed on the ingredients of official labels.

Related Policies

Anaphylaxis Policy
Incident Reporting Guideline