

OUR LADY IMMACULATE SCHOOL
NUT-FREE SCHOOL POLICY

Statement of Intent

This policy is concerned with a whole school approach to the health care and management of those members of the school community suffering or who might suffer from specific allergies, mainly nut and peanut allergies. We strive to minimise the risk of exposure, encourage self-responsibility and plan for effective response to potential incidents.

Although we recognise that this cannot be guaranteed, Our Lady Immaculate School aims to be a Nut-Free school. This policy serves to set out all measures to reduce the risk to those children and adults who may suffer an anaphylactic reaction if exposed to nuts to which they are sensitive. The school aims to protect children who have allergies to nuts yet also help them, as they grow up, to take responsibility as to what foods they can eat and to be aware of where they may be put at risk. We do not allow nuts or nut products in school lunch boxes.

Anaphylaxis

Life threatening food allergies are on the rise. While there are various food allergies amongst our student population, peanut and nut products can leave oil and residue behind which can increase the potential of exposure that could trigger an adverse reaction. The most severe allergic reaction is called anaphylaxis.

Definition, signs and symptoms:

Anaphylaxis is an allergic emergency. It is a rapid, severe allergic reaction that occurs when a person is exposed to an allergen (an allergy-causing substance), and can be life-threatening.

The symptoms of anaphylaxis usually start soon after contact with the allergen. Less commonly, they can occur a few hours or even days after contact. An anaphylactic reaction may lead to:

- feeling unwell or dizzy or may cause fainting due to a sudden drop in blood pressure.
- narrowing of the airways can also occur at the same time, with or without the drop in blood pressure. This can cause breathing difficulties and wheezing.
- swollen eyes, lips, hands, feet and other areas (this is called angioedema)
- sore, red, itchy eyes
- changes in heart rate
- a sudden feeling of extreme anxiety or apprehension
- itchy skin or nettle-rash (hives)
- unconsciousness due to very low blood pressure
- abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhoea, nausea and fever.

Anaphylaxis varies in severity. Sometimes it causes only mild itchiness and swelling, but in some people it can cause sudden death. If symptoms start soon after contact with the allergen and rapidly worsen, this indicates that the reaction is more severe.

Parents' / Guardians' Responsibilities

Parents of students with a known allergic condition are asked to:

- Provide details of allergies in the student's Medical Consent and Information Form submitted in Year 1 and Form 1. Furthermore, any change in a student's medical condition or medical treatment along the year/s must be reported to the school immediately.
- For students with an allergic condition, the school requires parents / guardians to provide written advice from a doctor (GP), which explains the condition, defines the allergy triggers and any required medication. This will enable the Head of School together with the Health & Safety Teacher and First Aiders on premises to ensure that a Health Care Plan is established and updated for each child with a known allergy.
- Where Epipen Auto Injectors (Adrenalin) are required in the Health Care Plan, parents/ guardians are responsible for the provision of the prescribed Auto Injectors and the timely replacement of expired injectors.
- Parents are responsible to educate their child about managing his/her allergy at school.

All parents:

- We ask that no nuts of any kind be brought into our school for any reason. Foods sent in for snack, lunch, or any class event (including parties, field trips, etc.) should be carefully checked to make sure they are nut-free. Families can help ensure that our school stays nut-free by reading packaging labels and reminding children not to share food with other children at school. We need to make sure that there is little opportunity for a child to be exposed to foods that could harm him/her.

School Responsibilities

Upon determining that a student attending school has a severe allergy, a team meeting will be set up where all staff concerned is informed about the situation. The Health Care Plan will be made available to members of staff who have contact with the student, but otherwise will be kept as confidential as possible.

All staff are to promote hand washing before and after eating. The school will strive to instruct staff to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction and to respond appropriately as necessary.

Students' Responsibilities

Students with a known allergic condition are asked to:

- Ensure they carry their EpiPen (Auto Injector) in their satchels at all times, including on outings when they may use a different bag)
- Not accept food from anyone at school to minimise the risk of exposure to an allergen.
- Refrain from touching, handling or consuming any food which they know they are allergic to. If in doubt, say no.
- Wash their hands well before and after eating.
- Know how to recognise signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis, and inform a member of staff immediately in the event of an incident.
- Always know where their Auto Injector is, remembering to take it with them on out of school visits.
- Know how to use their Auto Injector in an emergency.

All Students are asked:

- Not bring to school any food items containing nuts.
- Not to share food with one another. This is a crucial factor in the prevention of allergic reactions.
- Wash their hands well before and after eating.
- Inform a member of staff immediately if they notice that a schoolmate is feeling unwell.

Nut Allergy Emergency Procedure

1. Upon recognition of anaphylaxis signs and symptoms, call or send a student to school administration for a first aider.
2. Fetch the student's Auto Injector (EpiPen or Jext) from their satchel and assist with its administration.
3. Inform school administration to call 112 and the student's parents immediately (if they live close by, they can come to school; if not, they should go directly to hospital).
4. Monitor the student's Response, Airway and Breathing until arrival of an ambulance. Be prepared to resuscitate if need be.
5. Answer any questions from the paramedics, hand over the used Auto Injector to them and accompany the student to hospital if need be.

Definitions:

- Allergy – A condition in which the body has an exaggerated response to a substance (e.g. food, drug or chemical).
- Allergen – A normally harmless substance that triggers an allergic reaction in the immune system of a susceptible person.
- Anaphylaxis (or anaphylactic shock) – A sudden, severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction to food, stings, bites or medicines.
- Auto Injector – A medical device designed to deliver a dose of a particular drug. Most Auto Injectors are spring-loaded syringes. By design, Auto Injectors are easy to use and are intended for self-administration by patients or administration by untrained personnel.
- Epipen / Jext – Two brand names for Auto Injector device, similar to a syringe, containing a prescribed dose of the drug Adrenalin, which is ready for immediate intramuscular administration.
- Nuts – For safety and clarity, in this document ‘nuts’ shall include all types of nuts, peanuts and seeds (although these are not nuts, but they can cause anaphylaxis too) and any food item containing nuts or processed in a facility that also processes nuts.
- Packaging Labels – Labels on food packages containing food preparation information. Food labels that say “May contain peanut or tree nuts”, “Made on equipment that also processes peanuts or tree nuts” or “Processed in a facility that also processes peanuts or tree nuts” are NOT OK to bring to school.

What not to bring:

Packs of nuts (any type)

Peanut butter sandwiches

Fruit and cereal bars that contain nuts

Chocolate bars or sweets that contain nuts

Sesame seed rolls (children allergic to nuts may also have a severe reaction to sesame)

Cakes made with nuts

What one can bring instead:

Yoghurt – plain / mixed with fruit

Baked tortilla chips with salsa

Fruit Roll-ups

Applesauce

Fresh fruit

Pretzels

Unsweetened cereal

Crackers

Fruit / vegetable juice

Hard-boiled egg

Bagel w/ cream cheese

Low/No fat cottage cheese

Popcorn

Cheese or cheese sticks

Raisins

Breads – no nuts

Custard

Meatloaf

Pasta or rice salad

Soups with rice or pasta

Hummus

Vegetable sticks

Cold meats

Pita bread

Salad

Disclaimer

The school is and will be doing its utmost to minimise the chances of anaphylaxis and other life threatening allergic reactions. The students and staff working with the school are regularly reminded to avoid bringing specific food items that are known to be harmful to our students. In spite of all the effort made, the school cannot guarantee allergen-free food brought by the students and cannot be held responsible if such situations occur.

We have a policy to not use nuts in any of our food prepared on site at our school. Our suppliers provide us with nut-free products. However, we cannot guarantee freedom from nut traces.

We thank you for helping us maintain a safe environment for all of our students.