



Jilbup

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Food Allergies Policy



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'Allergy Conscious School'

Rationale

At Jilbup Primary School, we may have students with severe food allergies. The most common food allergies are peanuts, tree nuts (walnuts, almonds, cashews etc) cow's milk, soy, seafood, and eggs. Many children will 'outgrow' their food allergies, however reactions to nuts, 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.

The problem with nuts...

- Peanuts and other nuts are the most likely to cause anaphylaxis,
- Nuts are hardest 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,
- Only a small amount is needed to trigger symptoms (in some cases only as much as a sesame seed).

Why is it important that our school become allergy aware and allergy friendly?

- In Australia, more than 90% of fatal reactions to foods 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 home (including at school).
- We need to accept that food allergies are serious and that food allergies can be fatal.

What is our school community's responsibility?

As a school community we need to make every reasonable effort to minimise the risk of exposure to known allergens within the school environment. School staff, the parents of the student with the allergy, parents of the student's classmates, the student themselves and their peers all have responsibilities to ensuring the risk of an allergic reaction is minimised. We also need to make sure that we manage this issue in a sensitive and appropriate way.

How can we minimise the risk?

Jilbup Primary School is a "nut friendly" school. It is difficult for us to be 'nut free' due to the widespread use of nuts, but 'nut friendly' schools **where the school minimises the risk of exposure by removing high risk foods**, is certainly achievable. It is unreasonable to expect foods labelled 'may contain traces of nuts' to be removed entirely from the school environment. However, labels should be read to check that peanut/nuts (or the allergen that is an issue) is not a listed ingredient.



Practical Strategies

Practical strategies which require small changes to provide a much safer environment for children at Jilbup PS will be encouraged. These are:

Sharing Lunches

- Regular discussion with children about the importance of eating their own food and not sharing.
- Lunch supervision areas with a focus on supervision of the allergic student (it is not recommended that the allergic student be physically isolated from other children)
- **Parents not to send high risk foods to school in their child's lunchbox.**

Class Parties

- Advise the parent/s of the student/s at risk of food allergies ahead of time so that they can provide suitable food.
- Inform other class members' parents of high-risk foods so that these can be avoided.

In the classroom

- Students do not bring high risk foods to school in their lunch box.
- Be aware that craft items can be risk items (for example, egg cartons, milk containers, peanut butter jars etc)
- Choose recipes that don't contain high risk ingredients for cooking lessons.
- Consider non-food rewards.

On camp or excursion

- If students with severe allergies are participating, then high risk foods should not be taken or supplied (consistent with the risk minimalization policy in the school canteen)

General Issues

- Ideally lunch for the allergic child should be prepared at home.
- Bottles, other drinks and lunch boxes should be clearly labelled with the name of the child for which they are intended.
- Encourage staff and students to wash their hands after eating.
- The students with severe allergies should wear a medic alert bracelet.