

## ALLERGY POLICY

### DEFINITION

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.

This policy applies to a student with a diagnosed food, insect or medication allergy who has a mild to moderate allergic reaction to an allergen. A student with a known food or insect sting allergy who has had a previous severe reaction is usually diagnosed as being at risk of having a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis). See Related policies, Anaphylaxis.

Students with allergies who are not considered to have anaphylaxis should be provided with an ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (green plan).

Students with concomitant food allergy and significant asthma are at increased risk for more severe allergic reactions. Where a child with 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.

Common allergens include:

- peanuts
- tree nuts such as cashews
- eggs
- cow's milk
- wheat
- soy
- fish and shellfish
- sesame
- insect stings and bites
- medications.

Signs of a mild to moderate allergic reaction include:

- hives or welts
- swelling of the lips, face and eyes
- tingling mouth.

Students 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) include **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 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, the school staff should follow the school's anaphylaxis first aid procedures and administer an adrenaline auto-injector for general use.

#### **POLICY**

Any student at Melba College who is at risk of allergic reactions should:

- develop and annually review an Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plan for each student with allergies in conjunction with their parents/guardian (this replaces the need to have a Student Health Support Plan)
- develop prevention strategies to be used by Melba College to minimise the risk of an allergic reaction.

Melba College will:

- develop a communication plan to inform relevant staff, students and members of the College community of the student with allergies and how they will be managed
- meet with parents or guardians about medication and how to respond appropriately to an allergic reaction
- establish and annually review first aid response procedures for all in-school and out-of-school environments such as excursions and camps
- review each student's Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plan immediately prior to any excursion or camp in which the student is participating with the teacher in charge and any other relevant persons.

Although a student 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 student with food/insect allergy at any time.

General use adrenaline auto-injectors held by the College should be administered in the event of anaphylaxis occurring in these students.

For resources and support materials see: Department resources below.

## GUIDELINES

The Department has produced Guidelines for Managing Anaphylaxis in all Victorian Schools see: Department resources below.

All staff should read this document. Some of the information in the Guidelines, such as: 'Signs and Symptoms', 'Duty of Care' and the 'Role of the Parent' will also assist schools to manage mild to moderate allergic reactions.

### Impact at School

According to the Department's duty of care obligations to students, schools are required to ensure all students feel safe and supported at school. This includes supporting and responding to students with mild to moderate allergies. See: Duty of Care within Related policies.

An allergic reaction can be traumatic for the student and others witnessing the reaction.

It is important to be aware that some students with an allergy may not wish to be singled out or seen to be treated differently.

### Strategies

Students diagnosed with food, insect or medication allergies should be given an ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (green) by their medical practitioner. Schools need to develop an Individual Allergic Reaction Management Plan for these students.

This table describes how Melba College will manage students with an allergy.

Strategy	Description
<b>ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions</b>	<p>An ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (green plan) should be completed by the student's medical practitioner and a colour copy provided to the school by the student's parents or guardians.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plan</b>	<p>An Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plan for each student with a diagnosed food, insect or medication allergy, should be developed in consultation with the student's parents or guardians.</p> <p>These plans include the ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (green plan).</p> <p>The plan must also include strategies to prevent exposure to the student's known allergens .If parents indicate their child has an allergy but do not have an ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions (green plan), the school may consider developing a</p>

	<p>Student Health Support Plan in place of an Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plan. See Related policies, Health Support Planning Forms.</p>
<p><b>Prevention strategies</b></p>	<p>The Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plan that is completed in consultation with the parent/guardian must include prevention strategies used by the College to minimise the risk of exposure to known food, insect and medication allergens.</p>
<p><b>Communication Plan</b></p>	<p>A communication plan developed by Melba College that will provide information to all College staff, students and parents about the school's response to students with a confirmed food, insect or medication allergy</p>
<p><b>Emergency response</b></p>	<p>Melba College will develop emergency responses to allergic reactions for all in-school and out-of-school activities, including for school camps.</p>
<p><b>Staff response</b></p>	<p>All Melba College staff with a duty of care responsibility for the wellbeing of students with confirmed allergy need to recognise and respond to an allergic reaction.</p> <p>Staff should be aware of their student's Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plans and consult with parents or guardians regarding in-school and out-of-school activities that may pose a risk to the student.</p>
<p><b>Encouraging camps and special event participation</b></p>	<p>Melba College will ask the parents or guardians of a student with an allergy to complete the Department's Confidential Medical Information for Melba College Council Approved Excursions will include steps and consideration taken on relevant strategies to facilitate and ensure the participation of student with allergies.</p> <p>Note: Consideration will be given to the food provided at all camps.</p>
<p><b>Communicating with parents or guardians</b></p>	<p>Melba College will regularly communicate with the student's parents or guardians about the student's successes, development, changes and any health and education concerns.</p>

### Related policies

- [Health Care Needs](#)
- [Health Support Planning Forms](#)
- [Anaphylaxis](#)
- [Responding to Anaphylaxis](#)
- [Duty of Care](#)

### Related legislation

Children's Services and Education Legislation Amendment (Anaphylaxis Management) Act 2008

### Department resources

- [Anaphylaxis Management in Schools](#)
- [Individual Allergic Reactions Management Plan \(docx - 195.24kb\)](#)
- [Ideas on Risk Minimisation Strategies in the School and/or Childcare Environment](#)

### Other resources

- [Allergies & Anaphylaxis Australia](#) - about living with anaphylaxis
- [ASCIA Guidelines - for prevention of anaphylaxis in schools, preschools and childcare](#)
- [Royal Children's Hospital: Department of Allergy and Immunology](#)
- [Royal Children's Hospital - Anaphylaxis Support Advisory Line](#) - for all school allergy and anaphylaxis management enquiries, (including the implementation of Ministerial Order 706). The advisory line is available between the hours of 8.30 am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday. Phone 1300 725 911 or (03) 9345 4235.

### EVALUATION

Policy Reviewed by School Council	Person Responsible for Policy	Next School Council Review
2020	Assistant Principal - Accountabilities	2023