



RIVERMOUNT COLLEGE

Realising the Potential Within

7.01.02 ANAPHYLAXIS POLICY

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

Rivermount College is implementing this Policy to ensure that students and staff are familiar with some common serious allergies and are informed on how to manage an allergic reaction.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to employees, volunteers, parents/carers/students, and people visiting Rivermount College.

RESPONSIBILITY

Principal reporting to the Board of Directors

LEGISLATION AND REFERENCES

Australian Privacy Principles
Administration of Medication Procedure 07.01.01
First Aid Policy and Procedures

BACKGROUND

“Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction. It occurs when a person is exposed to an allergen (such as food or an insect bite).”

Food (and other) allergies can be life threatening as they may cause a reaction called Anaphylaxis. Common allergens for Anaphylaxis are:

- foods (peanuts and nuts, shellfish and fish, milk, egg, wheat products)
- insect bites (bees, wasps, jumper ants)
- medications (antibiotics, aspirin)

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- latex (rubber gloves, balloons, swimming caps)

Although death is rare, an anaphylactic reaction always requires an emergency response.

The first signs of Anaphylaxis may be a feeling of warmth, flushing, tingling in the mouth or a red, itchy rash. Other symptoms may include feelings of light-headedness, shortness of breath, severe sneezing, coughing and/or wheezing, anxiety, stomach or uterine cramps, and/or vomiting and diarrhoea. In severe cases, patients may experience a drop in blood pressure that results in a loss of consciousness and shock. Without immediate treatment, Anaphylaxis may cause death.

Reactions usually begin within minutes of exposure and can progress rapidly at any time over a period of two hours. A student at risk of Anaphylaxis will often recognise the early symptoms of an allergic reaction before any other signs are observable.

Symptoms of Anaphylaxis are reversed by treatment with injectable epinephrine, antihistamines, and other emergency measures. It is essential that anyone with symptoms suggesting possible anaphylaxis get emergency treatment immediately.

POLICY

The Policy of Rivermount College is to include allergic students into all College activities provided such inclusion does not constitute an unacceptable risk. However, a student who has been prescribed an Epipen will not be permitted to attend the College or take part in any College activity without providing an Epipen and without an Action Plan (see below) being established.

Parents/carers of an allergic child are responsible for supplying the Epipen and ensuring that the medication has not expired.

Parents are advised that students with severe allergies have their photos displayed in the staff rooms and on the College intranet as a reference point for teaching staff to ensure they can provide the best possible care in cases of emergency. The College nurse (or first aid officer/s) is responsible for informing all staff of every child who is known to have a severe allergy to food, insects, medications or other substances.

If a parent notifies the College that their child has a severe food allergy, the College will work with the parent, a medical expert and a College team (e.g. College Nurse, Principal, Teacher, Counsellor, Canteen Manager etc) to develop an Action Plan to accommodate the child's needs throughout the College as much as possible, including in the classroom, in the canteen, in after-care programs, during College-sponsored activities, and on the College bus.

Rivermount College will:

1. Provide regular professional development to all staff, including at induction for staff who join the College later in the year, that assists staff to understand food and other allergies, recognise symptoms, know what to do in an emergency, know the location of first aid facilities, and be aware of any source of allergen in materials they might use in the course of instruction (e.g. art and craft materials, cooking ingredients, prizes in class competitions);

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2. Emphasise the importance of reacting rapidly to a suspected allergic reaction, even when initial symptoms are not severe;
3. Bring to the attention of staff that the College Epipen is available if the student's own Epipen malfunctions or is damaged;
4. Ensure that all staff members know the names and appearance of students with severe allergies;
5. Ensure that all relief teachers know the names and appearance of students with severe allergies;
6. Prominently display the photograph and names of students with allergies;
7. Coordinate with the College Nurse/first aid officer/s to be sure medication is appropriately stored, and be sure that an emergency kit is available that contains a physician's standing order for epinephrine. Keep medication in an easily accessible secure location central to designated College personnel, not in locked cupboards or drawers (students will be allowed to carry their own epinephrine, if age appropriate after approval from the student's physician/clinic, parent and the College Nurse where applicable);
8. Designate College personnel who are properly trained to administer medication in the event that the College nurse is not immediately available;
9. Be prepared to handle a reaction and ensure that there is a staff member available who is properly trained to administer medication during the school day regardless of time or location;
10. Ensure that Epipens are easily available to staff members including, on large campuses, providing a small medication pack to be carried when staff members are on yard duty;
11. Notify the district transportation administrator to ensure that the College bus driver training includes symptom awareness and what to do if a reaction occurs; and
12. Discuss with the family and the College team, before every College excursion or camp, any special arrangements that need to be made for the College excursion or camp.

RESPONSIBILITIES

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of parents to inform the College if their child suffers from severe allergies and to attend a meeting with the Principal and other College and medical staff to develop an Action Plan for their child.

Parents/carers must also provide:

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1. Emergency contact information;
2. Written medical documentation and instructions as directed by their doctor;
3. Information to their child regarding self-management so that their child knows:
 - safe and unsafe foods
 - how to avoid exposure to unsafe foods
 - symptoms of an allergic reaction
 - how and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergic reaction
 - how to read food labels, where age appropriate
 - how to administer medication, where age appropriate
4. Medication that is correctly labelled;
5. Replacement medication when current medications has been used or has passed its use by date; and
6. A photograph of their child.

If an exposure to an allergen is thought to have occurred and the student feels unwell in any way the student Action Plan will be followed and the parents notified. Parents/carers will be asked to collect their child from the College in order to closely monitor for the development of an anaphylactic reaction.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITY IN AN EMERGENCY

As a part of the duty of care owed to students, teachers are required to administer first aid when necessary and within the limits of their skill, expertise and training. In the case of Anaphylaxis this includes following the student's Action Plan and administering an Epipen if necessary. It should be noted that a teacher's duty of care is greater than that of an ordinary citizen in that a teacher is obliged to assist an injured student, while an ordinary citizen may choose to do nothing.

The student's individual Allergy Management Plan will document the action required. Any student with an identified anaphylactic reaction will have his/her Action Plan documented in the anaphylactic area of the medical details section on the College database.

The College Nurse/first aid officer(s) are trained in the use of an Epipen and in the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions. In addition, other staff will be trained to ensure that adequate coverage is provided for all students, especially in relation to co-curricular activities.

Rivermount College will assist staff to meet their duty of care by:

- Providing professional development with regard to the risks, symptoms and treatment of Anaphylaxis;
- Training enough staff to adequately cover all areas of the College campus in the use of Epipens;
- Displaying photographs of all allergic students in the staff room and in the medical section of the staff intranet; and
- Ensuring all staff members make themselves familiar with the photographs of students with severe allergies.

Rivermount College will endeavour to take reasonable measures to minimise the allergen exposure of members of the College community by:

- Discussing with students the importance of not sharing lunch with others;

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- Identifying all foods supplied by the College canteen that contain or may contain trigger substances and replacing them where practicable with other nutritious foods. Any foods which may contain nuts are to be clearly labelled;
- Advising parents/carers ahead of time when class parties are planned and asking them to provide suitable foods and avoid risk foods. Parent of student with an allergy will be asked to organise specific food for their child;
- Informing parents not to supply food to the College for individual birthday celebrations or food to be handed out (for example, Easter eggs, Christmas foods) as this cannot be monitored as it can be in a planned class party activity;
- Asking parents/carers to avoid sending nuts or nut spreads such as nutella and peanut butter to school in lunchboxes;
- Specifying recreation areas that are safest to the student and encouraging the student and his/her peers to stay in the area. Staff will endeavour to ensure allergic students wear shoes at all times;
- Informing the College community of the policy regarding administration of medications and monitoring the implementation of the policy to minimise students bringing unauthorised medication to the College;
- Educating students and staff about medication allergies and the importance of taking medication prescribed only for them;
- Encouraging students to wear medic alert bracelets or necklaces and implementing the College's administration of medications policy for these students;
- Avoiding use of party balloons and contact with swimming caps and latex gloves around those students with latex allergies;
- Celebrating College achievements/festivals with non-food treats;
- Carefully planning cooking, craft and science classes by removing risk items such as egg cartons, milk containers, peanut butter jars, cereal boxes etc;
- Ensuring that teachers attending College camps and/or excursions are notified of any students with allergies and are familiar with their specific action plan. Staff from outside the College will also be notified about any students with allergies; and
- Identifying provoking food allergic reactions as a risk fact in the College's Anti-Bullying Policy.

RESPONDING TO AN ALLERGIC REACTION

If a student experiences a severe allergic reaction the College will:

- Administer the prescribed medication;
- Call an ambulance;
- Notify parents;
- Make a written report of the incident; and
- Review its policies/procedures, following any incident, with the College staff, the parents, the child's doctor, and the child (if age appropriate) to determine if any changes need to be made.

In any case, the College will conduct an assessment at regular intervals (at least annually, or more frequently where it is determined that changes at the workplace may impact on first aid needs) to determine the adequacy and appropriateness of existing first aid facilities in the College or workplace.

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