

2nd October 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Allergen Awareness

Introduction

Within our school community there are children who are in danger of experiencing severe allergic reactions when exposed to specific allergens such as nut products. A few are so sensitive that even airborne reactions can be life threatening.

Their anaphylaxis (allergic reaction) can occur as a result of digestion, inhalation or any other contact with nut-based products. Whilst we understand that we cannot ensure a school environment which is completely free of nut based products, we would like to minimise the risk posed to our pupils as much as possible.

The school aims to protect children who have allergies to nuts and help them to take responsibility in deciding which foods they can eat. They need to be aware of where they may be put at risk.

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of pupils bringing in packed lunch during the Covid Pandemic. We therefore would ask all parents to avoid including nuts or products containing nuts in school lunch boxes. This will include the following:

- Packs of nuts
- Peanut butter sandwiches
- Spreads, e.g. chocolate spread (if contain nuts)
- Cereal bars containing nuts
- Some types of biscuit containing nuts
- Condiments, e.g. satay sauce
- Cakes containing nuts
- Some snack pots containing nuts
- 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)

Definition of anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis (also known as anaphylactic shock) is an allergic condition that can be severe and potentially fatal.

Anaphylaxis is your body's immune system reacting badly to a substance (an allergen), such as food, which it wrongly perceives as a threat. The whole body can



be affected, usually within minutes of contact with an allergen, although sometimes the reaction can happen hours later.

Symptoms

The symptoms of anaphylaxis usually start between three and sixty minutes 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.

Other symptoms:

- i. Swollen eyes, lips, genitals, hands, feet and other areas (this is called angioedema)
- ii. Itching
- iii. Sore, red, itchy eyes
- iv. Changes in heart rate
- v. A sudden feeling of extreme anxiety or apprehension
- vi. Itchy skin or nettle-rash (hives)
- vii. Unconsciousness due to very low blood pressure
- viii. Abdominal cramps, vomiting or diarrhoea, or 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 worsens, this indicates that the reaction is more severe.

We understand that children with such allergies have to manage the dangers posed whether they are inside or outside school. However, we will try to minimise the risk, and seek your support in doing so.

Yours sincerely



RK Pawar

Headteacher

