



## Allergy Awareness Policy

Allergies occur when the immune system reacts to substances (allergens) in the environment, which are usually harmless. Examples include proteins, pollens, dust mites and insect venoms.

Anaphylaxis is a severe, rapidly progressive allergic reaction that is potentially life threatening. For details on how we manage anaphylaxis in our College refer to our Anaphylactic Shock Management policy.

### Harkaway Hills College's Policy

Harkaway Hills College is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all our students and to minimise the risk of allergen exposure. It is our policy:

- to provide, as far as practicable, a safe and supportive environment in which students at risk of allergies can participate equally in all aspects of the student's schooling
- to raise awareness about allergies and the College's allergy management and Anaphylactic Shock Management policy in the College community
- to engage with parents/carers of each student at risk of allergies when assessing risks and developing risk minimisation strategies for the student
- to ensure that staff have knowledge about allergies, anaphylaxis and the College's guidelines and procedures in responding to an anaphylactic reaction.

### Identification of Students at Risk

Parents/carers are requested to notify the College of all medical conditions including allergies. Refer to our Student Medical Records and Medication Administration Policy.

Students who are identified as suffering from severe allergies that may cause anaphylactic shock are considered high risk and are managed through our Anaphylactic Shock Management policy.

### Being Allergy Aware

Given the number of foods to which a student may be allergic, it is not possible to remove all allergens. It is better for the College community to become aware of the risks associated with allergies and for the College to implement practical, age appropriate strategies to minimise exposure to known allergens.

At Harkaway Hills College we do not promote that we are 'nut-free'. The College considers that being 'allergy aware' is a more appropriate term. The following rules are in place to assist the school community in this awareness:

- The College has a "No Peanut Policy" that is communicated to parent in the Parent Handbook. The College asks that parents ensure their children's lunchboxes do not include any products containing peanuts, and that family members do not bring peanut products on to school grounds both during school hours and during any functions held on-site after school hours.
- The College has a "No Sharing Food" policy to ensure students are not inadvertently eating food that contain allergens.
- The College requests that birthday cakes and treats brought in for supervised class parties are nut-free. Students with allergies may be asked to bring in allergy-safe treats for their consumption during class parties to ensure they are included in all activities.



### **Raising Peer Awareness**

Peer support and understanding is important for the student at risk of allergies (in particular anaphylaxis).

Class teachers can discuss the topic with students in class, with a few simple key messages:

- always take food allergies seriously – severe allergies are no joke
- don't share your food with friends who have food allergies or pressure them to eat food that they are allergic to
- not everyone has allergies – discuss common symptoms
- wash your hands before and after eating
- know what your friends are allergic to
- if a schoolmate becomes sick, get help immediately
- be respectful of a schoolmate's medical kit.

It is important to be aware that some parents/carers may not wish for their child's identity to be disclosed to the wider College community, this may also apply to the student themselves. It is therefore recommended that this be discussed with the student and their parents/carers and written consent be obtained to display the student's name, photograph and relevant treatment details in staff areas and/or other common areas.

### **Bullying Prevention**

A student at risk of allergies can have an increased risk of bullying in the form of teasing, tricking a student into eating a particular food or threatening a student with the substance that they are allergic to, such as peanuts.

Harkaway Hills College seeks to address this issue through raising peer awareness so that the students involved in such behaviour are aware of the seriousness of allergic reactions.

Any attempt to harm a student at risk of anaphylaxis with an allergen is treated as a serious and dangerous incident and treated accordingly under the College's Bullying and Harassment Policy.

### **Raising Community Awareness**

Harkaway Hills College takes active steps to raise awareness about allergies and anaphylaxis in the College community so that parents/carers of all students have an increased understanding.

These steps include providing information about our allergy awareness strategy to the broader College community through the Parent Handbook and email communication.

### **Developing Strong Communications with Parents/Carers of High-Risk Student**

Parents/carers of a student who is at risk of allergies (in particular anaphylaxis) may experience high levels of anxiety about sending their child to school.

It is important to encourage an open and cooperative relationship with parents/carers so that they feel confident that appropriate risk minimisation strategies are in place.



In addition to implementing risk minimisation strategies, the anxiety that parents/carers and the student may feel can be considerably reduced by keeping them informed of the increased education, awareness and support from the College community

Parents/carers are encourage to speak about their concerns with their child's Mentor and communicate regularly with their child's Class Teacher and the College Administration Assistant regarding the needs of their child.

### **Staff Responsibilities**

All staff must be allergy aware and actively promote Harkaway Hills College as an allergy aware College

Allergy awareness signage is posted in the staffroom and in other locations around the College

### **Implementation**

This Policy is implemented through a combination of:

- College premises inspections (to identify wasp and bee hives)
- staff training and supervision
- maintenance of medical records
- effective incident notification procedures
- effective communication procedures with the student's parents/carers
- effective communication procedures with the broader College community.

**Last updated: February 2023**