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## LOCAL 02: ALLERGY AWARE POLICY

### 1. Background Information

There has been an increase in enrolments in kindergartens in South Australia over the last few years of children with severe allergies. Port Elliot Kindergarten is now an allergy aware site.

Many children have allergies. If exposed, allergic reactions include hives, swollen eyes, wheezing and asthma symptoms. Some reactions however **can be life threatening**. Children who have severe allergies to food substances are exposed to a health risk not only when those foods are consumed but from residue left on toys, play surfaces and other equipment. These children are termed **anaphylactic** and fatal reactions can result.

**Anaphylaxis** is the most serious and life threatening form of allergic reaction and can result in death. It is a critical medical emergency that requires **immediate** treatment with adrenalin by injection to prevent permanent injury or loss of life (adrenalin opens up airways and blood vessels in the body).

### 2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- a. Reduce the risk of reaction for children with allergies and ensure a safe environment at Kindergarten for all children.
- b. To promote awareness amongst children and parents/caregivers about allergic reactions suffered by certain children after coming into contact with these products.
- c. Alert parents to the potential severity of "ANAPHYLACTIC" reactions and to provide information about how parents can help prevent such reactions by being aware of which products to avoid.

### 3. Implementation & Management

- a. All staff will be allergen aware and provide an environment that will minimize the risk of exposure to identified allergens.

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- b. All new staff and relief staff will be made aware of any anaphylactic children attending Kindergarten (refer to name and photography chart in office of any children with anaphylaxis) and will be instructed on what actions need to be taken in the event of an anaphylactic emergency.
  - c. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian/caregiver of a child with allergies to inform the kindergarten upon enrolment of a child. The Kindergarten must be provided with an Action Plan written and signed by the child's medical practitioner, using the Performa provided by the Kindergarten prior to the child attending the Kindergarten.
  - d. The parent/guardian/caregiver will notify the Kindergarten immediately of any changes to the child's condition that may affect their existing care.
  - e. Any suspicions of allergies that parents/caregivers have noted on enrolment must be further investigated by a qualified practitioner.
  - f. Parents/caregivers of any child with allergies will ensure the appropriate medication is made available to the Kindergarten for use in the event of an emergency. All medication must have clear instructions on a pharmacy label and be stored in a secure, safe place. All staff will know of this location in the event of an emergency.  
**Children will not be accepted for care at Kindergarten without their own medication.**
  - g. In the event that an accidental exposure occurs, the emergency response procedure in the child's Action Plan will be followed by staff.
  - h. A child with a food allergy will be encouraged by his/her family and Kindergarten staff not to accept food from anyone other than their own family.
  - i. Nut allergies are common in young children and this site is '**Nut Free**'. We ask for parent's understanding and co-operation by not sending any snacks and lunches that contain **nuts or nut products** (including any type of nut, peanut butter/peanut paste and Nutella) or products that state "This product **contains** traces of nuts". Products which state "This product **may** contain traces of nuts" can be included in lunch boxes. **THIS IS DEPENDENT ON THE SEVERITY OF THE ALLERGY AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**
  - j. All children will be encouraged not to share food with each other and will sit down when eating. Children's lunches and snacks will be monitored by supervising staff members in order to assess potential risk and to educate the children on the necessity of eating "nut free foods".
  - k. In the event that a child brings a snack containing nuts, the snack will be put aside in a container in the kitchen and the child will be asked to take the snack home at the end of the day. If a child's lunch contains nuts (e.g. peanut paste) they will be moved away from anyone with a

nut allergy. Staff will place a reminder note in their lunch box for their parent/guardian that the Kindergarten is a nut free zone.

- l. Kindergarten staff will supervise children with allergies closely whilst they are eating.
- m. Cooking experiences will always be nut free.
- n. Kindergarten staff will remind parents/caregivers and the children of this policy, via newsletters, posters, notes etc.
- o. All staff will be encouraged by the Director to train in the use of an EpiPen. There will always be one staff member on site that is trained in the use of an EpiPen.
- p. The Port Elliot Kindergarten Playgroup, Multijoy and any other facility users will also adhere to this policy to reduce the risk of contamination to any play equipment they may use.
- q. Materials sent in to the Kindergarten for use in craft activities must not be used if they have contained products that will cause an anaphylactic reaction to a child at the kindergarten (e.g. no egg cartons for egg allergies).
- r. These strategies will also be implemented for anaphylactic staff members.

#### **4. References:**

- Anaphylaxis in Education and Children's Services – Planning and Support Guide 2012 – DECD website