

## Bridgewater Primary School

# NUT AWARENESS POLICY

**Bridgewater Primary School is currently a Stage 2 NUT AWARE SCHOOL\***

### Purpose:

- To provide a safe learning environment for all members of the Bridgewater Primary School community.
- To raise the awareness of all members of the community regarding severe allergies.
- To continually review awareness of nut allergies in our school

### Management

#### Stage 1 (No identified student in the school)

- Information placed in newsletters and on website about nut allergies
- Enrolling parents asked for information about possible allergies.

#### Stage 2 (on enrolment of an identified student the school will move to stage 2)

#### The Nut Aware policy will be managed by:

- Parents providing a Health Care Plan from the allergic child's doctor with additional advice from parents. The school's management will be congruent with the allergic child's Health Care Plan from their doctor regarding the severity of reaction.
- All parents being requested **NOT** to send food to school that contains nuts (especially peanuts). This includes peanut paste, Nutella, all nuts and cooking oil containing peanut oil, as well as foods containing nuts. This will apply in particular to the Learning Area that the student is in.
- Signs will be posted near the Studio door to remind parents that a child with allergies is in this Studio.
- Staff supervising eating at lunch time.
- Students advised **NOT** to share food.
- Students being encouraged to wash hands after eating.
- Staff First Aid training in understanding and dealing with Anaphylaxis (severe allergic reactions) as the need arises. Medication kept at hand and checked for expiry.
- School activities such as fundraising, camps and excursions complying with the Nut Awareness Policy
- Students accidentally bringing food that contains nuts or nut products being asked to eat that food away from any other students and to wash their hands before going to play. It is critical that children **do not** bring these foods to school to ensure the safety of allergic children.

### Promotion

#### The policy will be promoted by:

- Parents and caregivers being informed via the newsletter and website
- New families to the school community being informed via the Enrolment Information Package/website.
- Governing Council being informed and has given approval and support
- Staff being informed and provided with training.
- Students being informed via teachers, signs and the newsletter

*\* This school acknowledges that due to food processing practices it is impractical to eliminate nuts or nut products entirely from an environment where there is food.*

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### INFORMATION

#### What Happens When a Person Has a Nut or Peanut Allergy?

When a person with a nut or peanut allergy eats a nut, peanut, or a food that contains nuts or peanuts, the immune system unleashes an army of chemicals to protect the body. The release of these chemicals can affect the respiratory system, gastrointestinal tract, skin, and the cardiovascular system — causing allergy symptoms like wheezing, nausea, headache, stomach-ache, and itchy hives.

People with nut and peanut allergies could have a mild reaction - or it could be more severe. People also react differently in terms of how quickly they may have symptoms of an allergy. A reaction to a particular food could take place immediately, or a person may not feel anything until a few hours after eating it. Most reactions last less than a day and may affect any of three body systems:

- **the skin** — in the form of red, bumpy rashes (hives), eczema, or redness and swelling around the mouth
- **the gastrointestinal tract** — in the form of belly cramps, diarrhoea, nausea, or vomiting
- **the respiratory tract** — symptoms can range from a runny nose, itchy, watery eyes, and sneezing to the triggering of asthma with coughing and wheezing.

People have different allergic reactions to nuts and peanuts. Some people may not even recognise an allergic reaction. In fact, people sometimes confuse an allergy with a cold, especially if it's the first time it happens.

In really bad cases, nut and peanut allergies can cause a condition called anaphylaxis (pronounced: ah-nuh-fuh-**lak**-sus). This is a sudden, potentially severe allergic reaction that can involve various systems in the body (such as the skin, respiratory tract, gastrointestinal tract, and cardiovascular system). This can cause a person's blood pressure to drop, airways to narrow, and tongue to swell, resulting in serious breathing difficulty, loss of consciousness, and, in some cases, even death. Anaphylaxis usually occurs minutes after exposure to a triggering substance, such as a peanut, but some reactions may be delayed by as long as 4 hours.

Some people may be so sensitive to nuts and peanuts that they get an allergic reaction just from breathing in small particles of that food. If you are one of these people, just being around nuts and peanuts can cause you to have an allergic reaction, even if you don't touch them or know they are there. This is the reason why some airlines have stopped serving peanuts to their passengers.

Although some people outgrow certain food allergies (like milk or egg allergy) over time, this doesn't usually happen in people who have nut and peanut allergies. But the good news is that, over time, people with nut and peanut allergies usually become really good at avoiding the foods that make them sick.