
POLICY 5141.21

ANAPHYLAXIS

Preamble

The Greater Victoria School District recognizes that it has a duty of care to students who are at risk from anaphylaxis while under school supervision. The Board also recognizes that this responsibility is shared among the student, parents, the school system and health care providers.

The purpose of this policy is to minimize the risk to students with severe allergies to potentially life-threatening allergens without depriving the severely allergic student of normal peer interactions or placing unreasonable restrictions on the activities of other students in the school.

This policy is designed to ensure that students at risk of anaphylaxis are identified, strategies are in place to minimize the potential of accidental exposure, and staff and key volunteers are trained to respond in an emergency situation.

Anaphylaxis is sudden and severe allergic reaction, which can be fatal. Anaphylaxis is a medical emergency that requires immediate emergency treatment with an Epinephrine auto-injector. Any substance can cause an allergic reaction. The most common substances include foods, food additives, medications, insects and latex. Anaphylaxis can include any of the following symptoms, which may appear alone or in any combination:

- Skin: hives, swelling, itching, warmth, redness, rash;
- Respiratory (breathing): wheezing, shortness of breath, throat tightness, cough, hoarse voice, chest pain/tightness, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms (runny itchy nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing;
- Gastrointestinal (stomach): nausea, pain/cramps, vomiting, diarrhea;

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- Cardiovascular (heart): pale/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizzy/lightheaded, shock;
- Other: anxiety, feeling of “impending doom”, headache, uterine cramps.

Policy

All children including those at risk of life-threatening allergic reactions have the right to access public education within a safe, healthy learning environment. The Greater Victoria School District cannot guarantee an ‘allergy free’ environment. It is expected that school staff, parents and students will take reasonable steps to establish an ‘allergy aware’ environment which minimizes the risk of potential anaphylaxis. Schools must take realistic and practical actions that will encourage the support of everyone involved.

The Board of Education expects schools will develop an ‘Anaphylaxis Action Plan’ when a student(s) with an anaphylactic allergy is under their care. The Anaphylaxis Action Plan will include allergy awareness, and prevention and avoidance strategies. These plans will be considered in the context of the anaphylactic child’s age and maturity. Children, as they mature, should take more personal responsibility for avoidance of their specific allergens.

Greater Victoria School Board

Approved: June 2003

Revised: June 2008