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ALLERGIES POLICY

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

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National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented

Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children		
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law Act	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
79	Service providing food and beverages
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record

Introduction

"Food allergy occurs in around 1 in 20 children and in about 2 in 100 adults. The most common triggers are egg, cow's milk, peanut, tree nuts, seafood, sesame, soy, fish and wheat. The majority of food allergies in children are not severe, and maybe 'outgrown' with time. However, peanut, tree nut, seed and seafood allergies are less likely to be outgrown and tend to be lifelong allergies. Some food allergies can be severe,

causing life-threatening reactions known as anaphylaxis". – ASCIA¹

Woden Early Childhood Centre (WECC) supports inclusive practices, as demonstrated in this *Allergies* policy. Please also refer to the *Inclusion, diversity and anti-bias* policy.

Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

Goals – What are we aiming to do?

WECC aims to provide a safe environment that allows any child with allergies to participate in the daily routine without risk or fear of being exposed to traces of their allergen.

WECC recognises that an allergy is a potentially life-threatening condition and follows best practices to reduce risk of exposure, by ensuring procedures are in place to ensure professional management of allergic reactions.

WECC works in partnership with families, following the recommendations of medical professionals to ensure the appropriate management of children's allergies at WECC, showing its commitment to:

- raising awareness of allergies amongst those involved with WECC
- following the necessary procedures to ensure the health and safety of all persons with allergies involved with WECC
- providing an environment in which children with allergies can participate in all activities to their full potential
- providing a clear set of guidelines and expectations to be followed with regard to the management of allergies

Strategies – How will it be done?

It is essential that WECC:

- identifies children at risk due to allergy and anaphylaxis
- obtains documentation and information about the child's allergy from a medical professional
- considers elimination of the allergen if recommended by a medical professional and if possible
- develops a crisis plan in conjunction with a medical professional's instructions
- provides opportunities for relevant educator training on allergies and anaphylaxis

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will:

- ensure the enrolment forms request information about known allergies of children
- discuss these allergies and their treatment with the child's family and ensure that educators have been given relevant information
- ensure that families have provided documentation from a medical professional and a completed Illness/Condition Management Plan, including a recent printed colour photograph of their child/ren, to ensure all educators can easily recognise the child
- ensure that educators are aware of the Medical Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan and put the necessary strategies in place
- check that medical and personal information about any child with known allergies is updated manually, or

¹ The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) is the peak professional body of clinical immunologists and allergists in Australia and New Zealand. Website: www.allergy.org.au

- more often where necessary (e.g. when they move rooms)
- develop a Medical Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan for each child with allergies in conjunction with the family and the child's doctor
- ensure that some educators in each room are trained and current in the recognition of a severe allergic reaction and the procedure to follow when they suspect a child is having an allergic reaction
- put procedures in place to exclude food which is known to cause an anaphylactic reaction in any child enrolled at WECC

Educators will:

- be aware of allergies of children in their care and maintain a copy of the Medical Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan and Action Plan
- display information in the kitchen about children with known allergies, including name, list of foods which cause an allergic reaction and relevant emergency information
- ensure food is not contaminated or cross-contaminated with any product known to cause an allergic reaction with any child currently in care
- discourage children sharing food whilst in care and encourage awareness and acceptance of inclusive practices for the different needs of children

Parents of children with known allergies will:

- provide information on the enrolment form about any known allergies
- complete a Medical Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor or Director and/or Room Leader
- provide medical information relating to their child, including a recommended Action Plan from the child's doctor
- update the Medical Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan when necessary
- provide clear and consistent information to educators regarding the requirements of their child in relation to allergic reactions
- assist educators to manage situations where food is shared by children (e.g. birthdays). It would be helpful if parents/guardians provide food that can be stored at WECC

Other parents at WECC will:

- read carefully and adhere to the policies regarding the exclusion of food which is known to cause an anaphylactic reaction in any child enrolled at WECC
- make themselves aware of the information regarding children with known allergies, which will be displayed in their child's room
- provide a list of ingredients used in any home cooked food they bring to WECC to be shared and to include packaging with other food, so ingredients can be checked

The supply of meals for children with diagnosed allergies:

WECC works in co-operation with families to minimise the risk of exposure to an allergen. In the case of children with diagnosed allergies it may be possible for WECC to offer a varied diet. Examples of allergies we are able to cater for include:

- nuts – WECC is a nut-free centre
- egg – offering egg alternatives in cooking
- dairy – restricting dairy intake. If parents require a replacement such as soy, parents need to supply it (yoghurt, soy milk, etc.)
- meat – not offering meat or certain meats to a child for religious or cultural reasons. Whilst not an allergy, this is something we are respectful of

Where children have more than one allergy or a more complicated diagnosed dietary restriction or food intolerance, it may become impractical for WECC to cater for the meals of a child as an individual, bearing in mind that we have up to 61 children attending WECC each day and over 100 children attending across the week. In this case it is the parent's responsibility to provide meals for the child.

When packing meals for a child to consume at WECC, parents must ensure:

- enough food is packed for the day – morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea
- food is packaged in a lunch box with all items clearly labelled with the child's name
- the meal does not contain nuts
- the lunch is placed in the room's refrigerator so that it is stored at a safe temperature
- parents have discussed with educators the need for heating any part of the meal

When meals are provided by families for their children, educators must ensure:

- that they are available to provide information to families about what foods their child has eaten from their lunch box or any issues arising from the food supplied
- that the child does not share food with or from other children

Evaluation

Allergies will be effectively managed at WECC to ensure children remain healthy and safe. Children at risk of allergies will not be put at unnecessary risk. WECC will monitor children's exposure to relevant allergenic foods.

Review process

Through frequent conversations, educators and families will work together to ensure that meals for a child with allergies are managed professionally and in the child's best interest. Where needed, educators and families may arrange a time to meet.

WECC reserves the right to ask families to supply their own food for a child when it is no longer possible for WECC to do so due to the type or complication of allergy.

Related policies /documents

- *Anaphylaxis management*
- *Asthma management*
- *Code of conduct*
- *First aid*
- *Grievances and complaints management*
- *Nutrition, food, beverages and dietary requirements*

Statutory legislation and considerations

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Sources and references

- Guide to the National Quality Standard

- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Early Years Learning Framework – Belonging, Being and Becoming
- Health and Safety in Children's Services Model Policies and Practices – 2nd Edition revised
- The Australian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) – www.allergy.org.au

Authorisation

Meng Wang
President
2018-19 WECC Management Committee