

**Nut Aware Environment Policy**

**Background**

Given the growing instances of children attending childcare with nut allergies, the Committee of Management supports a nut-aware environment to minimise nut exposure while recognising that it may not be possible to absolutely exclude all nuts and nut contacts. Children with nut allergies cannot be exposed to nuts in **ANY** form, as this may trigger a reaction up to and including an anaphylactic reaction, requiring an immediate injection of adrenalin, ambulance attendance and hospitalisation.

In severe cases children can die from these reactions. This has very serious consequences for our childcare service therefore in the best interest of these children, the Committee and staff support the need for a nut-aware environment. Meruka has an Anaphylaxis Policy which further explains the responsibility of the service to those who are anaphylactic.

**Meals & Snacks**

Meruka childcare co-operative has been implementing a nut-aware menu for several years. Meals and snacks produced at Meruka do not contain nuts or nut-products. All purchased pre-packaged food products are checked for information about the product contents regarding sources of nuts. If possible nut contents are identified on packaging information for particular products; these products are discarded and alternatives sourced.

**Bringing Food into Meruka**

In order for Meruka to remain nut-aware, and maintain the safety of all its children, parents are not allowed to bring in food and snacks for their children whilst at Meruka, unless first discussed with the Centre Co-ordinator.

If children do not eat the Centre’s meals, for individual or religious reasons, permission from the Centre Co-ordinator to bring in food for your child is required. This food should be handed directly to a staff member who will store the food in an appropriate place until your child requires it.

Under no circumstances should foods known to contain nuts be brought into Meruka.

Examples include:

* Peanut butter sandwiches, dips or crackers
* Nutella sandwiches or dips
* Biscuits and cakes with nuts in them
* Muesli bars with nuts
* Chocolate containing nuts e.g. Snickers
* Dried fruit & nut mixes.

Parents must notify staff of any known allergies their child has. If the child has a severe allergy, parents are responsible for providing an Epi-pen for their child whilst at Meruka. Each child with allergies should also have a written plan completed by parents, which is kept in the child’s file.

The Centre Management will ensure that staff attend training updates on the identification and management of allergic reactions in children, and the appropriate use of Epi-pens. See the anaphylaxis policy for further information.

Additional information about childhood allergies is available on the website: [www.allergy.org.au/](http://www.allergy.org.au/)

**Referenced National Quality Standards**

* **Quality Area 2** **–** **Children’s Health and Safety**
  + **2.1** Each child’s health is promoted.
  + **2.3** Each child is protected.
* **Quality Area 4 – Staffing Arrangements**
  + **4.2** Educators, coordinators and staff members are respectful and ethical.
* **Quality Area 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families & Communities**
  + **6.2** Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected.
  + **6.3** The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children’s learning and wellbeing.