

St. Mark's Nursery School Food Allergy Policy

St. Mark's Nursery School recognizes that food allergies may be life threatening and strives to maintain a safe and welcoming environment for children with such allergies. For this reason, St Mark's has created a "Food Allergy Policy." St. Mark's Nursery School has an Allergy Committee that works together to develop strategies and practices to minimize the risk of accidental exposure to food allergens and to ensure prompt and effective medical response should a child suffer an allergic reaction after eating at school. At St. Mark's we recognize the importance of collaborating with parents, physicians and teachers in developing such practices and we have worked together to strengthen our Procedures for Allergy Safety to protect our children afflicted with food allergies. All families must follow our Safe Food Guidelines and only bring in foods from our approved snack list.

Early identification of children with food allergies is a crucial part of our internal process. As part of Form #2, the "Health Record," which must be submitted prior to entry into any class, parents of children with food allergies must complete a "Food Allergy Action Plan." The Food Allergy Action Plan outlines steps to be taken in case of accidental ingestion of an allergen. As a cooperative nursery school with parents and caregivers in the classroom on a daily basis, it is imperative that all parents and caregivers are aware of any life-threatening allergies in their child's class.

When some children with food allergies eat certain foods or come into contact with even a miniscule amount of such foods, they can have an allergic reaction, such as a rash, runny nose, itchy eyes or vomiting. Some children may have an even more serious reaction to food allergens that can cause death. That type of reaction is called anaphylaxis (an-a-fi-LAK-sis). An anaphylactic reaction can move very quickly and is ALWAYS an emergency.

Signs of anaphylaxis may include any of the following symptoms:

- Skin symptoms anywhere on the body and including swollen lips
- Hives
- Coughing or difficulty breathing
- Gastrointestinal symptoms, specifically vomiting and diarrhea
- Tingling in the hands, feet, lips or scalp

Internal symptoms may progress rapidly before any outward symptoms appear showing that a severe allergic reaction occurred.

Common food allergens include peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, dairy, wheat, eggs, soy and some vegetables and fruits. Each allergy is different, and what is deemed "allergy-safe" for one child in the classroom may not be safe for another. Parents of children with allergies must give a detailed and accurate description of their child's allergy on the Food Allergy Action Plan and such parents must schedule a meeting with their child's teacher prior to the start of school to discuss the specifics of their child's allergy. All parents are informed at Back to School Night and reminded throughout the year of allergies in their child's class. Additionally, all parents must bring snacks deemed appropriate for their particular class either by picking a snack off of the Approved Snack List designated for St Mark's Nursery School, or if there is a child in their child's class that has a severe food allergy not addressed by the aforementioned list, the Approved Snack List designed for that particular class. The only food allowed in the classrooms shall be food listed on the applicable Approved Snack List. If any parent or caregiver brings a snack that is not appropriate for their child's class into the classroom, they will be asked to remove such snack from the school immediately.

Any dietary restrictions a child may have due to food intolerance (and not allergy) are to be confirmed with a doctor's note.

Any teacher using a lesson plan that calls for food ingredients shall provide a list of those ingredients to the parents of any child with food allergies at least one week prior to the lesson. In a classroom with a child suffering from Severe Food Allergies, the related teacher shall refrain from bringing any triggering foods into the classroom even if such foods were originally a part of the curriculum for that class. Safe substitutions for the triggering allergens shall be used.

Substitute teachers shall be informed of the food allergies in their class by the head teacher prior to entering the classroom. Additionally, substitute teachers and participating parents and caregivers shall be informed of such allergies by the Food Allergy Action Plans and photographs of the related children posted prominently on the walls of each affected classroom.

For more information, please visit:

SnackSafely.com
www.snacksafely.com
[\(800\) 929-4040](tel:(800)929-4040)

Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network
<http://www.foodallergy.org>

Allergy Kids
www.allergykids.com
[\(800\) 671-1525](tel:(800)671-1525)

The Food Allergy Initiative
www.foodallergyinitiative.org
[\(212\) 681-1380](tel:(212)681-1380)