

Education Times

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Specialised
playgroups



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Children's
Week



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Special

Anaphylaxis law an Australian first



Nothing nutty here: Williamstown North PS students Christopher, 8, Jasmine, 10 and Jeevan, 11, now feel safe in the knowledge that their school has a strong anaphylaxis management policy.

Picture: PETER GLENANE

VICTORIA has become the first state in Australia to introduce laws surrounding the safe management of anaphylaxis in kindergartens, childcare centres and schools.

Minister for Education Bronwyn Pike and Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development Maxine Morand marked the introduction of mandatory anaphylaxis management policies with a visit to Williamstown North Primary School earlier this week.

The school is attended by a number of children diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis – a sudden, potentially fatal allergic reaction that affects an increasing number of Australian children every year.

“Victoria is the first Australian state to introduce laws that require all licensed children’s services and those schools with a student diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis to have an anaphylaxis management policy in place,” Ms Morand said.

“The incidence of children suffering from severe allergies is growing, which is why the

Brumby Government is ensuring better planning and training in our children’s services and schools.

More than 26,000 government school teachers, staff and children’s services workers are receiving training to recognise and treat the symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction. This includes practice with an EpiPen which injects a dose of adrenaline.

“With about 4000 Victorian children being diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis it is vital that staff have the necessary skills to administer life-saving treatments.”

This training includes ways to minimise the risk of anaphylaxis, recognition of the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions, and practice in the administration of adrenaline using an EpiPen trainer.

The anaphylaxis management policy requires kindergartens, child care centres and schools with anaphylactic students to

work proactively to minimise risk, to store medication properly, to establish a plan for alerting parents about an incident and to have comprehensive individual management plans for all students at risk.

Ms Pike said the Brumby Government has been working with schools and children’s services to ensure they complied with the new laws, including the provision of comprehensive resources.

“With about 4000 Victorian children in schools, kindergartens, long day care and occasional care services being diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis it is vital that staff have the necessary skills to administer life-saving treatments and to minimise the risk to these children of anaphylaxis,” she said.

“This will reassure every parent whose child is at risk of anaphylaxis that the Government is working hard to make their children safer.”

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More than just nut-free zones, page 14.

New laws

As of July 14, schools with anaphylactic students and all children’s services must have the following in place:

- an Anaphylaxis Management Plan for each student, developed in consultation with the student’s parents or carers and medical practitioner
- prevention strategies for in-school and out-of-school settings
- a communication plan to raise staff, student and school community awareness about severe allergies and the school’s policies
- regular training and updates for school staff in recognising and responding appropriately to an anaphylactic reaction, including competently administering an EpiPen.

For further information visit:
www.education.vic.gov.au/health_wellbeing/health/anaphylaxis

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