

Awareness and Education
Students with Food Allergies at St. Bonaventure School

Dear St. Bonaventure Catholic School Families,

I pray this note finds you and your children well. I am writing to remind you of St. Bonaventure Catholic School's approach to safeguarding students with food allergies, most particularly students with allergies to peanuts and tree nuts. As you know, we request that families refrain from sending peanut and tree nut products to school. As a caring community whose goal is for all members to feel connected, safe, and supported, the request is one of many steps we have in place to partner with families to protect students from unnecessary risk of anaphylaxis.

In addition to asking families to avoid sending peanuts and tree nuts, we also instruct personnel in how to respond quickly and efficiently to anaphylaxis. During the week of August 29, each family received a "Food Allergy" brochure published by the American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology. The brochure describes the seriousness of allergy-induced anaphylaxis. "Anaphylaxis (pronounced an-a-fi-LAK-sis) is a serious allergic reaction that happens very quickly. Without immediate treatment – an injection of epinephrine (adrenalin) and expert care – anaphylaxis can be fatal.

Bishop Tod Brown has been clear in his direction for Catholic schools to be as inclusive as possible when accepting students. We admit children with mild learning exceptionalities to St. Bonaventure Catholic School whenever we feel we are able to serve them. Obviously, we are not equipped to accept all children, but we do our best to be inclusive in our admissions policies, including admitting students with severe allergies to peanuts and tree nuts.

During the 2009-2010 school year, over the course of several months, a subcommittee of our School Board surveyed our community, examined food safety approaches in a variety of school districts, spoke with key personnel at Marywood, and reflected on our Mission statement. That subcommittee has made recommendations to be implemented during the 2010-2011 school year to be included in our approach to safeguarding allergic students. One key recommendation is to add an awareness and education component for our community. As a first step, we have distributed the "Food Allergy" brochure for quick reference. You might also be interested in the information posted on the American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology website www.aaai.org. We will continue to remind you throughout the school year of the key role you play in safeguarding our students, especially those with food allergies. Thank you for your support.

Blessings,

Judy Luttrell

Principal