

Plymouth Grove Primary School

Allergen Policy



Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: 06.10.26
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Purpose of the Policy

To ensure staff are properly prepared to recognise and manage severe allergic reactions should they arise and to raise awareness; clarify practice and reassure staff (and parents) by providing them with guidelines to adhere to when working with pupils who have an identified allergy.

Links with other policies

- Health and Safety Policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

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1. Introduction

An allergy is a reaction by the body's immune system to substances that are usually harmless. The reaction can cause minor symptoms such as itching, sneezing or rashes but sometimes causes a much more severe reaction called anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is a severe systemic allergic reaction. It is at the extreme end of the allergic spectrum. The whole body is affected often within minutes of exposure to the allergen, but sometimes it can be hours later.

Causes often include foods, insect stings, or drugs.

Definition: *Anaphylaxis is a severe life threatening generalised or systemic hypersensitivity reaction.*

This is characterised by rapidly developing life-threatening airway / breathing / circulatory problems usually associated with skin or mucosal changes. It is possible to be allergic to anything which contains a protein, however most people will react to a fairly small group of potent allergens.

Common UK Allergens include (but not limited to):- Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Sesame, Milk, Egg, Fish, Latex, Insect venom, Pollen, molluscs, lupin, soya, gluten, crustaceans, mustard, sesame, celery, sulphites and Animal Dander.

This policy sets out how the school and its catering team will support pupils with allergies, to ensure they are safe and are not disadvantaged in any way whilst taking part in school life.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Identify the potential threats and the actions which the School and parents can reasonably take to prevent the presence of foodstuffs containing allergens in the School.
- Identify safeguarding and training requirements amongst staff and pupils in order to reduce, as far as possible, the risk of an allergic reaction.

3. Training

Anaphylaxis, acute asthma and Allergen training is covered in the First Aid Training Course that support staff have received.

Regular in-house training for the epipen is also covered for all staff so everyone is familiar how to use it irrespective if they are first aid trained or not due to anaphylaxis being life threatening.

Admin staff, Site Manager and School Business Leader have also completed training in Administration of Medicines

As at September 2026 all staff have completed Anaphylaxis Awareness training.

4. Potential Risks

- Any food on the School premises provided by ourselves or from outside
- Food brought into school for food projects
- Contact between persons who have handled foodstuffs known to present a risk of an allergic reaction (in or outside school) and allergy sufferers, without appropriate handwashing
- Catering on school / residential trips
- Events where food is served on the premises but not prepared on the premises i.e. Fun Day, staff events, cake sales
- Misinterpretation or a lack of understanding of the differences between a life-threatening 'allergy' or an 'intolerance' which may produce milder symptoms
- Lists of ingredients not explicitly naming the allergen (e.g. casein and whey as milk derivate, arachis oil is another name for peanut oil).

5. Reasonable Limits

There are many foodstuffs that do not contain allergens but which are labelled as being produced in factories that cannot be guaranteed to be allergen free due to the potential for cross-contamination in preparation.

It cannot reasonably be expected that all these items be kept out of school.

Items not packed and labelled will be permitted in school, in limited and controlled circumstances i.e. packed lunches or snacks provided by the School.

Ingredients in products should be checked and should be used to inform decisions regarding acceptable use of a product in school (currently, ingredients that may cause an allergic reaction are listed in products in bold).

6. Role and Responsibilities

Parent responsibilities

- On entry to the school, it is the parent's responsibility to inform reception staff of any allergies that their child has. This information should include all previous severe allergic reactions, history of anaphylaxis and details of all prescribed medication.
- Parents are to supply a copy of their child's Allergy Action Plan to school. If they do not currently have an Allergy Action Plan this should be developed as soon as possible in collaboration with a healthcare professional e.g. Schools nurse/GP/allergy specialist.
- Assist the School by educating their child and encouraging increasing independence in the child's awareness and management of their allergy.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring any required medication is supplied, in date and replaced as necessary.
- Parents are requested to keep the school up to date with any changes in allergy management. The Allergy Action Plan will be kept updated accordingly

If an allergen form is not returned by a parent, the School will assume that the pupil has no known allergies or intolerances.

School Staff Responsibilities

- To ensure the school caterers are aware of any pupils with a food allergy or intolerance via the appropriate computer programme.
- To ensure that there is an appropriate number of staff who have received First Aid Training that includes anaphylaxis training
- To ensure that all staff have read and understood the Allergen Policy and adhere to the contents
- Staff must be aware of the pupils in their care (regular or cover classes) who have known allergies as an allergic reaction could occur at any time and not just at mealtimes. Any food-related activities must be supervised with due caution.
- Staff leading school trips/ in school projects, will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies. Trip leaders will check that all pupils with medical conditions, including allergies, carry their medication. Pupils unable to produce their required medication will not be able to attend the excursion.
- The administration team along with the class teacher will ensure that the up to date Allergy Action Plan is kept with the pupil's medication.

- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all medication is in date however the administration team will check medication kept at school on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.
- School keeps a register of pupils who have been prescribed an AAI (EpiPen)
- Staff responsible for administering medicines will make a record using Medical Tracker Software of use of any AAI(s) and emergency treatment given.
- Pupils are encouraged NOT to share food and made aware of the dangers LA to monitor

Pupil Responsibilities

- Pupils are encouraged to have a good awareness of their symptoms and to let an adult know as soon as they suspect they are having an allergic reaction. LA to monitor

Caterers Responsibilities

- Allergen training is completed annually by all catering staff as per recommendation by Dukefield and the local EHO
- Work closely with the supply chain to ensure accurate information on all products that may contain allergens.
- Work closely with clients in assisting in the support of customers with known allergies, including meeting with parents, if requested, to discuss any special requirements..
- Ensure that catering staff have the necessary training and information to provide our customers with accurate guidance on allergens.
- Through good hygiene practices and adhering to Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), reduce the risk of cross contamination in our kitchens.
- Audit our operations to ensure the above policy and practices are working effectively and review the policy, as necessary.
- Operate as far as is practical a nut free environment.
- Ensure the development and review the Company Allergen Policy.
- Ensure that the necessary resources are available for implementing the Allergen Policy and detailed arrangements, as well as the subsequent monitoring of performance
- Ensure that the appropriate information, training and supervision is provided to all employees and apprentices.
- Ensure that the policy and procedures are communicated to all stakeholders to ensure its effective implementation. .
- Provide relevant training material to ensure the effective implementation of the policy.
- Work with the Food Department to review and update policy and procedures when necessary.
- Ensure that suppliers provide accurate allergen information on products on the Company Approved Product List (APL).
- Ensure that any changes to products and recipes are communicated to all relevant Managers.
- Ensure a copy of this policy is shared and explained with the parents
- Discuss with the parents any issues concerning the means in which information concerning students with allergens is communicated to the Unit Manager, and the identification of them, and agreeing a solution to ensure that the allergen procedures

can be fully implemented. Any agreed actions will be recorded in writing, using the Special Diets Form where applicable

- Ensure that the business manager is kept informed of the outcome of any meetings with parents concerning special diets. admin staff to update Catering Manager of any changes both verbally and in writing via an email
- Ensure that the Termly Unit Allergen Checklist is completed by the Unit Manager and is reviewed upon the first visit of the term by a member of the business manager.
- Liaise with the school to identify which students have special dietary needs & use the school's procedures to identify them (through lanyards)
- Where necessary, with the Business manager, meet with any parents to discuss any individual student requirements. Agreed outcome from any meetings to be recorded on the Special Diet Form.
- Ensure that the business manager and admin team are kept informed of the outcome of any meetings with parents concerning special diets.
- Ensure that where there are any **RED** category students the correct procedures are followed at all times
- Ensure that all staff are aware of all information relating to students and their allergies.
- Complete the allergen matrix when producing dishes, using information from recipes and ingredient packaging.
- Ensure that allergen matrices are reviewed and kept up to date to reflect any changes to recipes.
- To ensure that all allergen matrices are signed and dated when completed and/or reviewed. .
- Ensure that any pre-packaged direct sale foods are correctly labelled to compliance with Natasha's Law. pre-packed lunches for school trips. Admin staff to print all labels of ingredients contained in pack lunch. Children's name printed
- Check product packaging before use/consumption as the packing will carry the manufacturer/suppliers up to date information and update allergen information, as necessary.
- Complete allergen training and ensure all Unit staff *have been* trained.
- Support the School in the implementation of their own Allergy Procedures.
- Complete the Unit Allergen Checklist at the beginning for each term and follow up on any actions.
- Immediately report any concerns or issues to the business manager

7. Allergy Action Plans

Allergy action plans are designed to function as Individual Healthcare Plans for children with food allergies, providing medical and parental consent for schools to administer medicines in the event of an allergic reaction, including consent to administer a spare adrenaline auto injector.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to complete the allergy action plan with help from a healthcare professional (e.g. GP/School Nurse/Allergy Specialist) and provide this to the school.

8. Emergency Treatment and Management of Anaphylaxis

What to look for:

- swelling of the mouth or throat
- difficulty swallowing or speaking
- difficulty breathing
- sudden collapse / unconsciousness
- hives, rash anywhere on the body
- abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting
- sudden feeling of weakness
- strong feelings of impending doom

Anaphylaxis is likely if all of the following 3 things happen:

- sudden onset (a reaction can start within minutes) and rapid progression of symptoms
- life threatening airway and/or breathing difficulties and/or circulation problems (e.g. alteration in heart rate, sudden drop in blood pressure, feeling of weakness)
- changes to the skin e.g. flushing, urticaria (an itchy, red, swollen skin eruption showing markings like nettle rash or hives), angioedema (swelling or puffing of the deeper layers of skin and/or soft tissues, often lips, mouth, face etc.)

Note: skin changes on their own are not a sign of an anaphylactic reaction, and in some cases don't occur at all. If the pupil has been exposed to something they are known to be allergic to, then it is more likely to be an anaphylactic reaction.

Anaphylaxis can develop very rapidly, so a treatment is needed that works rapidly. Adrenaline is the mainstay of treatment and it starts to work within seconds. Adrenaline should be administered by an injection into the muscle (intramuscular injection)

What does adrenaline do?

- It opens up the airways
- It stops swelling
- It raises the blood pressure

Adrenaline must be administered with the minimum of delay as it is more effective in preventing an allergic reaction from progressing to anaphylaxis than in reversing it once the symptoms have become severe.

ACTION:

- Stay with the child and call for help. **DO NOT MOVE CHILD OR LEAVE UNATTENDED**
- Remove trigger if possible (e.g. Insect stinger)
- Lie child flat (with or without legs elevated) – A sitting position may make breathing easier
- **USE ADRENALINE WITHOUT DELAY** and note time given. (inject at upper, outer thigh - through clothing if necessary)
- **CALL 999 and state ANAPHYLAXIS**
- If no improvement after 5 minutes, administer second adrenaline auto-injector
- If no signs of life commence CPR

- Phone parent/carer as soon as possible All pupils must go to hospital for observation after anaphylaxis even if they appear to have recovered as a reaction can reoccur after treatment.

9. Supply, storage and care of medication

Anaphylaxis kits are kept in the locked emergency first aid cabinet in the library and all staff are aware of the code for access which has been kept simple - 999. With the exception of one child whereby he always carries his epipen in a special bag with him whilst in school. This is taken to PE lessons and when he goes off site for trips, etc.

The storage box contains:

- adrenaline injectors i.e. EpiPen® or Jext® (two of the same type being prescribed)
- an up-to-date allergy action plan
- antihistamine as tablets or syrup (if included on plan)
- spoon if required
- asthma inhaler (if included on plan).

It is the responsibility of the child's parents to ensure that the anaphylaxis kit is up-to-date and clearly labelled, however the administration team will check medication kept at school on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.

Storage

AAls should be stored at room temperature, protected from direct sunlight and temperature extremes. Disposal AAls are single use only and must be disposed of as sharps. Used AAls can be given to ambulance paramedics on arrival or can be disposed of in a sharps bin.

The school does not have a sharps bin on site.

10. Catering – External and Internal

All food businesses (including school caterers) must follow the Food Information Regulations 2014 which states that allergen information relating to the 'Top 14' allergens must be available for all food products.

- The school menu is available for parents to view in termly advance with all ingredients listed and allergens highlighted on the school website at.
- The office staff will inform the Catering Manager and assistant manager of pupils with food allergies via the correct computer programme
- The Admin team will provide the catering team with a list with photographs– including details of allergies regularly

Allergen Policy:

It is our legal obligation to provide accurate allergen information about the foods that we produce and serve

Where we have been informed of a student with severe allergies or who has suffered from anaphylactic symptoms they will be categorised as **RED** and will be treated in line with the procedures set out.

Some families and students may have a dietary preference based on lifestyle choosing to exclude or include certain foods. These students will be categorised as **Purple**

Working with the school we will seek to make the relevant information available to parents/carers of students who have food allergies.

Photos and allergy requirements of students should be supplied by the school to the catering team in hard copies which are visible within our kitchens. *Pupils with allergies have a lanyard which lists their allergies

Catering teams are briefed on requirements and made aware of allergies and special dietary requirements.

The successful implementation of the Allergen policy requires the support and cooperation of all employees, the Parent/Guardian/Carer and the students. Communicated to the parents and guardians

Special Diets

In order to ensure *that* the safety of students, particularly at primary school, the following procedures categorises the student depending upon their needs:

- **RED** severe reaction/anaphylactic symptoms disclosed.
- **RED** food/allergen intolerance
- **PURPLE** excludes foods due to lifestyle preference.

RED Category Controls

Once the procedures above has been followed and a menu agreed for the student the following controls must be in place at all times

The manager/Chef must communicate to the kitchen when food for RED category students is being prepared. Where possible this should be in a separate area, if this is not possible then separated by time from other foods containing allergens. Prior to preparation the area and all equipment must be thoroughly cleaned using the 2-stage cleaning method and/or dishwasher to prevent cross contamination

When preparing the meals, the Manager/Chef must thoroughly wash their hands and wear a disposable plastic apron over their uniform to prevent cross contamination. (The same control used when handling raw meat should apply). Care must be taken at all stages to prevent any allergen cross contamination including storage of ingredients, preparation, cooking and service.

Once completed the meal (main course and dessert) must be plated and double wrapped in cling film, then clearly labelled with the, dish description.

If the cling film at any time is torn, removed or damaged the meal **MUST NOT** be served and immediately disposed of. It is the Manager/Chef's responsibility to check the dish before service to ensure that it is correctly covered and labelled. .

The meal must be clearly identified to the members of staff responsible for serving the student, this information must be communicated directly to the staff by the Manager/Chef during the pre-service briefing.

The meal must be served directly to the student by the nominated member of staff responsible for serving the student.

It is for the student's safety that the above procedures are followed at all times, if at any time this cannot be followed then the Unit Manager must agree an action with the school.

Students that are **RED** AND **PURPLE** can be served from the counter ensuring that they are served the correct meal. Staff must be briefed before service by the Unit Manager/Chef using the Pre-Service Briefing Sheet.

General Food Production and Service

It is important to reduce the risk of cross contamination with allergens in the general production and service of foods within the business. The following procedures are in place to reduce the risk:

- Cleaning work areas down, using 2 stage cleaning, in between preparing different foods.
- Ensuring all equipment and utensils are cleaned in-between usage.
- Storing ingredients and foods in closed and labelled containers, this includes the Dry Stores, fridges and freezers.
- Keep ingredients containing allergens separate from others.
- Washing hands thoroughly between preparing different foods.

Cooking can also result in cross contamination – such as chips cooked in the same oil as fish cannot be considered gluten or fish free.

When cooking allergen free foods, the use of separate clean oven cloths maybe needed to prevent cross contamination where relevant.

Food provided from home:

- Bottles, drinks and lunch boxes provided by parents for pupils with food allergies should be clearly labelled with the name of the child for whom they are intended. Admin to inform Parents and Guardians that their child's name needs to be written on the front of their packed lunch
- Foods containing nuts are prohibited within school and children are not permitted to bring them into school. Parents have been provided with the 'packed lunch' policy and must adhere to this guidance
- Lunchtime organisers will monitor food brought in from home to be consumed at lunchtime and report any concerns to the Head Teacher

Food provided by the school (such as breakfast and afterschool club):

- The Catering Staff are educated via allergen awareness training, about how to read labels for food allergens and about measures to prevent cross contamination during the handling, preparation and serving of food.
- Use of food in crafts, cooking classes, science experiments and special events (e.g. fetes, assemblies, cultural events) needs to be considered and may need to be restricted/risk assessed depending on the allergies of particular children and their age.
- The school will not provide any foods containing nuts & peanuts or foods which 'may contain nuts & peanuts'.

11. Useful Links

- Anaphylaxis Campaign- <https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk>
- AllergyWise training for schools - <https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/informationtraining/allergywise-training/for-schools/>
- Whole school allergy and awareness management (Allergy UK) <https://www.allergyuk.org/schools/whole-school-allergy-awarenessandmanagement>
- Official guidance relating to supporting pupils with medical needs in schools: <http://medicalconditionsatschool.org.uk/documents/Legal-Situation-in-Schools.pdf>
- Education for Health <http://www.educationforhealth.org>
- Food allergy quality standards (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, March 2016) <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs118>
- Anaphylaxis: assessment and referral after emergency treatment (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2020) <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg134?unlid=22904150420167115834>
- Guidance on the use of adrenaline auto-injectors in schools (Department of Health, 2017) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/645476/Adrenaline_auto_injectors_in_schools.pdf