



Food Allergy Policy

Policy Title:	Food Allergy Policy
Last Review:	January 2026
Next Review:	August 2026
Responsibility:	Bursar, Headmaster, Matron
Other relevant policies:	Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy Child Protection Safeguarding Policy First Aid Policy Health and Safety Policy Off-Site Activities and Educational Visits Policy Packed Lunch Policy Risk Assessment Policy

Policy written in collaboration with School Nurse (NHS) and the Food Allergy Team.

Policy Statement and Aims

West House School recognises its responsibility for the safety of its pupils, staff and visitors and the need for awareness of the risk to individuals who may suffer from allergies or tolerances, particularly those that carry a potentially life-threatening reaction. The school is committed to a whole school approach to the care and management of members of the school community who suffer from an identified allergy and this policy encompasses food allergies and intolerances, in particular.

The school's position is not to guarantee a completely allergen free environment, but rather to minimize the risk of exposure by hazard identification, instruction and information. This will encourage self-responsibility in respect of staff and older pupils in making informed decisions on food choices. It is also important that the school has robust plans in place for an effective response to possible emergencies.

The school is committed to proactive risk management in respect of food allergies through:

- The encouragement of self-responsibility and learned avoidance strategies amongst those who are deemed old enough to make appropriately informed decisions.
- The proactive support of pupils who suffer with allergies/intolerances and are not of an age or stage of development at which they can take responsibility to make appropriately informed decisions in respect of food choices.
- The establishment and documentation of a comprehensive management plan for menu planning, food labelling, stores and stock ordering and 'customer' awareness of food produced on site.
- Provision of a staff awareness programme on food allergies/intolerances, possible symptoms (anaphylaxis), recognition and treatment.

As such, the aims of this policy are to:

- Identify the potential threats and the actions that the school and parents can reasonably take to reduce, manage and, where possible, 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.

Definitions

Allergy Occurs when a person reacts to a substance that is usually considered harmless. It is an immune response and instead of ignoring the substance, the body produces histamine which triggers an allergic reaction.

<i>Allergen</i>	A normally harmless substance that, for some, triggers an allergic reaction. You can be allergic to anything. The most common allergens are food, medication, animal dander (skin cells shed by animals with fur or feathers) and pollen. Latex and wasp and bee stings are less common allergens.
<i>Anaphylaxis</i>	Anaphylaxis, or anaphylactic shock, is a sudden, severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction to a trigger (food, stings, bites or medicines).
<i>Adrenaline Device</i>	A syringe style device containing the drug adrenaline. This is an individually prescribed drug for known sufferers which is ready for immediate intramuscular administration. This may also be referred to as an auto injector or EpiPen/Jext which are brand names.

Common Causes of Food Related Allergic Reactions

The common causes of allergies relevant to this policy are the 14 major food allergens:

- Cereals containing Gluten.
- Celery including stalks, leaves, seeds and celeriac in salads
- Crustaceans (prawns, crab, lobster, scampi, shrimp paste)
- Eggs – also food glazed with egg
- Fish – some salad dressings, relish, fish sauce, some soy and Worcester sauces
- Soya – (tofu, bean curd, soya flour)
- Milk – also food glazed with milk
- Nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecan nuts, Brazil nuts, pistachio, cashew and macadamia (Queensland) nuts, nut oils and marzipan)
- Peanuts – sauces, cakes, desserts, ground nut oil, peanut flour
- Mustard – liquid mustard, mustard powder, mustard seeds
- Sesame Seeds – bread, bread sticks, tahini, houmous, sesame oil
- Sulphur Dioxide/Sulphites (dried fruit, fruit juice drinks, wine, beer)
- Lupin – seeds and flour, some breads and pastries
- Molluscs (mussels, whelks, oyster sauce, land snails and squid)

Potential Risks

- Any food on the school premises provided by the school or via an external source.
- Food brought into school.
- Contact between persons who have handled foodstuffs known to present a risk of allergic reaction and allergy sufferers, without appropriate handwashing.
- Catering on school/residential trips.
- Events where food is served on the school premises but not prepared on the premises, e.g., cake sales, Parents' Association events.
- Misunderstanding of the differences between a life-threatening allergy and an intolerance which may produce milder symptoms.
- Lack of clear labelling of ingredients.
- Young pupils not being aware of the potential risks in respect of their own dietary requirements due to allergies.

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

Items so packed and labelled will be permitted in school, in limited and controlled circumstances e.g., 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 the product. The school will not permit a child to eat the product in the event of any doubt.

If items are brought in from outside, such as senior boys baking cakes for charity sales, parents will be informed to not provide food with the more common allergens listed above. Cakes will only be sold if they are accompanied by a clear

list of ingredients. The school does not permit Birthday and Celebration treats to be consumed during the school day. Any food brought in will be kept in the office and distributed at the end of the day and handed directly to parents.

Parental Responsibilities

- Parents are required to provide the school with details of their child's allergies via the completion of an annual form. If the form is not returned, the school will assume that the pupil has no known allergies or intolerances.
- Parents are required to provide in-year updates in relation to allergies and intolerances as they become available.
- Parents are required to provide the School Matron with medicines and medical documentation provided by the child's doctor.
- Parents are required to assist the school by educating their child and encouraging increasing independence in the child's awareness and management of their allergy.

Staff Responsibilities

Matron

- Medical information is confidential. However, Matron is responsible for keeping accurate medical records in respect of all information received from parents of boys in Reception to Year 6. Matron will pass any information on to the Head of Catering and Housekeeping with regards to pupil food allergies. She will also share it with Form Tutors and Class Teachers via records displayed in the staff room (such information cannot be viewed from outside the room).
- The sharing of information will be undertaken in the form of a list with pictures sent out to the relevant staff.
- Matron will arrange appropriate whole staff training in allergy awareness and anaphylaxis on an annual basis. Such training will be delivered by the school nurse (Louise Proudlock) or a member of the NHS Birmingham Community Health Care team.
- Matron is responsible for supplying pupil medication in Reception to year 6, ensuring that medication is in date and liaising with parents if it is out of date.
- Matron is responsible for maintaining an appropriate stock of additional devices (Epi-Pens, etc.) and to ensure that they are in date.
- Matron will liaise with staff leading external trips and visits to ensure that they are aware of specific medical/dietary requirements.
- Matron will meet with parents as required to discuss medical/dietary needs.

Head of Catering and Housekeeping/Catering Staff

- Using only authorised suppliers and being the controlling point and contact for all purchases of food used at school.
- Ensuring suppliers of foods and catering suppliers are aware of the school's food allergy policy and the requirements under labelling law.
- Catering staff check that foods from suppliers are nut free or labelled may contain nuts
- Ensuring that clear labelling is presented on menus and at serving stations highlighting allergens that might be present in the food served.
- Being aware of pupils who have allergies/intolerances by ensuring close reference to the documents provided by Matron (or, in the case of EYFS pupils, the EYFS team).
- Ensuring that individual training is updated regularly in accordance with arrangements made by the school Matron (usually annually).
- To undertake any further training in respect of allergies and intolerances required by the Headmaster, Deputy Head or Bursar.

Teaching Staff & Teaching Assistants

- Teaching Staff and Teaching assistants are required to familiarise themselves with those pupils who have allergies via the information provided by the School Matron in the Staffroom.
- Members of staff on lunch and tea duty are required to supervise pupils queuing and to support them in their food choices.

Pupil Responsibilities

- Pupils are required to demonstrate an age-appropriate awareness of allergies and to increasingly take ownership of their food choices.
- Pupils are expected to demonstrate age-appropriate responses and support in respect of their peers who have allergies. Any pupil who presents a potential danger through wilful acts of irresponsible behaviour will be sanctioned in accordance with the Policy on Pupil Behaviour.

EYFS Procedures and Responsibilities

- Parents are required to complete a diet/allergy form before their child's first day.
- The EYFS Administrator collates all of the information and produces a list of dietary requirements and allergies.
- The list is made available as follows:
 1. Via hard copy in the private medical room behind the reception desk.
 2. Via hard copy on the register clipboards for each group; 3. Via digital copy in the EYFS folder on 'Staff Resources'.
 4. Via hard copy to the Catering Department.
- The EYFS Administrator liaises with the Catering Department daily to confirm dietary arrangements for the day.
- The EYFS staff take the clipboards to lunch and tea every day and assist members of the Catering Department with food service to ensure that children receive the correct meals.
- Devices are stored in the classrooms and taken with the child upon leaving the room as required.
- A list of members of staff willing to administer a device is maintained by Avril Walsh, the Nursery Manager.
- **If a member is not willing, then school matron or a member of SLT will administer device.**

Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities

When pupils are taken off-site, it is the responsibility of the member of the Party Leader to check the requirements of all pupils they are taking off site and make a record within the risk assessment.

Party Leader must meet with matron 1:1 before every trip to run through the first aid kit and the emergency allergy kit – matron can provide a refresh on how to administer AAI during this.

If the school is providing packed lunches, the Party Leader must inform the Catering Department of pupils attending who have a food allergy or intolerance.

All those taking part in the trip must have current Anaphylaxis training (undertaken within a 12-month period) and a member of staff qualified in Paediatric First Aid must be included in the supervising staff. Staff must also:

- Physically check that pupils have their medication before leaving the site.
- Ensure that any food provided by the school has been clearly labelled and that they are aware of any foods that should not be given to pupils.

When pupils are required to bring their own packed lunches, information letters must include a statement about food allergy awareness and the fact that nuts must not be included in the meal.

Appendix A

School Management of Severe Allergies (Anaphylaxis)

All staff must update their allergy awareness training every twelve months in accordance with training arranged or directed by the School Matron. Staff must also make themselves aware of the First Aid Policy.

Anaphylaxis is a severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction at the extreme end of the allergic spectrum. Anaphylaxis may occur within minutes of exposure to the allergen, although sometimes it can take hours. It can be life threatening if not treated quickly with adrenaline.

Any allergic reaction, including anaphylaxis, occurs because the body's immune system reacts inappropriately in response to the presence of a substance that it perceives to be a threat. Anaphylaxis can be accompanied by shock (known as anaphylactic shock). This is the most extreme form of allergic reaction.

Common triggers of anaphylaxis include:

- Peanuts and tree nuts – peanut allergy and tree nut allergy are the most common reactions and for that reason have received widespread publicity.
- Other foods (e.g., dairy products, egg, fish, shellfish and soya).
- Insect stings (bees, wasps, hornets).
- Latex (gloves and PPE).
- Drugs (illegal and prescription).

Anaphylaxis has a wide range of symptoms. Any of the following may be present, although most people with anaphylaxis would not necessarily experience all of these:

Airway:

Persistent cough
Hoarse voice
Difficulty swallowing
Swollen tongue

Breathing:

Difficult or noisy breathing
Wheeze or persistent cough

Consciousness:

Persistent dizziness
Pale or floppy
Suddenly sleepy
Collapse/unconscious

When symptoms are those of anaphylactic shock, the position of the pupil is very important because anaphylactic shock involves a fall in blood pressure.

- If the patient is feeling faint or weak, looking pale, or beginning to go floppy, lay them down with their legs raised. **They should not stand up.**
- If there are also signs of vomiting, lie them on their side to avoid choking (recovery position).
- If they are having difficulty breathing caused by asthma symptoms and/or by swelling of the airways, they are likely to feel more comfortable sitting up.

Actions to take:

(Ask other staff to assist, particularly with making telephone calls, one person must take charge of ensure that the following is undertaken)

- Stay with child
- Call for help if needed
- Locate and administer adrenaline device
- Ring (9)999 immediately to get the ambulance on the way.
- Ring Matron (110) and state what has happened so that they can assess the situation and bring medication to the location. Please note that Matron may not be able to attend immediately and there should be no delay in using the person's medication. Locate the nearest first aider to come and assist.
- Ensure that the main school office is aware that an ambulance is on the way.

- Stay in the immediate area to assist and Matron/first aider and/or direct the Emergency Services.
- Ensure that accident forms are completed if applicable.
- Ring the child's parents.
- **If no improvement after 5 minutes give a further adrenaline dose using a second autoinjector device, if available.**
- **Commence CPR if there are no signs of life**