



Samarès School

Food Allergy Policy

April 2024

Policy Aim

Samares School ("the School") strives to minimise the risk of any pupil suffering a serious allergic reaction whilst at school or attending any school-related activity and to ensure staff are properly prepared to recognise and manage serious allergic reactions should they arise. This policy looks at food allergy and intolerances and should be read in conjunction with the School Food Preparation and Hygiene Policy.

Introduction

An allergy is a reaction of 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 serious reaction called anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is a serious life-threatening allergic reaction. It is at the extreme end of the spectrum. The whole body is affected often within minutes of exposure to the allergen, but sometimes it can be hours later. Causes can include foods, insect stings and drugs.

It is possible to be allergic to anything containing a protein, but most people will react to a small group of potent allergens. The 14 common UK Allergens relevant to this policy are:

- Peanuts
- Nuts
- Fish
- Crustaceans
- Molluscs
- Cereals containing gluten
- Egg
- Milk
- Sesame seeds
- Mustard
- Soya
- Celery
- Lupin
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites

The school's position is not to guarantee a completely allergen free environment, rather to minimise the risk of exposure by hazard identification, instruction, and information.

The school is committed to proactive risk food allergy management through:

- The encouragement of self-responsibility and learned avoidance strategies amongst those suffering from allergies.

- The establishment and documentation of a management plan for food labelling, food storage, food ordering and awareness of food produced on site.
- Provision of a staff awareness and training programme on food hygiene, food allergies/intolerances, possible symptoms (anaphylaxis) recognition and treatment.

Definitions

Allergy – a condition in which the body has an exaggerated response to a substance. This is known as hypersensitivity.

Allergen – a normally harmless substance that triggers an allergic reaction for a susceptible person.

Allergic Reaction – this is the body's reaction to an allergen and can be identified by, but not limited to, the following symptoms:

- Hives
- Generalised flushing of the skin
- Tingling in and around the mouth
- Burning sensation in the mouth
- Swelling of the throat, mouth, or face
- Feeling wheezy
- Abdominal pain
- Rising anxiety
- Nausea and vomiting
- Alterations in heart rate
- Feeling weakness

Anaphylaxis – also referred to as anaphylactic shock, this is a sudden, severe, and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. This kind of reaction may include the following symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing
- Feeling faint
- Reduced level of consciousness
- Lips turning blue
- Collapsing
- Becoming unresponsive

Adrenaline Device – A syringe device that is used for administering adrenaline when required. May also be referred to as an EpiPen (brand name).

Food Intolerance – An adverse reaction by the body to a specific food ingredient. It is unrelated to the immune system and, therefore, is not life-threatening. Instead, the body has difficulty digesting certain foods, usually when consumed in large amounts. Symptoms of food intolerance include bloating, stomach cramps and diarrhoea. These usually develop gradually within a few hours of eating the offending ingredient.

Coeliac Disease – is an autoimmune disease that causes the body to react when gluten is consumed. The villi in the small intestine are attacked and damaged by the body's immune system, meaning the body cannot absorb nutrients from food. The only way to prevent symptoms of coeliac disease is to avoid consuming gluten altogether, as even trace amounts can affect the individual.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

Parents and carers of children are:

- requested to inform the school of any allergies, the nature of the allergic reaction and provide any medical documentation necessary together with any appropriate medicines prescribed by the child's doctor.
- responsible for ensuring any required medication supplied is in date and replaced as necessary.
- Requested to assist the school by educating their child and encouraging increasing independence in the child's awareness and management of their allergy.
- requested to keep the school up to date with any changes in allergy management for their child.
- requested **to avoid** snack and lunchbox items containing nuts.
- requested **NOT** to bring 'homemade' or non-pre-packaged and labelled food into school for birthdays or other events. If it is agreed that cake or other food items intended for sharing can be brought into school for a special occasion, either by parents, children or staff, it should be prepackaged and labelled with ingredients listed that may cause an allergic reaction.

- requested to ensure that the school has up to date emergency contact information.

School Staff Responsibilities

Staff will:

- be made aware of pupils with known allergies as an allergic reaction could occur at any time and not just at mealtimes.
- supervise any food-related activities with due caution.
- educate pupils to be aware of allergies, the importance of hand washing, and encourage them not to share food.
- be made aware of the location of EpiPens for children who need them.
- participate annually in appropriate training and refresher training as requested.
- follow the School Food Preparation and Hygiene Policy at all times.
- respond immediately and appropriately in the event of a medical emergency.

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.
- asked to avoid which foods they know they are allergic to or intolerant to.
- encouraged to undertake good handwashing practices.
- asked not to share food with others.
- encouraged to support their peers and must be kind and understanding.

Food and Allergy Management

- An allergen matrix will be prepared to highlight the allergens in each snack prepared.
- Food items are fully covered, resealed, or placed into sealed containers if needed and stored in a cupboard, on a shelf or in a fridge or freezer.
- Food items should be labelled clearly, listing the allergens in the food. Original packaging from the suppliers will be kept if the ingredients are listed to be able to refer to if necessary.
- Allergenic food is stored below non allergenic food or in a different area (including in the fridge), in a similar way to storing raw meat below cooked meat in a fridge.

- Food items such as those containing bread and wheat will be stored in sealed containers.
 - Any food items that may contain common allergens, such as nuts, are stored separately from other foods to avoid contamination.
 - Containers should be clearly labelled with the ingredients.
 - Storage containers will be thoroughly cleaned following their use.
 - Any food spillages in storage areas/equipment will be cleaned up quickly and thoroughly.
 - All food preparation areas and food tables will be thoroughly cleaned/disinfected before and after being used.
 - There will be a set of kitchen utensils, boards etc. that are only for use with the food and drink of the pupils at risk.
 - There will be a set of labelled kitchen utensils, boards etc. for use only for food items that contain bread and wheat-related products and for fruit and vegetables.
 - Aprons (ideally disposable) are used by staff during food preparation and serving times.
 - Adults and Children are required to undertake frequent handwashing before, during and after food preparation.
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- Learning activities which involve the use of food, such as food technology lessons, will be planned in accordance with pupils' individual health care plans, taking into account any known allergies of the pupils involved.

In the event of a child suffering an allergic reaction:

- A trained First Aider will administer any child specific necessary medication, in accordance with the School Administering Medication Policy.
- A designated staff member will contact the pupil's parent/carer about the incident immediately.
- If the child becomes distressed or their symptoms become more serious an ambulance will be called.
- Staff will remain calm, make the child feel comfortable and give the child space, moving other pupils to another room if necessary. The child will not be left unattended.
- If an ambulance is called and arrives before the parent/carer has arrived, a member of staff will accompany the child to hospital.

Monitoring and Review

The Business Manager will be responsible for reviewing this policy at least annually.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by all members of staff.

Any concerns will be reported to the School Business Manager immediately.

Following the occurrence of an allergic reaction, SLT will review the adequacy of the school's response and will consider the need for any additional support, training or other corrective action.

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