Child allergy policy

Rebecca Cheetham Nursery School and Children's Centre

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Contents

1. Aims 3
2. Legislation and guidance 3
3. Roles and responsibilities 3
4. Assessing risk 5
5. Managing risk 5
6. Procedures for handling an allergic reaction 7
7. Adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs) 7
8. Training 9
9. Links to other policies 9

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Set out our nursery's approach to allergy management, including reducing the risk of exposure and the procedures in place in case of allergic reaction
- Make clear how our nursery supports children with allergies to ensure their wellbeing and inclusion
- Promote and maintain allergy awareness among the nursery community

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance on allergies in schools and supporting children with medical conditions at school, the Department of Health and Social Care's guidance on using emergency adrenaline auto-injectors in schools, and the following legislation:

- The Food Information Regulations 2014
- The Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019

3. Roles and responsibilities

We take a whole-school approach to allergy awareness.

3.1 Allergy lead

The nominated allergy lead is Farhana Hoque.

They're responsible for:

- Promoting and maintaining allergy awareness across our school community
- Recording and collating allergy and special dietary information for all relevant children (although the allergy lead has ultimate responsibility, the information collection itself may be delegated to the SENDCo assistant and office administrative staff)

- Ensuring:
    - All allergy information is up to date and readily available to relevant members of staff
    - All children with allergies have an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHPs) completed by a medical professional
    - All staff receiving mandatory annual training
    - All staff are aware of the school's policy and procedures regarding allergies
    - Relevant staff are aware of what activities need an allergy risk assessment
- Keeping stock of the school's adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs)
- Regularly reviewing and updating the allergy policy

3.2 School nurse/medical officer

The SENDCO / Inclusion Manager is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating the paperwork and information from families
- Co-ordinating with health professionals (Health visitors)
- Co-ordinating medication with families
- Checking spare AAIs are in date
- Any other appropriate tasks delegated by the allergy lead

3.3 Teaching and support staff

All teaching and support staff are responsible for:

- Promoting and maintaining allergy awareness among pupils
- Maintaining awareness of our allergy policy and procedures
- Being able to recognise the signs of severe allergic reactions and anaphylaxis
- Attending appropriate allergy training as required
- Being aware of specific pupils with allergies in their care
- Carefully considering the use of food or other potential allergens in lesson and activity planning
- Ensuring the wellbeing and inclusion of pupils with allergies

3.4 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Being aware of our school's allergy policy
- Providing the school with up-to-date details of their child's medical needs, dietary requirements, and any history of allergies, reactions and anaphylaxis
- If required, providing their child with 2 in-date adrenaline auto-injectors and any other medication, including inhalers, antihistamine etc., and making sure these are replaced in a timely manner
- Carefully considering the food they provide to their child as packed lunches and snacks, and trying to limit the number of allergens included
- Following the school's guidance on food brought in to be shared

3.5 Pupils with allergies

Childs with allergies are supported to:

- Begin to recognise (with help from adults) the things that may cause them harm, such as certain foods or substances.
- Learn, in an age-appropriate way, that some foods or things can make them unwell.
- Be familiar with their treatment plan, including the use of an adrenaline auto-injector (where appropriate and under adult supervision).
- Have their adrenaline auto-injector kept safely by staff, who will administer it if needed.
- In a nursery setting, children do not carry or self-administer medication. Staff take full responsibility for storing and administering adrenaline auto-injectors and managing emergency procedures in line with care plans

3.6 Pupils without allergies

Childs without allergies are encouraged to:

- Know that some foods can make their friends unwell.
- Not share food, drinks, or snacks with other children.
- Wash hands regularly to help keep everyone safe.
- Tell a grown-up if a friend looks unwell or needs help.

At Rebecca Cheetham, staff closely supervise all meals and snacks, and remind children of these simple rules in a gentle and age-appropriate way. Any emergency situations are always managed by staff.

4. Assessing risk

The nursery will conduct a risk assessment for any child at risk of anaphylaxis taking part in:

- Focus sessions such as baking and cooking
- Science experiments involving foods
- Crafts using food packaging
- Off-site events and school trips
- Any other activities involving animals or food, such as animal handling experiences or baking

A risk assessment will be carried out for any child at risk of an allergic reaction. A risk assessment will also be completed when a visitor attends the nursery with a guide dog, to ensure appropriate safety measures are in place for all children and staff.

5. Managing risk

5.1 Hygiene procedures

- Children are reminded to wash their hands before and after eating
- Sharing of food is not allowed
- Childs have their own named water bottles

5.2 Catering

The nursery is committed to providing safe food options to meet the dietary needs of children with allergies.

- Catering staff receive appropriate training and are able to identify children with allergies
- Nursery menus are available for parents/carers to view with ingredients clearly labelled on the nursery website
- Where changes are made to school menus, we will make sure these continue to meet any special dietary needs of children
- Food allergen information relating to the 'top 14' allergens is displayed on the packaging of all food products, allowing children and staff to make safer choices. Allergen information labelling will follow all legal requirements that apply to naming the food and listing ingredients, as outlined by the Food Standards Agency (FSA)
- Catering staff follow hygiene and allergy procedures when preparing food to avoid cross-contamination

5.3 Food restrictions

We acknowledge that it is impractical to enforce an allergen-free school. However, we would like to encourage child and staff to avoid certain high-risk foods to reduce the chances of someone experiencing a reaction. These foods include:

- Packaged nuts
- Cereal, granola or chocolate bars containing nuts
- Peanut butter or chocolate spreads containing nuts
- Peanut-based sauces, such as satay
- Sesame seeds and foods containing sesame seeds (eg. We will make our own humous with the use of tahini)

5.4 Insect bites/stings

When outdoors:

- Shoes should always be worn
- Food and drink should be covered

5.5 Animals

- All children will always wash hands after interacting with animals to avoid putting children's with allergies at risk through later contact
- Children with animal allergies will not interact with animals, parents will need to notify teachers and key persons.

5.6 Inclusivity, Mental Health & Anti-Bullying

We are committed to fostering an inclusive, safe, and supportive environment for all children, ensuring no child feels isolated, excluded, or mistreated due to an allergy or special dietary requirement.

- **Preventing Allergy-Related Bullying & Exclusion:** In line with the **Equality Act 2010** and **Benedict's Law**, we take a zero-tolerance approach to any form of allergy-related bullying, teasing, or exclusion. Staff actively ensure that children with allergies are never made to feel "different," excluded from group activities, or singled out during mealtimes.
- **Age-Appropriate Inclusion in EYFS:**
    - All children participate fully in food-related activities (e.g., baking, sensory play, and celebrations) using safe, inclusive alternatives so no child is left out.
    - Safe dining arrangements (such as color-coded placemats) are implemented discreetly so children sit alongside their peers without feeling isolated or stigmatized.

    - Staff use storybooks, persona dolls, and circle-time conversations to teach kindness, gentle boundaries, and empathy, helping children understand in a simple, positive way why some friends eat different foods.

- **Pastoral & Emotional Support:**
    - Key persons conduct regular emotional check-ins with children who have severe allergies to build their confidence and manage any early anxieties around food or medical equipment.
    - Staff maintain open communication with parents/carers to ensure any worries about social inclusion or well-being at nursery are addressed promptly.

5.7 Events and school trips

- For events, including ones that take place outside of the school, and educational visits, no children with allergies will be excluded from taking part
- The nursery will plan accordingly for all events and educational visits, and arrange for the staff members involved to be aware of child's allergies and to have received adequate training
- Appropriate measures will be taken in line with the schools AAI protocols for off-site events and school trips (see section 7.5).

6. Procedures for handling an allergic reaction

6.1 Register of pupil's with AAIs

- The school maintains a register of child's who have been prescribed AAIs or where a doctor has provided a written plan recommending AAIs to be used in the event of anaphylaxis. The register includes:
    - Known allergens and risk factors for anaphylaxis
    - Whether a child has been prescribed AAI(s) (and if so, what type and dose)
    - Where a child has been prescribed an AAI, whether parental consent has been given for use of the spare AAI, which may be different to the personal AAI prescribed for the child
    - A photograph of each child to allow a visual check to be made
- The register off children with medical needs are displayed in every classroom and can be checked quickly by any member of staff as part of initiating an emergency response

All children's AAIs will be kept in each classroom's First Aid box. This will reduce delays and enable staff to respond quickly without needing to check the register first.

6.2 Allergic reaction procedures

- As part of the whole-school awareness approach to allergies, all staff are trained in the school's allergic reaction procedure, and to recognise the signs of anaphylaxis and respond appropriately
- Staff are trained in the administration of AAIs to minimise delays in child's receiving adrenaline in an emergency
- If a child has an allergic reaction, the staff member will initiate the school's emergency response plan, following the child's Individual Healthcare Plan
    - If an AAI needs to be administered, a member of staff will use the child's own AAI, or if it is not available, a school one
- If the child has no Individual Healthcare Plan, staff will follow the school's procedures on responding to allergy and, if needed, the school's normal emergency procedures NHS advice on treatment of anaphylaxis and Anaphylaxis UK's advice on what to do in an emergency.

- A school AAI device will be used instead of the child's own AAI device if:
    - Medical authorisation and written parental consent have been provided, or
    - The child's own prescribed AAI(s) are not immediately available (for example, because they are broken, out-of-date, have misfired or been wrongly administered)
- If a child needs to be taken to hospital, staff will stay with the child until the parent/carers arrives, or accompany the child to hospital by ambulance
- If the allergic reaction is mild (e.g. skin rash, itching or sneezing), the child will be monitored and the parents/carers informed

6.3 Incident and Near-Miss Reporting & Review

At Rebecca Cheetham Nursery School, we actively track both actual allergic reactions and "near-miss" incidents to prevent future emergencies and maintain a safe learning environment.

- **Definition of a Near-Miss:** Any scenario where a child was nearly exposed to a dangerous allergen, even if no reaction occurred. Examples include:
    - An unlabelled snack or home-brought item being placed within reach of a child with an allergy.
    - A mix-up in color-coded dining plates or placemats during lunchtime.
    - Prescribed AAIs or rescue medication being temporarily misplaced or left out during a classroom activity.
    - Failure to wash hands or clean a messy play area (e.g., playdough or sensory bins) after an allergen was used.
- **Immediate Escalation:** Staff must immediately report any allergic reaction or near-miss to the **Allergy Lead (Farhana Hoque)** and the **Headteacher** on the day it occurs.
- **Incident Logging:** The staff member involved must complete an EYFS *Allergy Incident / Near-Miss Log* within 24 hours. This log records the event, environmental factors (e.g., snack time, sensory play, outdoor area), and immediate safety steps taken.
- **Parent Communication:** Parents/carers of any child involved will be spoken to directly at pick-up (or phoned immediately in the event of a reaction) and provided with a clear summary of the event and preventive actions taken.
- **Post-Incident Review:** Following any emergency AAI administration or significant near-miss, the Allergy Lead will hold a debrief with key persons and room staff to:
    - Identify root causes (e.g., breakdown in handover, cross-contamination during mess-play setup, or snack prep errors).
    - Review and update the child's Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) alongside health professionals and parents.
    - Adapt EYFS continuous provision, risk assessments, or snack routines immediately.
- **Governor Oversight:** A anonymised summary of all near-misses and reactions, including key procedural improvements, will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body to ensure high safety standards.

7. Adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs)

Following the Department of Health and Social Care's Guidance on using emergency adrenaline auto-injectors in schools, set out your school's procedures for AAIs, covering these areas:

7.1 Purchasing of spare AAIs

The allergy lead is responsible for buying AAIs and ensuring they are stored according to the guidance.

- AAIs will be sourced from the local pharmacy
- Two (AAIs will be required once the expiry date has passed
- **Epipen (0.15 milligrams) or or Emerade 150 microgram or Jext 150 microgram**

7.2 Storage (of both spare and prescribed AAIs)

The allergy lead will make sure all AAIs are:

- Stored at room temperature (in line with manufacturer's guidelines), protected from direct sunlight and extremes of temperature
- All children's AAIs will be kept in each classroom's First Aid box to which all staff have access at all times, but is out of the reach and sight of children
- **Not** locked away, but accessible and available for use at all times
- **Not** located more than 5 minutes away from where they may be needed
- Spare AAIs will be kept separate from any children's own prescribed AAI, and clearly labelled to avoid confusion.

7.3 Maintenance (of spare AAIs)

Shannon Taylor and Empress Allen are responsible for checking monthly that:

- The AAIs are present and in date
- Replacement AAIs are obtained when the expiry date is near

7.4 Disposal

AAIs can only be used once. Once an AAI has been used, it will be disposed of in line with the manufacturer's instructions (returned back to the local pharmacy)

7.5 Use of AAIs off school premises

- Self Parents and first aiders will carry medications at all times. AAIs for emergency use on educational visits and off-site events

7.6 Emergency anaphylaxis kit

Rebecca Cheetham Nursery School holds spare AAIs as part of an emergency anaphylaxis kit.

The nursery holds an emergency anaphylaxis kit. This includes:

- Spare AAIs
- Instructions for the use of AAIs
- AAIs are stored in the front office
- A note of dates on the google calendar for arrangements for replacing injectors are
- A list of pupils to whom the AAI can be administered are displayed in all rooms
- A record of when AAIs have been administered

8. Training

The school is committed to training all staff in allergy response. This includes:

- How to reduce and prevent the risk of allergic reactions
- How to spot the signs of allergic reactions (including anaphylaxis)

- The importance of acting quickly in the case of anaphylaxis
- Where AAIs are kept on the school site, and how to access them
- How to administer AAIs
- The wellbeing and inclusion implications of allergies

Training will be carried out annually by the health professionals to all staff.

9. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Health and safety policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
- School food policy