
POLICY ON:	Allergens
Member of Staff Responsible for the Policy:	Headteacher
Date on which this Policy was last reviewed:	February 2022
Date on which this Policy is next be reviewed:	February 2025
Dissemination of the Policy:	SLT; All SLs; First Aid Staff; Pastoral team; Union Representatives; school website

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School Medical Needs Policy

1. VALUES

Huntington School believes that the safety and wellbeing of those members of the school community suffering from specific allergies and who are at risk if anaphylaxis is the responsibility of the whole school community. The School position is not to guarantee a completely allergen free environment, rather to minimise the risk of exposure, encourage self responsibility and plan for an effective response to possible emergencies.

Huntington School is committed to:

- Providing, as far as practicable, a safe and healthy environment in which people at risk of allergies and anaphylaxis can participate equally in all aspects of the school programme.
- The encouragement of self-responsibility and learned avoidance strategies amongst students suffering from allergies.
- Raising awareness about allergies and anaphylaxis amongst the school community.
- Ensuring each staff member has adequate knowledge of allergies, anaphylaxis and emergency procedures.
- Close liaison with parents/carers of students who suffer allergies, to assess risks, develop risk minimisation strategies, and management strategies for their child.
- Facilitating communication to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the person with allergy who is at risk of anaphylaxis.
- Providing first aid training for so that there are always a trained first aiders available when required.

2. PURPOSE

The intent of this policy is to minimise the risk of any child suffering allergy-induced anaphylaxis whilst at school.

An allergic reaction to nuts is the most common high risk allergy, and as such demands more rigorous controls throughout the policy.

The underlying principles of this policy include;

- The establishment of effective risk management practices to minimise the student, staff, family member and visitor exposure to known trigger foods and insects.
- Staff training and education to ensure effective emergency response to any allergic reaction situation.

This policy applies to all members of the school community:

School Staff

Parents/carers

Volunteers

Supply staff

Children

Students

Contractors

3. BACKGROUND

Any allergic reaction, including anaphylaxis occurs because the body's immune system reacts inappropriately in response to a substance that it perceives as a threat.

Anaphylaxis is a severe and potentially life threatening allergic reaction at the extreme end of the allergic spectrum. It can occur within minutes of exposure to the allergen or the reaction may develop over hours. It can be life threatening if not treated quickly with adrenaline.

The common causes of allergies relevant to this policy are nuts, (in particular peanuts), dairy products, eggs, wasps, bees, and ants. The allergy to nuts is the most common high risk allergy.

4. DEFINITIONS

- **Allergy** - A condition in which the body has an exaggerated response to a substance (e.g. food and drug) also known as hypersensitivity.
- **Allergen** - A normally harmless substance that triggers an allergic reaction in the immune system of a susceptible person. Anaphylaxis - Anaphylaxis, or anaphylactic shock, is a sudden, severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction to food, stings, bites, or medicines.
- **EpiPen** - Brand name for syringe style device containing the drug Adrenalin, which is ready for immediate inter-muscular administration.
- **Minimised Risk Environment**- An environment where risk management practices (e.g. Risk assessment forms) have minimised the risk of (allergen) exposure.
- **Health Care Plan** - A detailed document outlining an individual child's condition treatment, and action plan for location of EpiPen.

5. KEY STRATEGIES

GENERAL

Huntington School will ensure:

- The establishment of clear procedures and responsibilities to be followed by staff in meeting the needs of students with additional medical needs.
- The involvement of parents/carers, staff and the student in establishing an individual medical care plan.
- Ensuring effective communication of an individual students medical needs to all relevant teachers and other staff
- Ensuring First Aid Staff training includes anaphylaxis management, including awareness of triggers and first aid procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.
- Parents/carers of children with packed lunches will be requested to give careful thought to eliminating food that may be of risk to those members of staff and pupils who suffer from such allergies.

Nut Related Aspects

- If the school is aware of a student who suffers a nut allergy, the school lunch caterer will be made aware of our risk minimisation policy and will be requested to eliminate nuts and food items with nuts as ingredients from meals as far as possible. This does not extend to those foods labelled “may contain traces of nuts”.
- Students are encouraged to self-manage their allergy as far as possible in preparation for life after school where nut-free environments are rare.

Dairy and Egg Related Aspects

- Students with dairy product or egg allergies are managed by the School in consultation with the parents/carers on a case by case basis.

Insect Related Aspects

- Diligent management of wasp, bee and ant nests on School grounds and proximity. This must include the effective system for staff reporting to management, and a system of timely response to eradicating nests.
- Education of staff and students to report any above normal presence of wasps, bees or ants in all areas of the school.

Latex Related Aspects

- If a student is allergic to latex they should avoid contact with some everyday items including, rubber gloves (unless latex free), balloons, pencil erasers, rubber bands, rubber balls, and tubes and stoppers used for science experiments.

6. ALLERGEN AWARENESS/AVOIDANCE

The School will promote food allergy information (including anaphylaxis) through PSHE, and/or Science/Food Technology lessons in particular with classes where a student has severe allergies.

The question of banning anything in schools is, of course itself controversial. We live in a world that is contaminated with potential allergens. Anaphylactic children must learn to avoid specific triggers. While the key responsibility lies with the anaphylactic individual and their family, the school community must also be aware of the risks and consequences.

In our school, the significant allergies are to peanut and nuts. The school policy is that nuts should not knowingly be used in any area of the curriculum. Whilst this does not guarantee a nutfree environment as traces of nuts are found in a great deal of foodstuffs it will certainly reduce the chances of exposure to pupils with allergies.

It is important that no one is complacent about allergen exposure around the school and students, staff and parents/carers will be informed of the potential harm of nuts and peanuts to pupils in school. In addition the school recognises that there are allergies to other foods/materials and to insect stings. In the classrooms of anaphylactic students, special care is taken to avoid allergens. In short, while the aim is to significantly diminish the risk of accidental exposure to known food and other allergens it can never be completely removed.

7. EDUCATIONAL VISITS

The Group Leader will check with any food provider and ensure 'safe' food is provided, or that an effective control is in place to minimise risk of exposure for pupils with allergies.

Where a student is prescribed EpiPen the Group Leader will ensure they or another supervising staff member is trained in the use of the EpiPen, and capable of performing any possible required medical treatment as outlined in the students Health Care Plan.

Parents/carers should ensure the student has their EpiPen on the visit, and that they will be responsible for its security. If in doubt over the risk of a student with an allergy taking part on an education visit the Group Leader should seek advice from the Parent/carer or dedicated First Aider.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Providing ongoing, accurate and current medical information in writing to the School. Whilst the school will play a role in reminding parents/carers when information etc requires updating this responsibility lies wholly with the parent/carer
- Completion of the students Health Care Plan where appropriate. The School will periodically seek updated information via a students Health Care Plan. Should a student develop a condition during a year, or have a change in condition the parents/carers must advise the School of the fact, and details to be clarified accordingly in the Pupil Health Care Plan.
- Providing written advice from a doctor, which explains the child's allergy, defines the allergy triggers and reaction, and any required medication, including completion of an action plan with supporting photographic or other evidence.

- Supplying EpiPens and medication.
- Ensuring medication is replaced as necessary i.e on change of dose or expiry date.
- Surplus/expired medication is collected at the end of each academic year.
- Ensuring all medication has the original pharmacy label attached stating the students name, date of birth and dose.
- Highlighting any classes/topics or activities which in the parent's/carers view may need to be avoided or flagged up as 'high risk' e.g food preparation in Food Technology or use of certain materials (eg latex) in science lessons.
- Contacting the school promptly where should this information/advice appears not be followed.
- Ensuring, including monitoring their use by dates and replacing medication where necessary.
- Providing appropriate foods to be consumed by the child if necessary.

Parents/carers should also teach their child(ren) with allergies to:

- Recognise the first symptoms of a food allergic/anaphylactic reaction.
- Communicate with school staff as soon as they feel a reaction is starting.
- Carry their own epipen where appropriate.
- Not share snacks, lunches, drinks or utensils.
- Understand the importance of hand washing before and after eating.
- Report to the school's dedicated first-aider or a member of staff promptly when they feel an allergic/anaphylactic reaction is beginning Huntington School.

Students with a life-threatening allergy are responsible for:

- Developing a relationship with the school first-aider or trusted adult eg Head of Year, Teacher to assist in identifying issues related to the management of the allergy in school.
- Taking responsibility for avoiding food allergens, including informing staff of their allergy at times of potential risk
- Learning to recognise personal symptoms.
- Being proactive in the care and management of their own allergies and reactions.
- Keeping emergency medications where appropriate, in the first aider's office or in an agreed suitable location. This may include carrying the medication with them at all times.
- Notify an adult if they are being picked on or threatened by other students as it relates to their food allergy.

- Developing an awareness of their environment and likely allergen zones.
- Knowing the overall student Health Care Plan and understand the responsibilities of the plan.
- Develop greater independence to keep themselves safe from anaphylactic reactions.

Given that anaphylaxis can be triggered by minute amounts of allergen, food anaphylactic pupils must be encouraged to follow these additional guidelines:

- Proper hand washing before and after eating and throughout the school day.
- Avoiding sharing or trading of foods or eating utensils with others.
- Avoiding eating anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen.
- Eating only food which brought from home unless it is packaged, clearly labelled and approved by their parents/carers
- Placing food on a napkin rather than in direct contact with a desk or table.
- Notifying an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic.

The School's dedicated First Aider is responsible for:

- Contacting parents/carers for required medical documentation regarding a students allergy and informing the Office Maager where important information is lacking. (The responsibility lies with parents/carers to ensure this information is provided)
- Ensuring (in conjunction with the DHT responsible for PSD) that there is an effective system to regularly updated and disseminated medical information to staff and others.
- Ensuring that parents/carers are reminded of their responsibilities to provide a current Action Plan.
- Ensuring that where students with known allergies are participating in camps and/or external visits, the risk assessment and safety management plans for those camps and external visits include the students Health Care Plan.
- Ensuring that first-aid staff are trained in the use of EpiPens and management of anaphylaxis and that similar training/information is provided periodically to all other staff.

Teachers and Support Staff are responsible for:

- Acquiring knowledge of the signs and symptoms of severe allergic reaction.
- Being familiar with information provided in the student health care plans, be aware of and implement the emergency plan if a reaction is suspected.
- Determining suitable protocols regarding the management of food in the classroom (particularly in high-risk subjects) in collaboration with the Subject Leader and Office Manager. This protocol will be communicated by the teacher to the pupils of the class.

- Reinforcing appropriate classroom hygiene practices eg. hand washing before and after eating or tasks potentially leading to contamination.
- Responding immediately to reports of students being teased or bullied about their food allergies.
- Call for first aid assistance and/or call 999 when life-threatening allergy related symptoms occur.
- Ensuring supplies of food stuffs are nut free or labelled “may contain nuts” as far as possible
- Being aware of students and staff who have severe food allergies.
- Clear labelling of items of food stuffs that may contain nuts.

Catering Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring suppliers of all foods and catering are aware of the school policy.
- Ensuring supplies of food stuffs are nut free or labelled “may contain nuts” as far as possible
- Being aware of pupils and staff who have severe food allergies.
- Clear labelling of items of food stuffs that may contain nuts.