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EYFS Allergy Policy

Policy Author:	Gateshead LA
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This policy is designed to be annexed to the school's wider medical conditions policy as required by the Supporting Pupils in schools with medical conditions statutory guidance. This policy has been produced by BSACI, Allergy UK and Anaphylaxis UK and approved by the Department for Education. The policy has been tailored to Washingwell Community Primary School.

Purpose

To minimise the risk of any pupil suffering a serious allergic reaction whilst at school or attending any school-related activity. To ensure staff are properly prepared to recognise and manage serious allergic reactions should they arise.

The named staff members responsible for coordinating staff anaphylaxis training and the upkeep of the school's anaphylaxis policy are:

- Alison Hall – Head Teacher
- Leanne Erskine – Deputy Head Teacher

Contents

1. 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 severe reaction called anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is a serious, life-threatening allergic reaction. 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.

Most healthcare professionals consider an allergic reaction to be anaphylaxis when it involves difficulty breathing or affects the heart rhythm or blood pressure. Anaphylaxis symptoms are often referred to as the ABC symptoms - (Airway, Breathing, Circulation).

It is possible to be allergic to anything which contains protein. However, most people will react to a small group of potent allergens.

Common UK Allergens include (but are not limited to):

Peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, milk, egg, fish, latex, insect venom, pollen and animal dander.

This policy sets out how Washingwell Community Primary School will support pupils with allergies, to ensure they are safe and are not disadvantaged in any way whilst taking part in school life.

2. Role and responsibilities

Parent Responsibilities

- On entry to the school, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the office staff of any allergies so that relevant paperwork can be completed. This information should include all previous serious allergic reactions, history of anaphylaxis and details of all prescribed medication.
- Parents are to supply a copy of their child's **Allergy Action Plan** (BSACI plans preferred) 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. School nurse/GP/allergy specialist.
- 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.

Staff Responsibilities

- Providers must ensure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods which are sometimes called complementary feeding or weaning. Training is provided for all staff on a yearly basis and on an ad-hoc basis for any new members of staff[1].
- **Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating.** Where possible, staff should sit facing children whilst they eat so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.
- Before a child is admitted to the setting the Manager must obtain information about any food allergies that the child has. This information must be shared by the Manager with all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food.
- At each mealtime and snack time Managers must be clear about who is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
- Staff (regular or cover) must be aware of the children in their care 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 considerable caution.
- Staff leading visits will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies. **Visit leaders will check that all children with medical conditions, including allergies, carry their medication. Children must not leave the setting without staff carrying the child's medication.**
- The Manager will ensure that the up-to-date Allergy Action Plan is kept with the child's

medication.

- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all medication is in date. However, the Manager will check medication kept at provider on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.
- The Manager keeps a register of children who have been prescribed an adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) and a record of use of any AAI(s) and emergency treatment given.

Pupil Responsibilities

- Children are encouraged to learn about their allergies and be taught to ask an adult 'is this safe for me?'
- Children should be taught to let an adult know if they are feeling unwell.

3. 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.

Organisations should not be devising their own allergy action plans, but requiring parents to provide the plan created by the GP or allergy clinic.

4. Emergency Treatment and Management of Anaphylaxis

What to look for:

Symptoms usually come on quickly, within minutes of exposure to the allergen.

Mild to moderate allergic reaction symptoms may include:

- A raised rash (known as hives or urticaria) anywhere on the body.
- A tingling or itchy feeling in the mouth.
- Swelling of lips, face or eyes.
- Stomach pain or vomiting.

More serious symptoms are often referred to as the ABC symptoms and can include:

- AIRWAY - swelling in the throat, tongue or upper airways (tightening of the throat, hoarse voice, difficulty swallowing).
- BREATHING - sudden onset wheezing, breathing difficulty, noisy breathing.
- CIRCULATION - dizziness, feeling faint, sudden sleepiness, tiredness, confusion, pale clammy skin, loss of consciousness.

The term for this more serious reaction is anaphylaxis. In extreme cases there could be a dramatic fall in blood pressure. In younger children, anaphylaxis almost always involves skin reactions. In addition to swelling of the face, lips, tongue and eyes, hands and feet may also swell. The child may experience diarrhoea and they may display sudden behaviour changes such as inconsolable crying, become clingy and refuse food. The child may become weak and floppy and may have a sense of something terrible happening. This may lead to collapse and unconsciousness and on rare occasions, can be fatal.

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.

What does adrenaline do?

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

As soon as anaphylaxis is suspected, adrenaline must be administered without delay. Action:

- Keep the child where they are, call for help and do not leave them unattended.
- **LIE CHILD FLAT WITH LEGS RAISED** – they can be propped up if struggling to breathe but this should be for as short a time as possible.
- **USE ADRENALINE AUTO-INJECTOR WITHOUT DELAY** and note the time given. AAIs should be given into the muscle in the outer thigh. Specific instructions vary by brand – always follow the instructions on the device.
- CALL **999** and state **ANAPHYLAXIS (ana-fil-axis).**
- If no improvement after 5 minutes, administer second AAI.
- If no signs of life commence CPR.
- Call parent/carer as soon as possible.

Whilst you are waiting for the ambulance, keep the child where they are. Do not stand them up, or sit them in a chair, even if they are feeling better. This could lower their blood pressure drastically, causing their heart to stop.

All children must go to hospital for observation after anaphylaxis, even if they appear to have recovered as a reaction can re-occur after treatment.

5. Supply, storage and care of medication

Children in early years settings need adults to be responsible for their emergency medication. Their medication/anaphylaxis kit must be kept within 5 minutes of them, not locked away or behind a locked door and accessible to all staff at all times. Any emergency medication will be kept in the white medicine cupboard behind the shutter in the nursery room.

Medication should be stored in a suitable container and clearly labelled with the pupil's name. The pupil's medication storage container should contain:

- Two AAIs i.e. EpiPen® or Jext®.
- An up-to-date allergy action plan.
- Antihistamine as tablets or syrup (if included on allergy action plan).
- Spoon if required.
- Asthma inhaler (if included on allergy action 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 Class Teacher will check medication kept at school on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.

Storage
AAIs should be stored at room temperature, protected from direct sunlight and temperature extremes.

Disposal
AAIs are single use only and must be disposed of as sharps. Used AAIs can be given to ambulance paramedics on arrival or can be disposed of in the emergency sharps bin which is stored in the staff room above the medication cabinet. This is a yellow sealed box.

6. 'Spare' adrenaline auto-injectors in school

Only providers who are part of a school can access spare AAIs for emergency use in children who are risk of anaphylaxis, but their own devices are not available or not working (e.g. because they are out of date) or are experiencing anaphylaxis for the first time.

The legislation does not cover providers who are independent or charity run and these providers are currently unable to purchase spare AAIs for emergency use.

Spare AAIs are stored in a green, plastic kit clearly labelled 'Emergency Anaphylaxis kit', kept safely, not

locked away in the staff room, accessible and known to all staff. This kit contains 4 epipens – 2 of each dosage.

Epipen Junior should be used for children under 6 (0.15mg dosage)

The Class Teacher is responsible for checking the spare medication is in date on a monthly basis and to replace as needed.

Written parental permission for use of the spare AAIs is included in the pupil's allergy action plan.

7. Staff Training

The named staff members (at least 2) responsible for coordinating staff anaphylaxis training and the upkeep of the school's anaphylaxis policy are:

- Alison Hall – Head Teacher
- Leanne Erskine – Deputy Head Teacher

All staff will complete AllergyWise® allergy and anaphylaxis training[2] annually, and on an ad-hoc basis during induction of new staff.

Training includes:

- Knowing the common allergens and triggers of allergies.
- Spotting the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and anaphylaxis. Early recognition of symptoms is key, including knowing when to call for emergency services.
- Administering emergency treatment (including AAIs) in the event of anaphylaxis – knowing how and when to administer the medication/device.
- Measures to reduce the risk of a child having an allergic reaction e.g. allergen avoidance, knowing who is responsible for what.
- Managing allergy action plans and ensuring these are up to date.
- A practical session using trainer devices (these can be obtained from the manufacturers' websites: www.epipen.co.uk and www.jext.co.uk .

8. Inclusion and safeguarding

Washingwell Primary School is committed to ensuring that all children with medical conditions, including allergies, in terms of both physical and mental health, are properly supported in provider so that they can play a full and active role in provider life, remain healthy and achieve their developmental milestones. The setting conforms to the Safer Eating requirements in Early Years Safeguarding 2025.

9. Food

All food businesses (including provider caterers or staff) 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 provider's menu is available for parents to view in weekly/fortnightly/monthly advance with all ingredients listed and allergens highlighted on the provider website at https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/7430/Primary-school-meals

The Manager will inform the Cook of children with food allergies.

Parents/carers should meet with the Cook to discuss their child's needs.

- Information must be shared by the Manager with all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food.
- At each mealtime and snack time the provider/Manager must be clear about who is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
- Managers/providers must ensure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can

develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods which are sometimes called complementary feeding or weaning.

- Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Where possible, staff will sit facing children whilst they eat so they can make sure children are prevented from food sharing and can be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.

The provider adheres to the following Department of Health guidance recommendations:

- Bottles, other drinks and lunch boxes provided by parents for children with food allergies should be clearly labelled with the name of the child for whom they are intended.
- The child, when old enough. should be taught to also check with staff, before eating 'is this safe for me?
- Where food is provided by the provider, staff should be educated about how to read labels for food allergens and instructed about measures to prevent cross contamination during the handling, preparation and serving of food. Examples include: preparing food for children with food allergies first; careful cleaning (using warm soapy water) of food preparation areas and utensils. For further information, parents/carers are encouraged to liaise with the Catering Manager.
- Food should not be given to food-allergic children without parental engagement and permission (e.g. birthday parties, food treats).
- Use of food in crafts, cooking, 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 children and their age.

10. School trips

Staff leading school trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies. Visit 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.

All the activities on the school trip will be risk assessed to see if they pose a threat to allergic pupils and alternative activities planned to ensure inclusion.

11. Allergy awareness and nut bans

Washingwell Primary School supports the approach advocated by Anaphylaxis UK towards nut bans/nut free schools. They would not necessarily support a blanket ban on any particular allergen in any establishment, including in schools. This is because nuts are only one of many allergens that could affect pupils, and no school could guarantee a truly allergen free environment for a child living with food allergy. They advocate instead for schools to adopt a culture of allergy awareness and education.

A 'whole provider awareness of allergies' is a much better approach, as it ensures teachers, children and all other staff are aware of what allergies are, the importance of avoiding the children' allergens, the signs & symptoms, how to deal with allergic reactions and to ensure policies and procedures are in place to minimise risk. Risk assessments may determine that a section of the provision needs to be kept free of a particular allergen. In this instance, when the child has left that area of the provision or the child's allergies change, the risk assessment must be reviewed and restrictions lifted.

12. Risk Assessment

Washingwell Primary School will undertake a risk assessment for the setting and each individual child with allergies both newly joining and newly diagnosed. The risk assessments will identify the control measures that are needed to be implemented to keep the child with allergies safe; this may be separate toys for a baby/toddler with a milk allergy and is using anything that is likely to go into their mouth. The risk assessment will be used to help identify any gaps in our systems and processes for keeping allergic children safe.

School and individual risk assessments can be downloaded for free from:
https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/downloads-form/safer-schools-download/.

13. Useful Links

Anaphylaxis UK - https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/

- For Education:
- Guidance for Early Years:

Training:

- AllergyWise® for Early Years Settings:

Allergy awareness V nut bans:

Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding reforms:

Nutrition guidance for Early Years providers:

BSACI Allergy Action Plans - https://www.bsaci.org/professional-resources/resources/paediatric-allergy-action-plans/

Department of Health Guidance on the use of adrenaline auto-injectors in providers - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/645476/Adrenaline_auto_injectors_in_providers.pdf

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

Footnotes

1 Trips are classed as any time the children leave the organisations usual place for any length of time; for example, a nature walk is considered a trip.

2 AllergyWise® training is produced by Anaphylaxis UK, the only charity in the UK supporting those with severe allergies. The training is medically reviewed by leading allergy specialists.