



Allergens Policy

This policy applies to Steephill School, including the EYFS setting.

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Reviewed and approved by Full Governing body:
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1.0 Introduction

This policy is concerned with a whole school approach to food. It is written with specific consideration of the health care and management of those members of the school suffering from specific food allergies and intolerances.

This policy applies to all members of the school community, including staff, pupils and their families.

The Legal requirements for schools include statutory guidance which explains our responsibilities in supporting pupils at school with medical conditions. Ensuring we should make sure that we support pupils with any medical conditions in school. This could include ensuring that a child with an allergy is able to eat a school lunch.

2.0 Food Allergies & Intolerances

2.1 Definition

Definition of allergy is a hypersensitivity to a foreign substance that is normally harmless, but which produces an immune response reaction in some people. This can be a minor reaction such as itching or a severe response known as an anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is a severe reaction affecting the entire body which can be life threatening. More information available from <https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/schools/schools-what-is-anaphylaxis/>

There are 14 major allergens that have to be declared as allergens by law.

At Steephill School our allergen list includes those identified in law as well as any additional foodstuffs to which any current pupil is known to have a severe anaphylactic response.

2.2 Definition of food intolerance

Food intolerances do not cause an immune system reaction. They are more common than a food allergy and an intolerance to several foods is not uncommon.

The onset of symptoms is usually slower and delayed. People can usually tolerate more of the food in comparison to an allergy.

3.0 General Food & Nut Policy

The risk of accidental exposure to foods can be reduced in the school setting if schools work with pupils, parents and catering teams to minimise risks and provide a safe educational environment for pupils with a food allergy.

3.1 Nut-Free Policy

Although we recognise that this cannot be guaranteed, Steephill School aims to be a Nut-Free school so far as is reasonably practicable. This policy serves to set out all measures to reduce the risk to those children and adults who may suffer an anaphylactic reaction if exposed to nuts to which they are sensitive. The school aims to protect children who have allergies to nuts yet also help them, as they grow up, to take responsibility as to what foods they can eat and to be aware of where they may be put at risk. We do not allow nuts or nut products in school.

Our “Nut-Free Policy” means that the following items should not be brought into school:

- Packs of nuts
- Peanut butter sandwiches
- Fruit and cereal bars that contain nuts.
- Chocolate bars or sweets that contain nuts.
- **Sesame seed rolls (children allergic to nuts may also have a severe reaction to sesame)**
- Cakes made with nuts

We have a policy to not use nuts in any of our food prepared on site at our school. Our suppliers provide us with nut-free products. However, we cannot guarantee freedom from nut traces. We allow foodstuffs brought in from home to be given out as birthday treats, provided they are checked for nuts and allergies.

The school policy is that nuts should not knowingly be used in any area of the curriculum. This does not guarantee a nut free environment, and therefore pupils should not be complaisant while at school, as traces of nuts are found in a great deal of foodstuffs, but it will certainly reduce the chances of exposure to pupils with nut allergies.

4.0 Food Policy

- Staff bringing in food for their own consumption may only consume it in the staff room or areas not used by pupils (unless separately approved by senior management).
- Staff and pupils, with the permission of the teacher, may drink water in classrooms (not labs).
- Staff may consume drinks outside of staff areas during non-contact times; however, beverages must be contained within a robust lidded cup or bottle to prevent spillage.
- Drinks must be stored out of sight of pupils. Drinks may not be consumed in labs.
- Staff are not to bring or use food as a reward in class. Food used as a teaching aid must always be the subject of a separate risk assessment approved by the Secretary and Bursar.
- Food and Nutrition as a subject or after school activity, Steephill School offers from time to time cooking clubs and Food and Nutrition as subjects on the curriculum.

- Pupils with a food allergy or coeliac participate in these subjects and individual risk assessments are carried out for these lessons and clubs.

5.0 Food on School Trips

School day trips are often undertaken with a school-packed lunch and allergy sufferers are provided with an appropriate lunch. Overnight and residential trips are catered externally by non-school provision. Steephill School staff on trips will always be trained to understand food allergy, can recognise symptoms and know what to do in an emergency. Before signing up for a trip, parents must discuss with the trip leader whether their pupil's allergy could be practically managed on that trip.

Parents and staff are able to ask the Secretary for advice. Staff leading trips will follow the schools risk assessment protocols and identify any pupils with allergies. They will take individual pupils emergency bags and action plans with them on the trip. They can ask the Secretary for advice and training before the trip departs.

Emergency kit for pupils requiring it will be taken on school trips.

6.0 Steephill School Catering Provision

All pupils and staff are provided with lunch and breaks on every school day. All these meals are prepared by the catering team at Steephill School.

6.1 Kitchen procedures

Like the majority of school kitchens, Steephill School kitchens are single production kitchens with no separate facilities to cook allergen-free meals.

However, the kitchen maintains careful procedures to minimise the risk of cross contamination both at the preparation and the serving stage. It also maintains procedures to minimise the risk of meals containing allergens being wrongly served to individuals with allergies/intolerances.

Key kitchen procedures maintained in regard to allergens include: -

- An allergen matrix is prepared for every meal detailing all items on the menu and the allergens they contain (or may contain).
- This is made available (to staff and pupils) at each meal for reference.
- The allergen matrix is signed off by the most senior 'duty chef' on shift.
- Freshly prepared and stored food is labelled using industry-approved allergy labels allowing the identification of 14 main allergens.

As far as possible the kitchen staff will:

- Meals for allergy pupils are where possible standardised so that they can be eaten by a wide a range of allergies/intolerances as possible minimising the risk of mistakenly providing an unsuitable meal to an allergic/intolerant pupil.
- Where this is not possible, a specific meal will be produced, and hot held separately from the core lunch menu.
- All pupils with a life-threatening food allergy must come to the dining room allergy counter at mealtimes or be supported by a lunchroom assistant where are deemed too young to come to the counter (reception).
- The salad bar is a source of potential cross contamination as is self-service. If a child has a severe allergy they are not to eat from this area and are to request salad items from the kitchen.
- Staff and visiting adults, with allergies or intolerances are invited to discuss with the chef on duty what may be suitable for them to eat if they are unsure.
- Teaching staff are to be aware of the Allergens Policy and are made aware of the allergy/intolerant children to ensure that they are only served their labelled food.

The kitchens priority must be focussing on the children with Allergic reactions to a particular food group and the other dietary needs are a second priority.

- Children in reception do not come to the counter and specific personnel are to be responsible for communicating with the catering team when requesting a meal and outlining the dietary / allergen requirement.
- The list of pupils signed up for a meal on any given day will be issued to catering with all dietary requirements denoted.
- The dietary requirements list from the office needs to be ratified frequently to ensure clarity on a dietary requirements / allergen.
- The school is to issue a full and comprehensive list of all children with allergic reactions to food groups with pictures of the children on a termly basis. This file will be held in the kitchen as a point of reference should there be a need to double check on the needs of a particular pupil.

7.0 Responsibilities

7.1 Parents' Responsibilities

The school cannot provide appropriate care for pupils with food allergies or intolerances without the cooperation of parents. The school requests that parents and carers observe the nut-free policy and therefore **do not** include nuts, or any traces of nuts, in packed lunches.

On application to join Steephill School, parents must inform the School Nurse via the Application form and the subsequent medical questionnaire of any history of allergy or intolerance, indicating the severity of allergy, highlighting previous severe allergic reactions, and any history of anaphylaxis.

Parents of pupils applying to the school or who are existing members of the school community must:

- Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a doctor.
- Ensure the school has all up-to-date emergency contact information for parents and GP
- Ensure any required medications (EpiPen's or other adrenalin injectors, inhalers and any specific antihistamine to be kept on site) are supplied, in date in the original container and replaced as necessary.
- Work with the school team to develop a workable plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school including in the classroom, in the dining room and on school trips.
- Educate their child in the self-management of their food allergy including safe and unsafe foods, strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods, how to read food labels (age appropriate), the symptoms of allergic reactions, how and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy-related problem.
- Inform the Secretary if their child suffers an episode of anaphylaxis outside school.
- Where food allergy is a major concern, the nurse will arrange for the parent/s and pupil (age appropriate) to meet with the Catering Manager so that the parents and pupil can understand the relevant catering procedures.

7.2 Pupils' Responsibilities (for those with an allergy or intolerance)

All students are regularly reminded about the good hygiene practice of washing hands before and after eating which helps to reduce the secondary contamination. Likewise, children are reminded and carefully supervised to minimise the act of food sharing with their friends including:

- Not to exchange food or eating utensils with others
- Avoid eating anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen.
- Identify yourself to serving staff at every meal.
- Ensure you have met with the school nurse to discuss your allergy.
- Be proactive in the care and management of your food allergies and reactions (based on the age level)
- Notify an adult immediately if you eat something you believe may contain the food to which you are allergic.
- Notify an adult immediately if you believe you are having a reaction, even if the cause is unknown.
- Take responsibility for avoiding food allergens, including informing staff of your allergy at times of potential risk.

- Learn to recognise your personal symptoms to an allergy reaction.
- Keeping emergency medications where appropriate, in the school office or in an agreed suitable location. This may include carrying the medication with you at all times.
- Develop greater independence to keep yourself 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.

7.3 School's Responsibilities

- All members of Steephill School staff should have an awareness of food allergies.
- Staff and volunteers must ensure they do not bring in or consume nut products in school and ensure they follow good hand washing practice.
- Caution must be taken at certain times of year such as Easter and Christmas and when there are various friend and fund-raising events on campus. If Staff distribute confectionary, care must be taken to ensure that no nuts are included in the product. Fruit sweets such as Haribo are a better alternative. Particular products that are a cause for concern are: - Boxes of mixed sweets or chocolates Celebrations – Roses – Heroes – Quality Street.
- All product packaging to be checked for warnings directed at nut allergy sufferers. It must clearly identify the food contents and ingredients to help identify which food pupils with allergies can and cannot eat. If the following or similar are displayed on packaging, the product must not be used in school:
 - Not suitable for nut allergy sufferers;
 - This product contains nuts;
 - This product may contain traces of nuts;
 - Indicating this is unsuitable for school consumption.
 - Epi Pen trained staff are named First Aiders. Please check the school office, medical room and the Staffroom noticeboard for a list of qualified staff. **Staff must complete the allergy / intolerance section of the Catering Request form when requesting additional catering.**
- All Catering Staff are trained in food allergens, allergies, and the possible consequences, including an understanding of the EU Food Information Regulations 2014.
- All staff who interact with pupils with allergies on a regular basis understand food allergy, can recognise symptoms and know what to do in an emergency.
- The Secretary is to work together with catering and teaching staff to ensure awareness of the severity of individuals' food allergies and their action plans.
- Identified key staff within the catering department will attend training sessions as required with the school nurse in recognising and managing an anaphylactic reaction.
- Review policies/prevention plan with the core team members, parents/guardians, pupil (age appropriate), and the school nurse after a reaction has occurred.
- The Secretary is to review the health records submitted by parents and doctors.

- Where necessary risk assess school trips / residential visits with the family of the pupil with a food allergy.

7.4 Catering teams additional responsibilities with regard to allergy meals

- Avoid using the same utensils for different foods without washing them thoroughly first using hot soapy water.
- Always clean preparation areas, utensils, hands and even aprons after handling key allergens and before preparing special food for allergy sufferers.
- Avoid frying with oils that have been used to cook food that may contain allergens.
- Cover and wrap dishes once they have been prepared wherever possible.
- File and retain all delivery notes and keep product information for 24 hours so that a staff member can consult them, if necessary
- To avoid substituting ingredients with one that contains an allergen. If an allergen is substituted this must be well communicated to other staff members.

8.0 Contamination Accident Food Allergy

If an individual is given food containing allergens to which they are allergic:

Health Plans and Emergency Response

We have individual Healthcare plans for children with allergies and Allergy Lists are displayed highlighting Healthcare plans in place, triggers, medication (Medication will be stored, administered and documented in accordance with our Medical and First Aid Provision Policy).

Symptoms

The symptoms of anaphylaxis may be immediate or delayed after contact with the allergen.

Less commonly symptoms can occur a few hours or even days after contact.

An anaphylactic reaction may lead to feeling unwell or dizzy or may cause fainting due to a sudden drop in blood pressure. Narrowing of the airways can also occur at the same time, with or without the drop in blood pressure. This can cause breathing difficulties and wheezing.

Other symptoms:

- Swelling of the eyes, lips and mouth (this is called angioedema)
- Itching
- Sore, red, itchy eyes
- Changes in heart rate
- A sudden feeling of extreme anxiety or apprehension
- Itchy skin or nettle-rash (hives)
- Unconsciousness due to very low blood pressure
- Abdominal cramps, vomiting or diarrhoea, or nausea and fever.

Anaphylaxis varies in severity. Sometimes it causes only mild itchiness and swelling, but in some people, it can cause sudden death. If symptoms start soon after contact with the allergen and rapidly worsens, this indicates that the reaction is more severe.

8.1 Care of affected individual during school hours.

- Do not leave the pupil unattended.
- Get the appropriate EpiPen from the school office
- The Secretary (or a member of staff nominated by them) must inform either the Head, Deputy Head or SLT that a pupil is having an anaphylactic response.
- Out of Hours Medical Protocol is to be followed.
- EpiPen locations: in the school office

8.2 Identification and care of other possible affected pupils

- Identified individuals must be found and monitored. Severely allergic children must be directly monitored by the Secretary or a nominated First Aider.
- The catering team will enter the incident in their own accident report book a copy of which must be sent to the Secretary the daily pupil treatment records.
- Contamination incidents resulting in an anaphylactic reaction will trigger a serious incident review, overseen by senior management.

Legal framework:

The Human Medicines Regulations (2012)

- The Children and Families Act 2014 states that schools have a duty to support pupils at their school with medical conditions.
- The Food Information Regulations 2014 requires all food businesses including school caterers to show the allergen ingredients' information for the food they serve.

Further guidance:

- Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings (DfES 2005)
- 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions' (DfE December 2015) refers to medical conditions in general but does not specifically refer to allergies/nuts.

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications:

- Medication Record (2010)
- Daily Register and Outings Record (2012)