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 Allergy Policy

2020

**Introduction**

An allergy is the response of a person’s immune system to substances that are normally harmless e.g. pollen, foods, house dust mites. In most people these substances pose no problem however in allergic individuals, their immune system identifies them as a threat and produces an inappropriate response.

Allergy is widespread and is thought to affect one in four of the population in the UK at some time in their lives. Each year the numbers are increasing with as many as half of all those affected being children.

Statutory guidance was issued to schools in May 2014 by the government. This guidance states that schools in England are legally required to provide the high quality support children with medical conditions need. Guidance includes

* Ensuring catering supervisors are aware of an allergic child’s requirements
* Pupils should not be excluded from activities based on their allergy
* Ensuring staff receive high-quality training in managing severe allergies in school
* Ensure medications are appropriately stored and easily accessible central to designated staff
* Ensure all staff can recognise symptoms; know what to do in an emergency, and work to eliminate the use of allergens in the allergic pupil’s meals, educational tools, arts and crafts projects.

Due to the nature of pupils at Foxfield School, many of whom suffer from pre-existing medical conditions or are unable to communicate their allergies to others, staff are required to be extra vigilant. Staff must ensure that they are fully aware of any allergies within their class group and that other staff working with those pupils are also made aware.

**Symptoms**

For many children the symptoms of allergy are mild and can include

* Sneezing
* A runny or blocked nose
* Red, itchy, watery eyes
* Wheezing or coughing
* A red, itchy rash
* Worsening of asthma or eczema symptoms

 In severe cases, symptoms may include generalised flushing of the skin, nettle rash (hives) anywhere on the body, swelling of the throat and mouth, difficulty swallowing or breathing, severe asthma, a feeling of impending doom, abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting. In very severe cases **(anaphylaxis)** there may be collapse and unconsciousness.

**Anaphylaxis**

Anaphylaxis is an extreme and severe allergic reaction. The whole body is affected, often within minutes of exposure to the substance which causes the allergic reaction but sometimes after hours.

Common causes include foods such as peanuts, tree nuts (e.g. almonds, walnuts, cashews, and Brazil nuts), sesame, fish, shellfish, dairy products and eggs. Non-food causes include wasp or bee stings, natural latex (rubber), penicillin or any other drug or injection. In some people, exercise can trigger a severe reaction — either on its own or in combination with other factors such as food or drugs (e.g. aspirin).

**Procedures at Foxfield**

* Pre-admission- school nurse to meet with primary feeder school nurse for pupil medical handover.
* Pre- admission- pupil records are available to school nurse via the Wirral Community Foundation Trust system 1
* Pre-admission- Parents fill in a ‘Pupil Confidential form’. This includes information on allergies and is returned to the office. The school nurse receives a copy of these forms.
* Upon admission- a Health Needs assessment will be carried out and care plans regularly updated.
* Nursing staff will inform class staff of medical issues including allergies
* Class room staff to produce red allergy alerts (appendix i) using the template in the pupil care plan. Allergy alerts must be displayed in pupils classroom
* Class staff must inform the school kitchen of any dietary requirements including allergies
* Alerts containing names of pupils with food allergies will be placed in the dining hall, food technology room and ILS BASE
* Pupils medical information to be included on any risk assessments for ILS, community work and residential
* ‘Pupil Confidential form’ will be sent home to all parents annually for updating.

**Treatment**

The most effective way of managing an allergy is to avoid the allergen that causes the reaction whenever possible. Mild reactions may be treated with antihistamines, decongestants or emollients. Antihistamines or eye drops may only be used is prescribed by a doctor and sent in to school in labelled packaging. Please speak to the school nurse if you believe a pupil to be having an allergic reaction.

The treatment for a severe allergic reaction is an injection of adrenaline, delivered into the muscle in the side of the thigh. Adrenaline acts quickly to open up airways, stop swelling and raise blood pressure. To allow it to work most effectively, it should be administered with minimum delay as soon as a severe reaction is suspected of occurring. These injectors are easy to use and staff working closely with at risk pupils will undergo the necessary training in administration of the injection. If an injector has been prescribed it should be available AT ALL TIMES. The emergency services should still be called after use as symptoms may return after a short period and more than one injection of adrenaline may be required. Any used injectors should be retained and given to the emergency services.

The majority of staff at Foxfield have been trained in anaphylaxis and the use of an epipen.

 **Food Allergy**

A food allergy is when the body’s immune system reacts unusually to specific foods. Food allergens can be life threatening and the only way to manage a food allergy is to avoid the foods that make them ill. Food allergens cannot be removed by cooking. That is why it is essential to practice good kitchen hygiene, as well as careful separation, storage and labelling of ingredients when preparing food. (FSA 2016)

Every school is likely to have at least one pupil who is severely food allergic and many schools will have more.

Under EU law, any pre-packed food or drink sold in the UK must clearly state on the label if it contains the following ingredients

* celery
* cereals that contain gluten (including wheat, rye, barley and oats)
* crustaceans (including prawns, crabs and lobsters)
* eggs
* fish
* lupin (lupins are common garden plants, and the seeds from some varieties are sometimes used to make flour)
* milk
* molluscs (including mussels and oysters)
* mustard
* tree nuts – such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts
* peanuts
* sesame seeds
* soybeans
* sulphur dioxide and sulphites (preservatives that are used in some foods and drinks)

It has been reported that kiwi fruit is an increasing cause of food allergies particularly among young children

If a pupil has a known food allergy all cookery ingredients and class snacks must be checked. It is a legal requirement for all food labels to clearly state any of the 14 most common food allergens in bold. The form (appendix ii) can be used to track allergens in recipes.

Staff must also be vigilant when lessons/ school activities involve food or sensory materials e.g. play dough, ILS/ community, residential

**Other common allergies**

* Grass and tree pollen
* Dust mites
* Animal dander (flakes of skin or hair)
* Insect bites or stings
* Medication including ibuprofen, aspirin and certain antibiotics
* Latex
* Mould
* Household chemicals

**Intolerances**

Some people can suffer from unpleasant symptoms upon contact with some substances e.g. diarrhoea, bloating, cramps. Unlike allergies, intolerances do not involve the immune system but may be caused by difficulties digesting certain substances e.g. lactose. People with intolerance to certain foods can typically eat a small amount without any problems.

**Further reading**

<http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Allergies/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/science/allergy-intolerance>

<https://www.allergyuk.org/index.php>

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DISHES | Celery | Cereals containing gluten | Crustaceans | Eggs | Fish | Lupin | Milk | Mollusc | Mustard | Nuts | Peanuts | Sesame seeds | Soya | Sulphur Dioxide |
|  | **Celery** | **Cereals containing gluten** | **Crustaceans** | **Eggs** | **Fish** | **Lupin** | **Milk** | **Mollusc** | **Mustard** | **Nuts** | **Peanuts** | **Sesame seeds** | **Soya** | **Sulphur Dioxide** |
| Tuna Salad [example] | ✓ |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |  |
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**DISHES AND THEIR ALLERGEN CONTENT**

**Allergy / Intolerance Alert**

**Name:** **................**

Has an allergy/intolerance to the following:

* ***(Please list)***
* ***(Please list)***
* ***(Please list)***
* ***(Please list)***

*(Insert pupil picture)*