

Schools Allergy Code

Allergic disease is the most common chronic condition in childhood. An allergic reaction occurs when a person's immune system is triggered by a substance that is usually considered harmless. Whilst most allergic reactions are mild, some can be very serious and cause anaphylaxis which is a life-threatening medical emergency.

The Code is not a set of rules and regulations but it is a guide to best practice in achieving a whole school approach to allergy safety and inclusion. It has been drawn up by the Benedict Blythe Foundation and The Allergy Team, with the backing of leading allergy clinicians and the Independent Schools' Bursars Association.

All schools are encouraged to use the Schools Allergy Code to ensure good allergy management in their setting. The Code and its accompanying Checklist are free resources.

Principles of good practice

1. **Take every allergy seriously** – allergic reactions are unpredictable and every child with a diagnosed allergy should be included in the measures outlined in the Code.
2. **Every child matters** – allergies are as unique as the children who have them. It is crucial that an individualised approach is adopted to implementing the Code, working with families and children to understand their experiences.
3. **Prioritise safety and inclusion over the 'status quo'** – responding to the needs of children with allergy can require finding new ways of doing things, with schools prioritising safety and inclusion every time.

Code guidance

1. **Take a whole-school approach**

Every member of the school community should understand allergy and their responsibility for reducing risk, from pupils and parents to staff members. Allergy management is not just the responsibility of the catering and medical team.

 - 1.1 Build the knowledge and skills of all staff through targeted training and education. This will include understanding risk reduction and the importance of inclusion, as well as first aid response to allergic reaction.
 - 1.2 Weave allergy awareness into classroom activities, for example lessons on nutrition and PSHE.



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2. Communicate clearly

Give people information about the school's approach to allergy clearly and frequently.

- 2.1 Establish an Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy which is written in plain English and accessible. The policy should be published online and communicated to all staff and relevant members of the school community, including parents. This should be a dynamic document that is frequently reviewed and updated.
- 2.2 Ensure open communication with parents, teachers, support staff and caterers about the individual needs of children, based on co-created Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) for all children with allergy.

3. Have clear governance and risk management

Create an awareness of allergy risk across all activities and processes.

- 3.1 Ensure clear governance structures and clearly defined roles and responsibilities including a Designated Allergy Lead.
- 3.2 Make sure allergy policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and reported on by Designated Allergy Lead.
- 3.3 Allergy should form a part of every risk assessment.

4. Readiness to respond

Have systems, processes, and medication in place for emergencies.

- 4.1 Ensure that pupils prescribed with adrenaline pens have two in-date devices accessible at all times.
- 4.2 Hold spare adrenaline pens and make sure everyone knows where they are.
- 4.3 Establish annual risk reduction and anaphylaxis training for all staff.
- 4.4 Publish an Anaphylaxis Emergency Response Plan which enables staff to respond confidently and immediately to an allergic reaction.
- 4.5 Rehearse the Anaphylaxis Emergency Response plan.

Schools Allergy Register

To join the Schools Allergy Register of those observing the Code and to display a trust mark, schools must be assessed by The Allergy Team. Schools that do this will be supported throughout the process and receive free access to The Allergy Team's allergy and anaphylaxis training for staff.



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