

Testwood School Food Allergen Policy

Key Responsibility	CC
Last Review:	October 2025
Next Review:	October 2027

Revision History

Version	Date	Amendments	Initials
V1	03.10.23		JB
V2	23.10.25	Revision dates updated	CC

*Appendices follow on from policy

Policy Statement and Guidelines

This policy should be considered alongside and in conjunction with Testwood's First Aid Policy (Guidance of the use of Epi-pens to counter Anaphylactic Shock), Admissions Policy and Data Protection Policy.

Aims:

- To reduce the likelihood of a student or member of staff with a known food allergy displaying a severe reaction to a specific food whilst in school.
- To foster an understanding of and sense of responsibility for, the specific needs of the individual members of the school community.
- To create an awareness of the action to take should someone with a severe food allergy display its symptoms.
- To ensure the school complies with the statutory guidance for supporting students with medical conditions.

A) Introduction:

Testwood School recognises that a number of community members (students, parents/cares, visitors and staff) may suffer from potentially life-threatening allergies or intolerances to certain foods.

Testwood School is committed to a whole school approach to the care and management of those members of the school community. This policy looks at food allergy and intolerances in particular. The School's First Aid Policy looks more in depth at allergens such as animal stings (bees, wasps, ants etc.).

The school's position is not to guarantee a completely allergen free environment, rather to minimise the risk of exposure by hazard identification, instruction and information. This will encourage self-responsibility to all those with known allergens to make informed decisions on food choices. It is also important that the school has robust plans for an effective response to possible emergencies.

The school is committed to proactive risk food allergy management through:

- The encouragement of self-responsibility and learned avoidance strategies amongst those suffering from known allergies.
- The establishment and documentation of a comprehensive management plan for menu planning, food labelling, stores and stock ordering and consumer awareness of food produced on site.
- Provision of a staff awareness programme on food allergies/intolerances, possible symptoms (anaphylaxis) recognition and treatment.

The intent of this policy is to minimise the risk of any person suffering allergy-induced anaphylaxis, or food intolerance whilst at Testwood School or attending any School related activity. The policy sets out guidance for staff to ensure they are properly prepared to manage such emergency situations should they arise.

B) Definitions and Allergers Information:

Allergy - A condition in which the body has an exaggerated response to a substance (e.g. food or drug), also known as hypersensitivity.

Allergen - A normally harmless substance that triggers an allergic reaction in the immune system of a susceptible person.

Anaphylaxis, or Anaphylactic shock - Is a sudden, severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction to a trigger (food, stings, bites, or medicines).

Adrenaline device - A syringe style device containing the drug adrenaline. This is an individual prescribed drug for known sufferers which is ready for immediate intramuscular administration. This may also be referred to as an Epi-Pen / Ana pen or Jext (particular brand names).

What is a food allergy?

The body's immune system reacts to certain allergens in food by producing antibodies, which can cause immediate and sometimes severe symptoms such as: itching or a strange metallic taste in the mouth; swelling of the throat and tongue; difficulty in swallowing or speaking; abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting; skin hives (nettle rash) anywhere on the body; and in most extreme cases difficulties in breathing and a severe fall in blood pressure (anaphylactic shock). In extreme cases this can prove fatal.

What is food intolerance?

This does not involve the immune system in the same way as allergens and is usually not as severe. Symptoms usually take longer and may include headaches, fatigue and digestive problems. Food intolerance is harder to diagnose than a food allergy. The person with a known allergen trigger may know what food ingredient will provoke a reaction. However, they may well have eaten this food or a specific dish previously and had no adverse reaction.

Who is at risk?

Anybody can develop a food allergen or intolerance at any time in their life irrespective of whether they have consumed the food previously. A person with an allergy is at risk even if they consume a small amount of the food allergen.

Common Food Allergens

The common causes of allergies relevant to this policy are:

- **Cereals containing Gluten** (i.e. wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, kamut or their hybridized strains) and products thereof.
- **Celery** including stalks, leaves, seeds and celeriac in salads.
- **Crustaceans** (prawns, crab, lobster, scampi, shrimp paste).
- **Eggs** - also food glazed with egg.
- **Fish** - some salad dressings, relishes, fish sauce, some soy and Worcester sauces.
- **Soya** (tofu, bean curd, soya flour).
- **Milk** - also food glazed with milk (including lactose).
- **Nuts** (almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecan nuts, Brazil nuts, pistachio, cashew and macadamia 'Queensland' nuts, nut oils, marzipan).
- **Peanuts** - sauces, cakes, desserts, groundnut oil, peanut flour.
- **Mustard** - liquid mustard, mustard powder, mustard seeds.
- **Sesame Seeds** - bread, breadsticks, tahini, houmous, sesame oil.
- **Sulphur dioxide/Sulphites** (dried fruit, fruit juice drinks, wine, beer).
- **Lupin** (in baked products) - bread, pastries, pies - pasta or noodles, sauces, beverages and meat based products, such as burgers and sausages. Foods free of gluten, soy or genetically modified ingredients may contain lupin.
- **Molluscs** (mussels, scallops, oysters, clams, snails, periwinkles, whelks, squid and octopus).

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and people may report allergies to other foods not on the above list. Most common in the UK are kiwi, peas, other legumes (beans etc.), other seeds and other fruits and vegetables. In some cases, people only need to avoid these when raw and can have them cooked.

C) School Procedure:

On entry to Testwood school parents/carers are required to inform the school of any known food allergies that their child has. This information is then entered onto the school's data base (Arbor) from the completed Medical and dietary information form (see *Template A*).

Parents and carers must advise the school of the action that should be taken if their child develops the symptoms of an allergic reaction whilst in school. If a student has an allergy requiring an EpiPen, or the risk assessment deems it necessary, an Individual Health Care Plan (see *Template B*) must be completed and signed by the parents/carers.

If school staff are required to administer medication, then *Template C Medication Consent Form* will need to be completed.

Parents/carers of children with food allergies should regularly (at least annually) update allergy information and equipment. The school will request an updated medical consent form at the start of every academic year. Parents/carers however, should update the school if there is a change to what the school had previously been informed of.

Teaching staff are given dietary details of students who have specific food allergies, at the beginning of each school year and this is updated where required throughout the year. Staff who deal with the handling and preparation of food (Catering staff, food Technology teachers), will always have an up to date record. Staff who run offsite trips, school events and other activities requiring food provision will be able to access the latest most up to date details held by the school.

The school will ensure that individual medical health plans for students with allergies are in place and communicated to all relevant staff. Allergen information is accessible to all visitors/guests/parties who visit the school.

The school provides training to enable staff to recognise the symptoms of an allergic reaction and to respond appropriately. Staff have been trained in the use of the EPIPEN should a student with a known food allergy go into anaphylaxis including awareness of triggers and first aid procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.

D) Data Protection:

Medical information for students is private and confidential and is stored in line with Testwood School's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Policy (GDPR).

E) Responsibilities:

Medical information for students is private and confidential. However, it is the First Aid Centre's responsibility to pass any information on to the Catering Manager / Food Technology teachers, with regards to food allergies of students. Staff will be made aware of these students via:

- Staff training and instruction within the Catering Department. Housemaster/mistress will be made aware direct from the Medical Centre.
- A list with pictures will be sent out to all staff at the start of the Michaelmas term outlining students with medical conditions
- This medical information will be on the Apollo system for staff to download during trips and activities.
- The Medical Team who offer and deliver training to all staff in regard to the administration of the medication, also to brief all staff on anaphylaxis recognition and treatment. The Medical Centre is responsible for supplying the relevant student medication (adrenaline device). Students are responsible for ensuring that they have their medication with them at all times.

F) The Catering Manager will

- Maintain a management system for menu planning, food labelling, stores and stock ordering and customer awareness of food produced on site.
- Catering staff will maintain a list of known allergens in the school meal menus and these can be shared with parents and carers.
- Responsible for ensuring that any food provided for students, staff and visitors who have an allergy is appropriate for their needs.
- Will ensure that the kitchen has stock or can access the necessary stock ingredients to offer suitable alternatives for people with allergies, intolerances and coeliac disease. This includes wheat/gluten free bread and pasta, and alternatives to cow's milk and butter/margarine spreads (e.g. milk free spread).
- Will ensure that allergen information is provided on all food/listed in the list of 'Common Food Allergens' listed above. This information will be supplied in Allergy Data Sheets (See Appendix 1) that can be easily seen by students, staff and visitors. This also applies to pre-packed food such as wraps and sandwiches.
- Responsible for using only authorised suppliers and being the main contact for all purchases of food stuffs for School catering.
- Ensure suppliers of all foods and catering supplies are aware of the school's food allergy policy and the requirements under the labelling law
- Ensuring suppliers of food stuffs are nut free or labelled 'may contain nuts'.

G) Parent/Carer Role

In order to complete the Health Care Plan parents and carers are responsible for providing, in writing, on-going accurate and current medical information to the school. Parents and carers are to confirm and detail, in writing, the nature of the allergy; including:

- The allergen (the substance the child is allergic to)
- The nature of the allergic reaction (from rash, breathing problems to anaphylactic shock)
- What to do in case of allergic reaction, including any medication to be used and how it is to be used.
- Control measures – such as how the child can be prevented from getting into contact with the allergen.
- It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to provide the school with up to date medication /equipment clearly labelled in a suitable container with their child's photo on.
- In the case of life saving medication like Epi Pens the child will not be allowed to attend without it.
- Parents and carers are also required to provide up to date emergency contact information.
- Snacks and lunches brought into school are provided by each child's parent/carer.
- It is their responsibility to ensure that the contents are safe for the child to consume.
- Parents/carers should liaise with Staff about appropriateness of snacks and any food related activities (e.g. cooking).

H) Staff Role

Staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with the policy and to adhere to health & safety regulations regarding food and drink.

- If a child's Enrolment Form states that they have an allergy requiring an EpiPen then an Individual Health Care Plan is needed. It must be in place before the child starts attending sessions. 4
- All staff should know the procedures at snack and lunch time to ensure the safety of children with allergies.
- However, staff cannot guarantee that foods will not contain traces of nuts or other allergens.
- All tables are cleaned with an approved solution.
- Children are not permitted to share food. • As part of the staff training, EpiPen use and storage has been discussed.
- We may ask the parent/carer for a list of food products and food derivatives the child must not come into contact with.
- Emergency medication should be easily accessible.
- Staff should liaise with parents and carers about snacks and any food-related activities e.g. cooking.

I) Staff Training:

The catering Manager along with Food Technology teachers must have attended the following:

- 1) Level 2 Food Safety
- 2) Food Hygiene Certificate
- 3) Received recognised training on Food Allergy Awareness.

- 4) Appropriate First Aid course (school endorsed course).

Casual / Part Time / Supply staff must be instructed on food allergy awareness and school procedures by the Catering Manager or the Head of Food Technology before commencing work.

J) Good Kitchen and Service Practises

Kitchen / Food Technology (T3)

- All food produced in-house will be from standard ingredients from 'approved' suppliers. Any ingredient changes/supplier changes affecting standard ingredients will be detailed.
- Where allergenic ingredients are packaged openly/loosely, they are stored separately to reduce the risk of contamination.
- Where dishes contain common allergens, they are clearly labelled at the entrance to the dining area.
- Equipment/utensils used in the preparation of food for people with a food allergy are cleaned according to standard procedures (see HACCP manual) which under normal circumstances should be sufficient.
- A separate area of the kitchen will be sought for the preparation of any food for someone with a food allergy. The area will be sanitised before it is used to prepare food. There are separate chopping boards.
- When cooking food for people with a food allergy or intolerance the Catering Manager will wear gloves and will wash their hands before and in-between preparation tasks.
- All food produced for people with food allergy or intolerance will be placed away from other food and covered in cling film. It will then be clearly marked with the person's diet.

K) Food Service

- Food Service. The catering team must check that the special meal ordered for the person with a food allergy or intolerance has been supplied and is appropriate for the person. Any concern should be immediately discussed with appropriate Catering Manager.
- Normal food handling procedures should apply (e.g. washing hands, wearing disposable gloves and aprons).
- Staff are aware to keep serving utensils separate to avoid cross contamination.
- All tables are cleaned with an appropriate solution.

L) Actions:

In the event of a child suffering an allergic reaction:

1. If it is not an emergency situation, check to see if there is a risk assessment and Individual Health Care Plan and follow instructions.
2. If a child has an EpiPen and is suffering an extreme allergic reaction, administer the medication immediately, then call 999.
3. In an emergency situation, e.g. the child is suffering serious symptoms/a severe allergic reaction ring 999 and follow advice.
4. Contact parents/carers to advise, or ask for advice if less serious symptom.