Ashbridge
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL & NURSERIES

DIETARY AND ALLERGY SAFETY POLICY (SCHOOL)

Approved by: SLT
Approved date: September 2026
To be reviewed by: SLT
Review date: September 2027
Scope: Ashbridge Independent School

Ashbridge Independent School is committed to providing safe, high-quality food and mealtimes for all pupils. This policy explains how we identify and manage food allergies, intolerances, coeliac disease, medically required diets and other dietary requirements, and how food is prepared and served safely across the school.

This policy applies throughout the school day and to school-arranged activities, before and after school club, educational visits, residential trips, sporting activities, events and food-related curriculum activities.

Responsibilities

The Proprietor has overall responsibility for ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for allergy safety. The Headmaster, Mr. Jackson has operational oversight of allergy and dietary safety.

Overview

Allergy can be a serious and potentially life-threatening medical condition. We take a whole-school approach to allergy safety and work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, healthcare professionals and our catering team.

Pupils with known allergies and dietary requirements are identified and appropriate care plans are put in place. Relevant information is communicated to the teaching staff, catering team, support staff, and any other staff who need it.

Staff receive appropriate allergy awareness and first aid training and emergency medication is always accessible. Allergic reactions are recorded, reviewed and used to improve practice.

Identifying Allergies and Dietary Requirements

At enrolment:

- Parents/carers complete the enrolment documentation and identify any known food allergy, intolerance, coeliac disease, medically required diet or other dietary requirement.
- This information is recorded on Connect/iConnect.
- Where an allergy is identified, an allergy questionnaire is sent to the parent/carer to obtain further information.
- A follow-up meeting may be arranged between parents/carers and a member of the Leadership and/or Teaching Team to fully understand the pupil's needs and agree how they will be managed in school.
- Parents/carers are asked to provide relevant medical confirmation of an allergy or medical dietary requirement from an appropriate healthcare professional, such as a doctor or dietitian.
- Where an NHS or other healthcare professional's allergy action plan or care plan already exists, parents/carers are asked to provide the school with a copy.

- Any necessary medication, staff training and individual risk-control measures are agreed and implemented.
- Where a pupil's needs are particularly complex, the school will undertake an individual assessment of how those needs can be safely supported, including consideration of any reasonable adjustments required.

Allergy or medical care plans

An individual care plan will be put in place where a pupil's allergy or medical dietary requirement requires individual arrangements to keep them safe in school. The plan will be developed with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the pupil and relevant healthcare professionals (see appendix for allergy care plan template).

During this care planning, the following will be discussed and recorded:

- The pupil's allergy/allergen and known triggers.
- The nature and severity of previous reactions.
- Signs and symptoms to look for.
- Measures required to reduce the risk of exposure.
- Medication, dosage and where it is kept.
- Emergency procedures.
- Arrangements for meals, snacks and drinks.
- Arrangements for educational visits, residentials, sport and other activities.
- Any additional individual requirements.
- Relevant staff must know how to access the pupil's care plan and understand the arrangements they are required to follow.

Changes and reviews

Parents/carers must inform the school in writing of any change to their child's allergy or dietary requirements, including changes to triggers, symptoms, severity, treatment or medication.

Allergy or medical care plans will be formally reviewed and signed with parents/carers every six months at parent review meetings.

A care plan will be reviewed sooner where the pupil's condition, treatment or medication changes, new medical advice is received, an allergic reaction occurs, or there is a significant allergy-related near miss.

Dietary Requests Without Medical Evidence

The school will make appropriate arrangements for non-medical dietary requirements, including religious, cultural and ethical diets such as vegetarian diets.

Where a parent/carer requests a dietary restriction on medical grounds, appropriate medical confirmation will normally be required so that the school can accurately understand the pupil's needs and provide a safe and nutritionally appropriate diet.

Any parent-requested medical dietary change without supporting medical advice or evidence must be approved by SLT. Where appropriate, a temporary dietary arrangement may be agreed while parents/carers obtain the necessary documentation.

This does not prevent the school from taking immediate precautionary action where a new allergy is suspected or where there is an immediate safety concern.

Communicating Dietary Information

Accurate communication between parents/carers, teaching staff, leadership and the catering team is an essential part of our allergy controls.

- All known allergies and dietary requirements are recorded on Connect/iConnect.
- The kitchen team receives a regularly updated dietary sheet identifying pupils with allergies and dietary requirements.
- The catering team checks the current dietary list, relevant ingredients and allergen information each day before food is prepared and served.
- Any ingredient substitutions or menu changes must be checked against pupils' dietary requirements before service.
- Changes notified by parents/carers are updated on school systems and communicated promptly to relevant staff and the catering team.

If there is any discrepancy or uncertainty about a pupil's dietary information, food must not be served until the information has been checked and confirmed.

Preparing and Serving Food

Food for pupils with allergies and dietary requirements is prepared and identified in the kitchen in accordance with the school's food-safety and allergen procedures. Appropriate controls are used to minimise allergen cross-contact during storage, preparation, cooking and service.

Mealtime arrangements

Reception pupils eat their meals within their classroom, in accordance with the school's arrangements for meeting the EYFS safer eating requirements. Pupils in Year 1 and above eat their meals in the dining hall.

Appropriate supervision and the school's dietary and allergy procedures apply consistently in both locations.

Red plate system - medical dietary requirements

Pupils with a food allergy, food intolerance, coeliac disease or other medically identified dietary requirement are served using a red plate or bowl.

- The meal is prepared in accordance with the pupil's recorded dietary requirements.
- It is clearly identified and labelled in the kitchen with the pupil's name and dietary requirement.
- It is checked against the current dietary information before leaving the kitchen.
- The member of staff serving the meal confirms that the name and dietary requirement correspond with the correct pupil before the food is given to them.

Blue plate system - non-medical dietary requirements

Pupils with a non-medical dietary requirement, for example a vegetarian diet, are served using a blue plate or bowl.

Reducing the Risk of Allergen Exposure

The school cannot guarantee an entirely allergen-free environment. Instead, we take proportionate and practical steps to reduce the risk of accidental exposure while enabling pupils with allergies to participate fully in school life.

- Ashbridge is a nut free school
- Pupils and parents are not permitted to bring any food or drinks into school
- All food provided to pupils is supplied and managed through the school's approved catering arrangements.
- Staff know which pupils in their care have allergies and how to access their care plan and relevant medications.
- Individual allergy controls are followed consistently.
- Pupils are appropriately supervised while eating.
- Effective handwashing is encouraged before and after eating.
- Pupils are discouraged from sharing or swapping food, drinks, bottles, plates or utensils.
- Tables and eating areas are appropriately cleaned.
- Allergies are considered when planning cooking, food tasting, celebrations, rewards and curriculum activities.
- Food is checked before it is given to a pupil with an allergy.
- Allergy risks are considered when planning trips, events and activities away from school.
- Where an activity creates an additional or unusual allergy risk, an individual risk assessment will be undertaken.

Medication

Where medication is required for an allergy, such as an antihistamine or adrenaline auto-injector (AAI), parents/carers must provide the pupil's prescribed medication.

- Medication must be in date.
- Medication must be clearly labelled for the pupil.
- Medication must be provided in its original container where applicable.
- Appropriate instructions and parental consent must be provided.

The school undertakes regular medication expiry checks, however parents/carers are also responsible for monitoring expiry dates and supplying replacement medication before it expires or promptly following use.

Emergency allergy medication must be readily accessible at all times and must not be locked away.

Transitions

The Teaching Team and Leadership Team oversee the handover and review of allergy arrangements when a pupil transitions between classes or key stages. They ensure:

- The receiving team understands the pupil's allergy and care plan.
- Medication is appropriately transferred and remains readily accessible.
- Relevant dietary information remains current.
- Catering information is updated where necessary.

Adrenaline Auto-Injectors and Emergency Medication

Where a pupil has been prescribed an AAI, staff responsible for the pupil must know where the pupil’s AAIs are located, how to recognise anaphylaxis, how and when to administer adrenaline, and what to do following administration.

Pupils’ prescribed AAIs are kept in the designated emergency medication cupboard within their named classroom. This provides a consistent, clearly identified location so that staff can locate and access the medication quickly when required.
When pupils attend the dining hall for lunch, their AAIs are taken with them and remain readily accessible throughout the mealtime. They are returned to the designated location in the pupil’s classroom afterwards.

Spare emergency AAIs are located in the dining hall so that they can be accessed rapidly in an emergency.

Recognising and Responding to an Allergic Reaction

All staff must take symptoms of an allergic reaction seriously. Anaphylaxis is a medical emergency. A severe reaction can occur without skin symptoms.

Signs of anaphylaxis may include:

- difficulty or noisy breathing
- wheezing
- persistent coughing
- swelling of the tongue or throat
- difficulty swallowing or speaking
- dizziness
- confusion
- sudden drowsiness
- collapse or loss of consciousness

Where anaphylaxis is suspected:

- Administer adrenaline immediately in accordance with the pupil's care plan/emergency instructions.
- Adrenaline should not be delayed where anaphylaxis is suspected.
- Call 999 and state that anaphylaxis is suspected.
- Keep the pupil under continuous supervision and position them appropriately.
- Administer a further dose of adrenaline after the recommended interval if symptoms have not improved and another device is available.
- Contact the pupil's parents/carers.
- Ensure the pupil is assessed by emergency medical services following the administration of adrenaline.
- Emergency treatment must never be delayed while attempting to contact a parent/carer, SLT or another member of staff.

Staff Training

All relevant staff receive allergy awareness training at induction at least annually. This includes:

- Understanding food allergy and anaphylaxis.
- Recognising signs and symptoms of allergic reactions.
- Preventing accidental allergen exposure and cross-contact.
- Understanding the school's red and blue plate/bowl system.
- Accessing and following care plans.
- Locating emergency medication.
- Administering AAIs.
- Responding to an emergency.
- Reporting allergic reactions and significant near misses.

Staff with responsibility for pupils with more complex allergy needs may receive additional training if required.

Educational Visits, Residentials, Sport and Activities Away From School

Having an allergy should not ordinarily prevent a pupil from participating fully in school life. Allergy arrangements are considered when planning educational visits, residential trips, sporting activities and other off-site activities.

- The pupil's individual allergy and care plan
- Access to emergency medication and who will carry it.
- Emergency procedures.
- Food and catering arrangements.
- Travel arrangements where relevant.
- Access to emergency medical assistance.
- The pupil's required emergency medication must accompany them whenever they are off site.

Inclusion and Wellbeing

Pupils with allergies should be supported to participate fully in school life wherever this can be achieved safely. Staff should recognise that living with an allergy can have an emotional and social impact, and pupils should not be unnecessarily isolated, excluded or made to feel different because of their condition.

Allergy-related bullying, teasing, deliberately exposing another pupil to an allergen or threatening to do so will be treated seriously under the school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies. Deliberate allergen exposure may constitute a serious medical and/or safeguarding incident.

Incidents and Near Misses

All allergic reactions requiring treatment and all significant allergy-related near misses must be recorded and reported to SLT.

Following a serious allergic reaction or significant near miss, the school will review:

- What happened and why.
- Whether the pupil's care plan and individual controls were followed.
- Whether food preparation and serving procedures were followed.
- The availability and accessibility of medication.
- The staff response and communication between relevant teams.
- Whether changes are required to the pupil's care plan, risk assessment, staff training or school procedures.
- Learning from incidents and near misses will be used to improve allergy safety.

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

- Provide accurate and current information about their child's allergy or dietary requirements.
- Complete requested allergy documentation.
- Provide relevant medical evidence and existing NHS/healthcare plans where available.
- Participate in and approve the review of the pupil's care plan.
- Inform the school in writing of any change to symptoms, severity, triggers, treatment, medication or dietary requirements.
- Supply prescribed medication which is in date and appropriately labelled.
- Monitor medication expiry dates and provide replacements when required.
- Work in partnership with the school to help manage their child's allergy safely.

Responsibilities of Pupils

Pupils will be involved in managing their allergy according to their age, maturity and understanding. They will be encouraged to:

- Understand foods they must avoid, where developmentally appropriate.
- Not to swap or share food or drinks.
- Tell an adult if they are unsure whether food is safe.
- Tell an adult immediately if they feel unwell or believe they may have been exposed to an allergen.

Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Information about a pupil's allergy or dietary requirement will be shared with staff who need the information to keep the pupil safe. Information will be handled sensitively and in accordance with data-protection requirements. Confidentiality will not prevent appropriate information being shared where this is necessary to protect a pupil's health or safety.