Bedford High School

Work hard. Be respectful. Take responsibility

Allergy Policy

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Document control

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1. Introduction

An allergy is a reaction of the body's immune system to substances that are usually harmless. The reaction can cause minor symptoms such as itching, sneezing or rashes but sometimes causes a much more serious reaction called anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is a serious, life-threatening allergic reaction. It is at the extreme end of the allergic spectrum. The whole body is affected often within minutes of exposure to the allergen, but sometimes it can be hours later. Causes can include foods, insect stings, and drugs.

Common UK Allergens include (but are not limited to) peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, milk, egg, fish, latex, insect venom, pollen and animal dander.

2. Role and responsibilities

Parent Responsibilities

- On entry to the school, it is the parent's responsibility to inform school of any allergies.
- Parents are to supply details of their child's allergy and if they have an Allergy Action Plan. A Health Care Plan should be produced by school as soon as possible.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring any required medication is supplied, in date and replaced as necessary.
- Parents must keep the school up to date with any changes in allergy management. The Health Care Plan will be kept updated accordingly.

Staff Responsibilities

- All education staff, those having regular face-to-face contact with students, those involved in food preparation of any kind (including snack handling and food related activities) and staff who have colleagues with a known allergy, will regularly complete allergy awareness and anaphylaxis training and food hygiene level 1 certification.
- Staff must be aware of the students in their care who have known allergies as an allergic reaction could occur at any time and not just at mealtimes. Staff must familiarise themselves with their Health Care Plan.
- Staff must ensure that any food-related activities are supervised with due caution.
- Staff leading school trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies and medication for students. Students without their required medication will not be able to attend.
- The pastoral team will ensure that the up-to-date Health Care Plan is kept with the student's medication.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all medication is in date however, the School attendance team and Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for medical needs will check medication kept at school on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.
- The Data Team will keep a spreadsheet of students who have medical conditions, including allergies and those prescribed an adrenaline auto-injector (AAI). They are responsible for any updates that need to be made on a student's record on the Bromcom system.
- The School Leadership Team will keep a record of use of any AAI(s) and emergency treatment given. Incidents of AAI and emergency treatment will also be added to MIS system.
- It is the staff members' responsibility to inform HR and their line manager of their own allergies and share their allergy action plan.

Student Responsibilities

- Students are encouraged to have a good awareness of their symptoms and to let an adult know as soon as they suspect they are having an allergic reaction.

3. Allergy Action Plans

Allergy action plans are designed to function as individual healthcare plans for children with allergies, providing medical and parental consent for schools to administer medicines in the event of an allergic reaction, including consent to administer a spare adrenaline auto-injector.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to complete the allergy action plan with help from a healthcare professional and provide this to the school.

4. Emergency Treatment and Management of Anaphylaxis

What to look for:
Symptoms usually come quickly, within minutes of exposure to the allergen.

Mild to moderate allergic reaction symptoms may include:

- a red raised rash (known as hives or urticaria) anywhere on the body
- a tingling or itchy feeling in the mouth
- swelling of lips, face or eyes
- stomach pain or vomiting.

More serious symptoms are often referred to as the ABC symptoms and can include:

- AIRWAY - swelling in the throat, tongue or upper airways (tightening of the throat, hoarse voice, difficulty swallowing).
- BREATHING - sudden onset wheezing, breathing difficulty, noisy breathing.
- CIRCULATION - dizziness, feeling faint, sudden sleepiness, tiredness, confusion, pale clammy skin, loss of consciousness.

The term for this more serious reaction is anaphylaxis. In extreme cases there could be a dramatic fall in blood pressure. The person may become weak and floppy and may have a sense of something terrible happening. This may lead to collapse and unconsciousness and, on rare occasions, can be fatal.

If the student has been exposed to something they are known to be allergic to, then it is more likely to be an anaphylactic reaction.

Anaphylaxis can develop very rapidly, so a treatment is needed that works rapidly. **Adrenaline** is the mainstay of treatment, and it starts to work within seconds.

What does adrenaline do?

- It opens the airways
- It stops swelling
- It raises the blood pressure

As soon as anaphylaxis is suspected, adrenaline must be administered without delay.

Action:

- Keep the child where they are, call for help and do not leave them unattended.

- **LIE CHILD FLAT WITH LEGS RAISED** – they can be propped up if struggling to breathe but this should be for as short a time as possible.
- CALL **999** and state **ANAPHYLAXIS and follow their instructions**
- **USE ADRENALINE AUTO-INJECTOR WHEN ISTRUCTED BY 999 WITHOUT DELAY** and note the time given. AAIs should be given into the muscle in the outer thigh. Specific instructions vary by brand – always follow the instructions on the device.
- If there is no improvement after five minutes, administer a second AAI.
- If no signs of life commence CPR.
- Call parent/carer as soon as possible.

Whilst you are waiting for the ambulance, keep the child where they are. Do not stand them up, or sit them in a chair, even if they are feeling better. This could lower their blood pressure drastically, causing their heart to stop.

All students must go to hospital for observation after anaphylaxis even if they appear to have recovered as a reaction can reoccur after treatment.

5. Supply, storage and care of medication

For students with a Health Care Plan or allergy action plan requiring an EpiPen there should be an anaphylaxis kit which is kept safe, not locked away and **accessible to all staff.**

Medication should be stored in a suitable container and clearly labelled with the student's name. The student's medication storage container should contain:

- Two AAIs i.e. EpiPen® or Jext® or Emerade®
- An up-to-date Health Care Plan or allergy action plan
- Antihistamine as tablets or syrup (if included on the plan)
- Spoon if required
- Asthma inhaler (if included on allergy action plan).

It is the responsibility of the child's parents to ensure that the anaphylaxis kit is up-to-date and clearly labelled, however the member of the attendance team with responsibility for medical needs will check medication kept at school on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.

Parents can subscribe to expiry alerts for the relevant AAIs their child is prescribed, to make sure they can get replacement devices in good time.

Storage
AAIs should be stored at room temperature, protected from direct sunlight and temperature extremes.

Disposal
AAIs are single use only and must be disposed of as sharps. Used AAIs should be given to ambulance paramedics on arrival or disposed of in the sharps bin.

6. Spare adrenaline auto-injectors in school

The school has purchased spare **AAIs for emergency use for children/staff who are at risk of anaphylaxis,** if their own devices are not available or not working (e.g. because they are out of date).

We hold spare pens which are kept in the school's main front office, the attendance office and the food department These are kept safely, not locked away and **accessible and known to all staff.**

The School Business Manager is responsible for checking the spare medication is in date on a termly basis and to replace as needed.

Written parental permission for use of the spare AAIs is included in the student's Health Care Plan or allergy action plan.

If anaphylaxis is suspected **in an undiagnosed individual** call the emergency services and state, you suspect ANAPHYLAXIS. Follow advice from them as to whether administration of the spare AAI is appropriate.

7. Staff Training

The School Business Manager is responsible for coordinating staff anaphylaxis training. All staff regularly complete allergy awareness and anaphylaxis training. Training includes:

- Knowing the common allergens and triggers of allergy
- Spotting the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and anaphylaxis. Early recognition of symptoms is key, including knowing when to call for emergency services
- Administering emergency treatment (including AAIs) in the event of anaphylaxis – knowing how and when to administer the medication/device
- Measures to reduce the risk of a child having an allergic reaction e.g. allergen avoidance, knowing who is responsible for what
- Managing allergy action plans and ensuring these are up to date

8. Inclusion and safeguarding

We are committed to ensuring that all children with medical conditions, including allergies, are properly supported in school so that they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential.

9. Catering

All food businesses (including school caterers) must follow the Food Information Regulations 2014 which states that allergen information relating to the 'Top 14' allergens must be available for all food products.

The school menu is available for parents to view on the school website. Listed ingredients, including highlighted allergens, can be found displayed outside the school kitchen and on our school website. Any menu changes are communicated to parents as soon as is practically possible.

The catering team will be warned of any allergies of students via an alert on the till system.

Parents/carers of children with diagnosed food allergies are encouraged to meet with the pastoral team to discuss their child's needs.

The School adheres to the following Department of Health guidance recommendations:

- Students with allergies should be encouraged to check with catering staff before selecting their lunch choice.
- Where food is provided by the school, staff are educated about how to read labels for food allergens and instructed about measures to prevent cross contamination during the handling, preparation and serving of food. Examples include preparing food for children with food allergies first; careful cleaning (using warm soapy water) of food preparation areas and utensils.
- Use of food in crafts, cooking classes, science experiments and special events (e.g. school fairs, assemblies, cultural events) needs to be considered and may need to be restricted/risk assessed depending on the allergies of particular children and their age.

10. School trips

Staff leading school trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies and medication for students. Students without their required medication will not be able to attend.

All the activities on the school trip will be risk assessed to see if they pose a threat to students with allergies and alternative activities planned to ensure inclusion.

Staff at the venue for an overnight school trip should be briefed early on that a child with allergies is attending and will need appropriate food (if provided by the venue).

Sporting Excursions

Children with allergies will have equal opportunity to attend sports excursions. The school will ensure that the P.E. teachers are fully aware of the situation. The school/site being visited will be notified that a member of the team has an allergy when arranging the fixture/event. A member of staff trained in first aid will accompany the team.

11. Allergy awareness

A 'whole school awareness of allergies' is a much better approach, as it ensures teachers, students and all other staff are aware of what allergies are, the importance of avoiding the students' allergens, the signs & symptoms, how to deal with allergic reactions and to ensure policies and procedures are in place to minimise risk.