



ALLERGIES POLICY

1.0 Introduction

Goodmayes Primary School recognises that a number of community members (pupils, parents, visitors and staff) may suffer from potentially life-threatening allergies and we believe that all allergies should be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional and appropriate way.

Goodmayes Primary School is committed to a whole school approach to the care and management of those members of the school community suffering from specific allergies.

Goodmayes Primary School's position is not to guarantee a completely allergen free environment, but rather to minimise the risk of exposure, encourage self-responsibility and plan for effective response to possible emergencies.

2.0 What is an allergy?

An allergy is a hypersensitivity to a foreign substance that is normally harmless, but which produces an immune response reaction in some people. This can be a minor response such as localised itching which may require the administration of antihistamine medication such as Chlorphenamine Maleate (e.g. 'Piriton') or Cetirizine Hydrochloride (e.g. 'Piriteze'), or it can be a severe response known as *anaphylaxis* or *anaphylactic shock*.

2.1 Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is potentially life threatening. It is often rapid in onset with symptoms which often include an itchy rash, throat or tongue swelling, shortness of breath, vomiting and light-headedness; if symptoms progress, it may cause low blood pressure leading to collapse. Anaphylaxis occurs when an allergen enters the bloodstream, causing the release of chemicals throughout the body to protect it from the foreign substance. Common triggers of an anaphylactic reaction include foods such as nuts, shellfish, sesame seeds and kiwi and non-food triggers such as insect stings or bites, drugs, latex, detergents, perfumes, blood products and even exercise.

In the 20 years to 2012 there was a 615% increase in the rate of hospital admissions for anaphylaxis in the UK (Turner, Paul J., et al, 2015) and there are approximately 20 anaphylaxis deaths per year in the UK according to a report by the Resus Council in 2008.

2.2 Epinephrine auto-injectors (Adrenaline Auto-Injectors or AAI's)

Epinephrine (adrenaline) is a medication used in emergencies to treat anaphylaxis. It acts quickly to improve breathing, stimulate the heart, raise a dropping blood pressure, reverse hives, and reduce swelling of the face, lips, and throat.



EpiPen is the major brand of adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) prescribed to treat anaphylaxis. **Emerade** and **Jext** are other brands that may be prescribed by medical professionals.

3.0 Nuts

An allergic reaction to nuts is the most common high-risk allergy, and as such demands more rigorous controls throughout the school environment.

Goodmayes Primary School is a 'nut-free zone' and as such expects that:

- ISS do not provide school meals which contain nuts in their menu recipes.
- Planned curriculum activities involving cookery or experimentation with food items do not include nuts or products containing nuts.
- Staff do not bring in lunch or snack items which contain nuts.
- Parents / carers do not include food containing nuts in their child's packed lunches.
- Parents / carers do not provide birthday treats for their child's class which contain nuts.

4.0 Aim

The intent of this policy is to minimise the risk of any child suffering allergy-induced anaphylaxis or more minor allergic reaction whilst at school.

The underlying principles of this policy include:

- The establishment of effective risk management practices to minimise pupil, staff, parent / carer and visitor exposure to known triggers.
- Staff training and education to ensure effective emergency response to any allergic reaction situation.

This policy applies to all members of the school community.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities:

5.1 Redbridge LA

- Provides indemnity for teachers and other school staff who volunteer to administer medication or EpiPens to pupils with allergies who need help.
- Supports its schools through the School Nurse Service in setting up Individual Health Care Plans (IHCPs) for pupils with allergies. These are mainly Allergy Action Plans which parents obtain via their GP or hospital/clinic.



5.2 School

- Will hold a register of pupils with anaphylaxis or known allergies and request that parents / carers complete the medical questionnaire.
- Will facilitate, and in partnership with the school nurse and parents, complete an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) for pupils identified through the completed questionnaire or other means as having anaphylaxis or allergic reactions. Established IHCPs will be reviewed at least annually. This is known as an 'Allergy Action Plan'.
- Will ensure key school staff have reviewed and familiarised themselves with the medical information contained within the Allergy Action Plans of their pupils.
- Will take the appropriate emergency measures for dealing with an anaphylactic attack as outlined in the annual staff training session and individual Allergy Action Plans.
- Will inform parent / carer if a pupil has a 'minor' allergic reaction, where medication has been administered as per the Allergy Action Plan.
- Will communicate any concerns school staff may have to parents/carers about their child's allergy care.
- Will ensure EpiPens are kept in a safe but readily accessible place in the class medical boxes and Medical Room. These are also accessible at play times. The Medical Administrator is responsible for monitoring the contents of the medical boxes.
- Will ensure spare EpiPens are stored in the Medical Room and are readily accessible in the event of an emergency or off-site trip.
- Will take reasonable steps to reduce potential trigger factors influencing allergic reactions within the school environment.
- Will display discreet information in all classrooms to ensure non-class based and supply staff can clearly identify the children with allergies.
- Will display discreet photographs in the kitchen to ensure catering staff can clearly identify the children with allergies.
- Will ensure Midday Assistants carry photographs of all pupils with allergies for immediate identification purposes.
- Will ensure that risk assessments for school trips or other off-site activities include information pertaining to pupils with anaphylaxis or allergies.
- Will ensure that pupils participating in PE or going off the school site for school trips or other off-site activities take their EpiPens and / or medication with them.



- Will allow the wearing of a medic-alert bracelet at School (where this is provided).
- Will make referrals, at parent request, for 'special diet menus' to ISS for qualifying¹ pupils that require tailored menus.

¹ An Allergy Action Plan or supporting Consultant / GP letter is required to accompany all referrals.

From 1st October 2017 schools have been allowed to purchase adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) devices without a prescription, for emergency use on children who are at risk of anaphylaxis but whose own device is not available or not working.

In the event of a pupil needing to use the emergency AAI, school:

- Will have written parental consent for use of the emergency AAI.
- Will ensure the emergency AAI is only used by children with symptoms of anaphylaxis and with written parental consent for its use.
- Will keep a record of the use of the emergency AAI as required by 'Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions'.
- Will inform parents / carers that their child has used the emergency AAI and why (e.g. their child's own AAI was missing / broken / empty / expired).
- Will keep a copy of the register of pupils with anaphylaxis, with the emergency AAI.

NOTE: Adrenaline is considered a life-saving medication to treat anaphylaxis. As a result, if an emergency AAI has been used and parent / carer has not replaced their child's own AAIs promptly, their child may be asked to remain at home until School has received the required medication.

5.3 Redbridge Primary Care Trust / Children's Trust

- Ensures that school nurses have access to training on anaphylaxis / allergy care to equip them with the skills and knowledge to provide support, education, and training for school / nursery staff, pupils, and parents on anaphylaxis / allergy care.
- The school nurse is provided with the necessary resources to support the training of school staff (e.g. leaflets/ PowerPoint presentations).
- The school nurse will check all returned allergy questionnaires and identify those pupils who require an Allergy Action Plan and, in partnership with the school and the parent, arrange a suitable date to set up the IHCP in school (or the school can ask parents to get their GP to complete it).
- The school nurse will work in partnership with parents, pupils, head teachers, school staff and other key healthcare professionals as required.



5.4 The Pupil with Anaphylaxis

- Should have easy access to their AAI at all times (Class Medical Box).
- Should, if possible, inform a member of staff if he/she becomes unwell at school.
- Should care for their AAI in a safe manner.

5.5 The Parent

- Must inform the school if their child has been diagnosed with anaphylaxis or allergies, along with providing written advice from a medical practitioner/ Allergy Action Plan which explains the condition, defines the allergy triggers and any required medication.
- Should complete the Medical History questionnaire and return it to the school office. This needs to be done at all induction/admission meetings.
- Should attend any meetings about their child's IHCP or relating to their medical condition.
- Must inform the school of any relevant changes to their child's medical status or changes to medication.
- Must ensure **two AAIs**, in the original packaging (unopened) have been supplied to the school, with their child's full details clearly labelled on the pharmacy label.
- Must complete the school's parental consent form (which also includes consent for the use of the emergency AAI).
- Must ensure their child's AAIs at school are in date, in good condition and replaced as and when necessary.
- Must communicate any concern about their child's allergy care in school to the head teacher or class teacher and the Medical Administrator as soon as possible.

6.0 Related School Procedure

- Policy on Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- **Appendix 1:** Consent to Administer Medication form
- **Appendix 2:** Medical History Questionnaire



References

- Anaphylaxis.org.uk
- Allergyuk.org
- DfE 'Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions'
- DfE 'Managing Medicines in School & Early Year Settings'
- Department of Health 'Guidance on the use of adrenaline auto-injectors in schools'

Policy date: Spring Term 2023

Review date: Spring Term 2025 (or earlier if necessary)