

Policy for Managing Nut and Other Allergies

Introduction

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction at the extreme end of the allergic spectrum, affecting the entire body, and can occur within minutes of exposure. The main causes are attributed to nuts, seeds and seafood. This policy focuses on the management of nut and similar allergies.

We do not claim to be a 'nut-free' school. The Anaphylaxis Campaign advises that this is a pragmatic approach, for the following reasons:

- It would be impossible to provide an absolute guarantee that the School is nut free, given that boys regularly bring in food from home and food items can be bought on the way to School;
- There would be a risk that boys with allergies might be led into a false sense of security;
- The nut ban would be seen as a precedent for demands to ban other potentially 'risky' foods;
- There is a strong case to be argued that children with food allergies will develop a better awareness and understanding of how to manage their allergies if they grow up in an environment where allergens are present, but are, at the same time, restricted and monitored as much as is reasonably possible.
- Pupils who are known to have food allergies (e.g. nuts, egg, milk, gluten, fish, molluscs and crustaceans) are introduced to key members of the catering team on their first day at the School and are encouraged to seek guidance from catering staff - on a daily basis, if necessary - on what they can have, from the menu, for lunch.

Catering

Within the catering facilities at Newcastle School for Boys, we take precautions to minimise the risk of anaphylaxis and other allergenic reactions occurring.

It is the policy of our caterers, Sodexo, not to use whole peanuts or tree nuts (in the catering services at Newcastle School for Boys, recognising the potentially severe allergic reaction for some people. We never knowingly use any whole nuts (including pine nuts and peanuts) in our kitchens.

- Catering staff receive training at the start of each term in respect of managing food allergies, intolerances and special diets.
- Food preparation staff take precautions to reduce the risk of cross-contamination and never change, update or embellish agreed recipes without going through correct menu planning and communication processes.

Recipes are analysed and ingredient allergens contained therein are recorded. Dish names and descriptions reflect potential allergenic ingredients.

It should be acknowledged that, given current food manufacturing processes, it is impossible to guarantee that all products will be free from possible 'traces of nuts' and other allergens.

EU allergen regulations, effective from December 2014, relating to pre-packaged food and 'loose' food offered in retail and other food outlets require food service operators to provide information on fourteen specified allergens (three of which are nuts, peanuts and sesame). Our commitment to flagging selected allergens on the service counter menu cards now extends to the additional newly prescribed allergens when present in the food we serve. We keep detailed allergen information on all our recipes and other food and drink items, enabling catering staff to be able to provide allergen information whenever asked.

Whilst most allergic reactions are the result of food ingestion, we recognise too that severe allergic reactions can occur as a result of individuals being susceptible to airborne allergens. Allergic reactions can also be triggered by touching surfaces - such as computer or piano keyboards - which may have been inadvertently contaminated.

The success of minimising anaphylaxis risk - and all other allergenic reactions - requires the co-operation of boys, staff and parents. Parents are asked not to provide pupils with snacks and cakes (birthdays are potentially high risk occasions) that contain nuts and sesame seeds. A written reminder will be communicated to parents at least once each year.

It is essential that the School has full details of all of our boys' allergies in the form of a completed Sodexo food allergy request form. The details of the allergy must be supported by either a doctor's letter or a letter from a dietician, highlighting the child's diagnosis and any other relevant information, such as a diet sheet. This information is requested by the School and must be provided by parents when their son joins the School and then updated by parents if allergies are discovered at a later stage. The information will be shared with Sodexo's dietetic team for guidance and approval. Where appropriate, the School should be provided with a treatment plan and EpiPen, clearly marked with the boy's name.

Within the parameters of confidentiality, the School provides to its caterers department and other relevant parties a list of names and photographs of boys with severe medical conditions, including severe allergies.

When the School provides packed lunches for trips away, catering staff are provided with a list of boys who have allergies and specially labelled packed lunches are provided, accordingly.

When boys take part in single or multi-day school trips, participating boys' allergies, their respective treatments and other associated requirements are factored into the planning process.

Whilst the School will exercise all due care and attention to minimise risk, boys are expected to self-manage their allergy, too, having an appropriate understanding according to their age of:

- Foods which are safe or unsafe;
- Their specific symptoms, if an allergic reaction occurs;
- Their responsibility to carry their EpiPen;
- Who to advise if and when an allergic reaction happens;
- Letting friends and staff know about their allergy, in case of emergency;
- When to seek guidance (and from whom) if in doubt.

Anaphylaxis protocol

How do I recognise an anaphylaxis reaction and what action should I take?

Early symptoms include:

- Raised, itchy, rash anywhere on the body;
- Runny nose and watery eyes;
- Nausea and vomiting;
- Dizziness.

Danger signs include:

- Swelling of the lips, tongue and throat;
- Cough, wheeze, tightness of chest or shortness of breath;
- Sudden collapse or unconsciousness.

Treatment will depend on the severity of the reaction

For mild symptoms, Piriton or an inhaler may be given as first aid.

For severe symptoms (see emergency procedure, below) an EpiPen device should be used. This should be administered into the thigh muscle (can be delivered through clothing) and will allow the adrenaline to quickly reverse the effects of the allergic reaction. The child should then be taken to hospital.

Emergency procedure

The following procedure must be adopted:

- Call an ambulance;
- Send a responsible person to the School office and ask for a first aider;
- Monitor the boy's condition carefully;

- Administer the EpiPen:
 - Remove packaging and pull off the blue safety cap from the EpiPen;
 - Hold the device about 10 cm from the outer thigh;
 - Inject - swing and jab the orange tip firmly against the outer thigh and listen for an audible click from the mechanism - hold in place for 10 seconds;
 - The orange tip extends on removal;
 - Massage the area for 10 seconds.
- Monitor the child's progress - a second dose of EpiPen may be required after 10 minutes if the condition has not improved and help has still not arrived;
- When the ambulance crew arrives, ascertain where they will be taking the boy and give all used EpiPens to the ambulance crew for safe disposal;
- Contact the boy's parents, guardian or next of kin and advise them to meet at the hospital, if they are not in the immediate vicinity;
- Accompany the boy to hospital if the parents have not arrived.

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