

# Allergies in Schools Guidance

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It's not just food substances that people can have allergies from. It can be things such as – but not limited to:

- Foods – peanuts, tree nuts, milk, shellfish
- Environmental – pollen, dust, mold
- Insects/Animals – bees, wasps, dogs, cats, rabbits
- Medications – penicillin
- Latex – gloves, balloons
- Household chemicals – perfumes, cleaning products

Schools need to be prepared for pupils who have allergies, this includes the production of a policy, outlining procedures, and ensuring each affected child has a regularly reviewed Individual Healthcare Plan including that staff receive sufficient training if necessary.

Although schools have a responsibility to ensure children with allergies are looked after, we need to enforce the importance of communication from parents to inform schools of their children's allergies. Schools then need to think about how that information is safely stored, updated and communicated to the relevant school staff.

## Food allergies

Around 2–5% of children in the UK live with a food allergy—and 1 in 5 severe allergic reactions to food happen while a child is at school.

The [standards for school food in England](#) allow schools and colleges to substitute items from their usual menus if certain items are in short supply.

If you're making changes to your menus, or substituting food products due to supply changes or for religious and cultural reasons, you must make sure you can continue to meet any special dietary needs. This includes pupils who cannot eat certain ingredients due to an allergy or other medical condition. If you need to adapt your menus at short notice, you must make sure that the needs of these pupils are still met.

## Legal requirements for schools and caterers

Under [section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#), schools have a duty to support pupils with medical conditions.

The statutory guidance on [supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#) explains your responsibilities. This could include ensuring that a child with an allergy is able to eat a school lunch.

The [Food Information Regulations 2014](#) require all food businesses, including school caterers, to show allergen ingredients information for the food they serve. This makes it easier for schools to identify the food that pupils with allergies can and cannot eat.

## Practical measures and advice

If making changes to menus etc you must ensure you continue to meet these pupils' needs, you should:

- check any product changes with your food suppliers
- ask your caterers to read labels and product information before using a product
- use the [dishes and their allergen content menu chart](#) to list the ingredients in all your meals
- ensure allergen ingredients remain identifiable

The Food Standards Agency has produced [guidance for food businesses](#) to help with this.

## Environmental and animal allergies

Be aware of children with environmental allergies, for those who have allergies, they must have an Individual Healthcare Plan created between parents and school. These environmental elements could include things such as the tree types that are present on site or hanging over from neighbouring properties. Be aware of plants and trees on site and include them within a risk assessment.

Having animals in school is becoming more popular with animals permanently in school and some having therapy dogs visit school regularly. Whilst this isn't usually a H&S issue when the correct risk assessments, policies and procedures are in place. We need to ensure we are considering the effect these animals may have on staff and pupils who have allergies. This will include things such as:

- The need for regular/good housing keeping
- Additional cleaning elements and/or equipment/products or required PPE
- Waste disposal
- The cleaning and hygiene processors in place
- Control measures needed for children/staff with known animal/environmental allergies

## From September 2026

The Department for Education will publish new mandatory statutory guidance on allergy safety.

This guidance will:-

- Require every school to hold spare adrenaline auto-injectors such as EpiPens
- Make allergy and anaphylaxis training mandatory for all staff
- Ensure every pupil with allergies has an action plan
- Introduce a whole-school allergy policy

The message from clinicians is clear, if you suspect it COULD be an allergic reaction, don't delay – use an allergy pen as soon as possible.

No harm will come if the pen is given when it isn't an allergic reaction – but the consequences of delaying can be harmful, or fatal. Even if a child does not have their own EpiPen, it is advised the school keeps spares for any children 'at risk'. For more information on this visit [government guidance](#).

## Dealing with a severe reaction

The NHS has advice on [food allergies](#). It contains information on symptoms and treatment. It also has more detailed advice on the [treatment of anaphylactic reactions](#).

Read the Anaphylaxis UK advice on [what to do in an emergency](#).

All primary and secondary schools can buy adrenaline auto-injectors from a pharmacy, without a prescription, for use in emergencies. Read the Department of Health and Social Care's guidance on [using emergency adrenaline auto-injectors in schools](#).

Most allergic reactions are less severe. Check the [NHS advice on symptoms](#).

## Other resources

The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation has launched [Allergy School](#), offering free resources to support both staff and pupils to ensure children with food allergies feel safe and supported. The resources are currently aimed for use in early years settings, primary schools and out-of-school clubs and groups.

Allergy UK has [fact sheets and resources for schools](#) covering a wide range of allergies.

Anaphylaxis UK has advice to help schools [manage severe allergic conditions](#).

LACA, the lead body for catering in education, has produced a [good practice and risk assessment guide \(PDF, 413KB\)](#) for caterers, to help manage allergens safely.

You can find a model to help develop individual health care plans in annex A of the [supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#) guidance.

## Useful Links

[Allergy guidance for schools - GOV.UK](#)

[For Schools and Childcare Settings | Allergy UK | National Charity](#)

[Downloads | Anaphylaxis UK](#)

## Lincolnshire County Council (LCC)

[Health and Safety for Schools Webpage](#)

## Contacts

LCC Corporate Health and Safety Team – [corporatehealthandsafety@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:corporatehealthandsafety@lincolnshire.gov.uk)