BIRKENHEAD
SCHOOL

Allergies and Anaphylaxis Policy

Reviewed by School Nurse & DSL: October 2026
Reviewed by Governor: Nicky Thorp, September 2026
Next review: August 2027

The school recognises that effective allergy management is achieved through awareness, training and robust procedures rather than reliance on a completely allergen-free environment.

An allergy is a reaction by 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 severe reaction called anaphylaxis. In anaphylaxis a swollen tongue or throat can cause difficulty speaking / breathing, resulting in wheezing, coughing and a lack of air which can cause fainting/dizziness, collapse or loss of consciousness. Anaphylaxis is potentially fatal and is a medical emergency.

This policy focusses on the need to reduce the risk of harm from food allergies in particular while also recognising other potential causes of anaphylaxis (insect stings, latex, drugs, exercise).
Where necessary the management of an individual's condition will be outlined in their own Allergy Action Plan, circulated to those who need to know of the risks involved and control measures required.

Allergy Management

Birkenhead School is an allergen-aware and nut-restricted school.

We are committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all pupils, including those with food allergies and those at risk of anaphylaxis. In line with current allergy management guidance and emerging national expectations following developments in allergy awareness legislation and practice, the school adopts a proactive approach to allergy management through staff training, individual healthcare plans, risk assessments, clear communication and appropriate emergency procedures.

Whilst every reasonable effort is made to minimise the risk of exposure to allergens, it is not possible to guarantee a completely allergen-free environment. For this reason, the school operates an allergen-aware approach and actively discourages nuts and nut-containing products from being brought onto site. The school does not intentionally purchase or provide products containing nuts and seeks to avoid products carrying precautionary allergen statements ("may contain nuts") wherever reasonably possible.

The school's approach is based on awareness, vigilance, risk reduction and partnership working with pupils, parents, healthcare professionals and staff to ensure allergies are managed effectively across the school community.

1. **Food Allergens**

The 14 allergens required to be declared under Food Standards are:

Celery	Lupin	Sesame
Cereals (containing Gluten)	Milk	Soybeans
Crustaceans (e.g. prawns, crab, lobster)	Molluscs (e.g. mussels, oysters)	Sulphur Dioxide / sulphites
Eggs	Mustard	Tree Nuts (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, etc.)
Fish	Peanuts	

Allergen-aware and Nut-Restricted Environment

Birkenhead School operates as an allergen-aware and nut-restricted school. Whilst it is not possible to guarantee a completely nut-free environment, the school takes reasonable and proportionate steps to reduce the risk of exposure to nuts and nut-containing products for pupils, staff and visitors with allergies.
To support this approach:

- Nuts and nut-containing products should not be brought into school by pupils, staff, visitors or external providers.
- The school catering team will not intentionally purchase, prepare or provide food products that contain nuts as an ingredient.
- Where reasonably practicable, the school will seek to minimise use of products carrying precautionary allergen statements; however, these statements are widely used by manufacturers and cannot be fully excluded.
- All food-related activities, fundraising events, celebrations, educational activities and PTA events must consider allergen risks and take reasonable steps to minimise potential exposure.
- Appropriate risk assessments will be undertaken where food is being provided or sold within school.
- Clear allergen information should be available wherever possible to enable pupils, parents and staff to make informed decisions.
- Staff must remain aware that pupils with allergies may be present during lessons, trips, clubs, events and dining arrangements, and should follow individual healthcare plans where applicable.
- The school will continue to work closely with parents, pupils, healthcare professionals and catering providers to support children with allergies safely within the school environment.

The school's approach is based on awareness, communication, education and sensible risk management. Whilst every effort is made to minimise risks, all members of the school community share responsibility for supporting a safe environment for those living with allergies.

2. **Roles and Responsibilities**

The management of pupils with allergies forms part of the pastoral responsibilities of the School and therefore involves all with pastoral roles as well as the Catering Team and a general awareness among all staff. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) will ensure the following occurs:

- Relevant staff are suitably trained and informed to prevent the assist pupils with allergies or who suffer anaphylaxis
- Consider the sharing of necessary information on an individual pupil's allergies with other staff, third parties and fellow students where this is important to minimise the risk.
- Ensuring that specific risk assessments are undertaken where high levels of risk are posed to individual pupils as a result of their medical conditions, and that these are monitored and reviewed; and that
- This policy, and its constituent parts, is regularly reviewed

Leadership and Governance

- The designated Senior Leadership Team leads for allergy management are Graham Murdoch and Danny Byrne. They are responsible for overseeing implementation of this policy and ensuring appropriate systems, training and support are in place.
- The nominated Governor with oversight of allergy management is Nicky Thorp.

Staff responsibilities

- All staff will complete annual online allergy awareness and anaphylaxis training to support recognition, prevention and emergency management of allergic reactions. Training will include awareness of common allergens, recognising the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis, understanding individual healthcare plans, and the safe administration of Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs) where appropriate.
- Teachers and other staff in charge of pupils are expected to always use their best endeavours, particularly in emergencies, to secure the welfare of the pupils at the school.
- Staff should be aware of the pupils in their care who have known allergies as an allergic reaction could occur at any time and not just at mealtimes.
- Staff supervising younger pupils with prescribed Adrenaline AutoInjectors (AAIs) (who are not yet able to carry their own), will take responsibility for storing the AAIs with ready access.
- Staff undertaking food-related lessons or activities have responsibility for checking the food allergy status for all the pupils/students involved and taking appropriate precautions as required.

School Nurse responsibilities

- Supported by the School's Admissions staff, they will ensure that the School's information management system is up-to-date with information on pupil allergies supplied by parents, and supply such to the School's Catering Team.
- They will consider the Allergen Risk Control Matrix and prompt the relevant actions as a result.
- They will ensure that the School maintains a supply of in-date spare Adrenaline Auto-Injectors. (Spare AAIs are located at the: Dining Hall, Medical Centre, Bushell Hall, Sixth Form canteen, McAllester Field).
- They will advise colleagues as required on allergy information and precautionary measures.

School Catering Team responsibilities

- Catering staff ensure that food is prepared in accordance with the relevant food standards and legislation.
- While we do not knowingly use nuts or sesame seeds in any of the food we prepare and serve, it is unable to guarantee that dishes/products served are free all allergens including, from nuts, nut derivatives, sesame and sesame derivatives, due to the use of precautionary allergy statements such as 'may contain' which are used by our suppliers.

Visitors, Contractors and External Providers

Visitors, contractors and external providers are expected to support the School's allergen-aware and nut-restricted approach where their activities involve food or potential allergen exposure. Where relevant:

- Food brought onto site should follow school allergy expectations and allergen information should be available where possible.
- External providers involved in food-related activities may be asked to provide risk assessments and allergen information in advance.
- Staff organising events should consider pupils with allergies and ensure appropriate precautions are in place.
- Visitors and contractors should follow staff direction in the event of an allergy emergency.

Whilst the School takes reasonable steps to reduce risk, an allergen-free environment cannot be guaranteed and safe management relies on shared responsibility.

Parent responsibilities

- On entry to the School, the parents are required to notify the school of any allergies and to complete the Birkenhead school Food Allergy Form and Food Allergen Risk Level Matrix.
- Parents of children with Allergy Action Plans must supply the school with a copy, (these should be completed with the assistance of a GP/Allergy Specialist (more information is available from the School Nurse)
- Parents remain responsible for checking suitability of food choices with their child where age and development allow. The school cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment
- Parents are responsible for ensuring any medication for the pupil is supplied to the School, and remains "in date" with replacement/s as necessary.
- Keep the School up-to-date with any changes in allergy management, including reviews of any Allergy Action Plan

Pupil/Student responsibilities

- Pupils/Students will be encouraged to have good awareness of their allergies and symptoms.
- Pupils of sufficient age and maturity prescribed AAIs will be encouraged to take responsibility for carrying their own prescribed AAIs them on their person at all times with sufficient training and confidence on their administration.
- Allergy awareness for students will form part of the planning for PSHE sessions

3. **Individual Healthcare Plans (IHCPs)**

Any pupil identified as being at risk of anaphylaxis or requiring specific allergy management arrangements will have an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP) in place. The IHCP will be developed in partnership with parents/carers and informed by medical advice and/or an Allergy Action Plan where provided.

- The IHCP will clearly outline:

  - The pupil's diagnosed allergy/allergies and known triggers
  - Typical signs and symptoms of reaction and escalation concerns
  - Medication requirements, including location and administration arrangements
  - Emergency procedures and escalation pathways
  - Reasonable adjustments required to support safe inclusion in school life, including educational visits, food-related activities and extracurricular activities
  - Arrangements for communication with staff and relevant stakeholders

- IHCPs will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if there is a change in medical need, treatment, allergy status or following an allergic reaction. Relevant staff will be informed of the contents of the plan on a need-to-know basis to support safe care whilst maintaining pupil dignity and confidentiality.

4. **Emergency Response**

- All staff should be aware that allergic reactions can progress rapidly and prompt recognition and response is essential.
- If a pupil is suspected of experiencing an allergic reaction:
  Remain with the pupil and seek assistance immediately.
  Follow the pupil's Individual Healthcare Plan and/or Allergy Action Plan where available.
  Administer prescribed medication, including an Adrenaline Auto-Injector (AAI), without delay where indicated.
  Call 999 immediately and state that anaphylaxis is suspected if symptoms are severe, progressing

or adrenaline has been administered.
Contact parents/carers once emergency treatment is underway and it is safe to do so.
Continue to monitor the pupil until emergency services arrive.
Record, review and debrief following any allergic reaction or administration of emergency medication to identify any learning or changes required to support future care.

- Where a spare school AAI is used, this will be in accordance with current legislation, school procedures and documented parental consent arrangements.

5. **Medication – Adrenaline Autoinjectors (AAIs) etc.**

Medication will be stored in a red medical bag clearly labelled with the pupil's name and will contain:
Two AAIs (e.g. EpiPen® or Jext® or Emerade®)
An up-to-date allergy action plan
Antihistamine as tablets or syrup (if included on allergy action plan)
Asthma inhaler (if included on allergy action plan).

6. **Nuts**

The School intends to keep nuts and all products including nuts as ingredients off-site as far as is practicable.

The School does not knowingly use nuts or sesame seeds in any of the food we prepare and serve, it is unable to guarantee that dishes/products served are free all allergens including, from nuts, nut derivatives, sesame and sesame derivatives. For this reason, food suppliers often still use precautionary allergen statements such as "may contain nuts", "may contain traces" and "produced in a factory that handles nuts".

7. **Off-Site Activities, including Trips & Fixtures**

Staff organising the activity/trip/visit are provided with a list of pupils with relevant medical needs, including those known to be at risk of anaphylaxis.

Older students who have been prescribed an AAI should carry their **two Prescribed AAIs** (plus inhaler/antihistamine, where relevant) with them on all trips and fixtures, in line with current MHRA/Government guidance.

For younger pupils, the class teacher will give the Prescribed AAIs (plus inhaler/antihistamine, where relevant) to the member of staff supervising the activity/trip/visit.

Students prescribed a reliever inhaler must have their **own inhaler immediately available** throughout the activity. As an additional School safety measure for off-site activities, students should also have access to a **second reliever inhaler where practicable**.

These requirements must be considered as part of trip/fixture planning and included in the relevant risk assessments.

Appendices

APPENDIX A - Allergen Control Matrix

The School uses the following Risk Levels to consider its food allergen management and to identify special dietary requirements. The Risk Levels are defined below:

Risk Level	Risk Description	Risk Controls

Level 1	The individual has a severe life-threatening allergy/ anaphylactic shock. They do not need to be in direct contact with diagnosed allergens e.g. airborne or have multiple sensitivities beyond the 14 major allergens (listed earlier).	A bespoke risk assessment and risk controls to be agreed in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
Level 2	The individual has a severe life-threatening allergy/ anaphylactic shock if in contact with the diagnosed allergen or more than 3 sensitivities/ allergens.	A bespoke risk assessment and risk controls to be agreed which may include: • Food prepared separately in designated area. • Food stored in separate hotplate/ separate dedicated container. • Persons preparing or serving food change their gloves beforehand. • Food plated with separate utensils. • All food that is provided is recorded and double check by an additional member of the team.
Level 3	The individual has a severe life-threatening allergy/ anaphylactic shock if they ingest the diagnosed allergen	A bespoke risk assessment and risk controls to be agreed which may include: • Food prepared separately in designated area. • Food stored in separate hotplate/ separate dedicated container. • Persons preparing or serving food change their gloves beforehand. • Food plated with separate utensils. • All food that is provided is recorded and double check by an additional member of the team.
Level 4	The individual becomes very unwell if they ingest a food, diagnosed as allergic or intolerant but does not go into anaphylaxis e.g. coeliac.	Information on the ingredients readily available • Ensure that there is a good variety of suitable choices at each serving period • Food stored on separate hotplate/ in separate container • Persons preparing food change their gloves beforehand • Food plated with separate utensils
Level 5	The individual experiences minor ill health if they ingest food which they are known to be intolerant (e.g. nausea).	Information on the ingredients readily available. • Ensure that there is a good variety of suitable choices at each serving period.
Level 6	The individual experiences no ill-health after they ingest their food but wishes to avoid certain food for religious, cultural or moral / beliefs reasons.	Ensure that there is a good variety of suitable choices at each serving period.

‘Spare’ adrenaline auto-injectors in school

Birkenhead School has purchased spare AAIs for emergency use in children who are at risk of anaphylaxis, but their own devices are not available or not working (e.g. because they are out of date).

Spare AAIs should only be used for pupils with both written parental consent and a prescribed AAI.

These are stored in a red 'Emergency Anaphylaxis Response Kit', kept safely, not locked away and accessible and known to all staff.

Birkenhead School holds spare pens which are kept in the following locations:

- Dining Hall
- Medical Centre
- Sixth Form Canteen
- Bushell Hall
- Mac Field

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

Written parental permission for use of the spare AAIs is included in the pupil's allergy action plan.

Reviewed: School Nurse, September 2026

Reviewed by Governor: Nicky Thorp, September 2026

To be reviewed August 2027