Allergy Policy and Procedure

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Purpose

To minimise the risk of any individually suffering an allergic reaction whilst at school or attending any school related activity. To ensure staff are properly prepared to recognise and manage allergic reactions should they arise.

Links with other policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Echo Emergency procedure

Introduction

In line with Benedict's Law, Heathfield Community College is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all children, young people, staff, and visitors with allergies. Recognising the serious and potentially life-threatening risk posed by anaphylaxis. This dedicated policy establishes robust risk-mitigation measures and emergency response protocols.
Heathfield Community College has a whole school awareness approach, because it ensures all staff and students are aware of what allergies are, the importance of avoiding
the individuals' allergens, the signs & symptoms, how to deal with allergic reactions and to ensure procedures are in place to minimise risk of exposure.

Coeliac disease and food intolerance can present symptoms which are similar to those of food allergy; it is important that Coeliac disease and food intolerance is be managed through dietary avoidance, but these conditions do not pose a risk of anaphylaxis and so they are not within this allergy safety policy.

Eczema, asthma and allergies sometimes occur together – known as the atopic triad. It is important that these are managed well in order to keep the individual healthy. Asthma training is needed by all staff and an individual's asthma care plan needs to be included with their individual healthcare plan. These conditions are not included in this allergy safety policy.

Heathfield Community College understands that severe allergies are included in the Equality Act, 2010. The act considers a person disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to carry out normal daily activities. Seasonal rhinitis (such as hay fever) is explicitly excluded from the definition of disability, unless it aggravates the effect of another health condition.

What is an Allergy?

Allergy is a spectrum of different allergic diseases. Reactions occur when a susceptible person is exposed to something (an “allergen”) they are allergic to. Asthma, food allergy, eczema and seasonal rhinitis (hay fever) are all forms of allergy.

Allergy occurs when a person reacts to a substance that is usually considered harmless. It is an immune response and instead of ignoring the substance, the body produces histamine which triggers an allergic reaction.

Whilst most allergic reactions are mild, causing minor symptoms, some can be very serious and cause anaphylaxis, which is a life-threatening medical emergency.

People can be allergic to anything, but serious allergic reactions are most commonly caused by food, insect venom (such as a wasp or bee sting), latex and medication.

Definitions

Anaphylaxis: Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can be life-threatening and must be treated as a medical emergency.

Allergen: A normally harmless substance that, for some, triggers an allergic reaction. You can be allergic to anything. The most common allergens are food, medication, animal dander (skin cells shed by animals with fur or feathers) and pollen. Latex and wasp and bee stings are less common allergens.

Most severe allergic reactions to food are caused by just 9 foods. These are eggs, milk, peanuts, tree nuts (which includes nuts such as hazelnut, cashew nut, pistachio, almond, walnut, pecan, Brazil nut, macadamia etc), sesame, fish, shellfish, soya and wheat.

There are 14 allergens required by UK law to be highlighted on pre-packed food. These allergens are celery, cereals containing gluten, crustaceans, egg, fish, lupin, milk, molluscs, mustard, peanuts, tree nuts, soya, sulphites (or sulphur dioxide), and sesame.

Adrenaline Auto-injector: Single-use device which carries a pre-measured dose of adrenaline. Adrenaline auto-injectors are used to treat anaphylaxis by injecting adrenaline directly into the upper, outer thigh muscle. Adrenaline auto-injectors are commonly referred to as AAIs, adrenaline pens or by the brand name EpiPen. There are two brands licensed for use in the UK: EpiPen and Jext Pen. For the purposes of this Policy we will refer to them as Adrenaline Pens

Allergy Action Plan: This is a document filled out by a healthcare professional, detailing a person’s allergy and their treatment plan.

Designated Allergy Lead: The member of staff responsible for overseeing allergy management across the school and acting as the main point of contact for students, parents/carers and staff.

Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP): Individual healthcare plans are an essential communication tool that provide clarity about the arrangements which need to be in place to ensure that a student is fully included in the life of the school. It will identify exact risk-mitigation measures that need to be followed.

Individual Healthcare Plans are school owned documents that are co-created by school, parents/carers and students.
They should include any advice received from health professionals.
Where a child has an allergy action plan and or an asthma plan, this must be included with the IHP.
It is good practice to review IHPs annually or when staff change, however they must be reviewed if an incident or near miss occurs. They need to be brought to the attention of supply or cover staff and be passed on during transition to a new school.
Heathfield Community College will ensure that:

- students with a significant allergy or symptomatic asthma have an individual healthcare plan
- students without an allergy action plan or asthma plan but have an allergy that needs active management over and above what other students need will have an individual healthcare plan

Risk Assessment: A detailed document outlining an activity, the risks it poses and any actions taken to mitigate those risks. Allergy should be included on all risk assessments for events on and off the school site - Completed by trip and activity leads

Role and Responsibilities

Designated Allergy Lead

The Designated Allergy Lead is Mike Pooley, Assistant Headteacher and DSL.

They are responsible for:

- Ensuring the safety, inclusion and wellbeing of students and staff with an allergy;
- Taking decisions on allergy management across the school;
- Championing and practising allergy awareness across the school;
- Being the overarching point of contact for staff, students and parents/carers with concerns or questions about allergy management;
- Ensuring allergy information is recorded, up-to-date and communicated to all staff;
- Making sure all staff are appropriately trained, have good allergy awareness and realise their role in allergy management (including what activities need an allergy risk assessment);

- Ensuring staff, students and parents/carers have a good awareness of the school's Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy, and other related procedures;
- Reviewing the school's stock of spare adrenaline pens and ensuring staff know where they are;
- Keeping a record of any allergic reactions or near-misses via Medical Tracker, reporting these to the appropriate authority (e.g.under RIDDOR) where necessary and ensuring the circumstances are investigated and learnings shared;
- Regularly reviewing and updating the Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy; and
- Ensuring there is an anaphylaxis drill once a year.

College Welfare Officer

Katharine Baseley is responsible for:

- Collecting and coordinating the paperwork (including Allergy Action Plans and Individual Healthcare Plans) and information from families;
- Supporting the Designated Allergy Lead with disseminating this information to all school staff, including the catering team, occasional staff and those running clubs;
- Ensuring the information from families is up-to-date, and reviewed annually. Coordinating medication with families and ensuring medication is in date – regular scheduled checks of medication allow communication with parents/carers regarding approaching expiry dates and reminders when new pens are not provided;
- Keeping an adrenaline pen register to include adrenaline pens prescribed to students and the school's stock of spare adrenaline pens, including brand, dose and expiry date. The location of spare adrenaline pens should also be documented;
- Regularly checking spare adrenaline pens are where they should be, and that they are in date;
- Replacing the spare adrenaline pens when necessary.

Admissions Team

The admissions team is likely to be the first to learn of a student's allergy. They should work with the Designated Allergy Lead and welfare officer to ensure that:

- There is a clear method to capture allergy information or special dietary information at the earliest opportunity. This will form part of the admission form.
- There is a clear structure in place to communicate this information to the Welfare Officer.

All staff

All school staff are responsible for:

- Championing and practising allergy awareness across the school;
- Reading, understanding and putting into practice the Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy and related procedures, and asking for support if needed;

- Being aware of students (and staff, when necessary) with allergies and what they are allergic to;
- Considering the risk to students with allergies posed by any activities and assessing whether the use of any allergen in activity is necessary and/or appropriate;
- Ensuring students always have access to their medication or carrying it on their behalf
- Being able to recognise and respond to an allergic reaction, including anaphylaxis, after appropriate training;
- Taking part in training and anaphylaxis drills as required (at least once a year). Whilst it is the school's responsibility to ensure staff have received annual training, if the member of staff is aware they have not received any allergy training in the last 12 months they should alert a manager;
- Considering the safety, inclusion and wellbeing of students with allergies at all times. Preventing and responding to allergy-related bullying, in line with the school's anti-bullying policy;
- Forwarding any communication or information that comes directly to them from parents/carers regarding allergens to the Welfare Officer; and
- Ensuring that students have their medication and their Allergy Action Plan or Individual Health Care Plan with them when leaving school site, for a fixture or off site activity.
- Staff will consider the risk assessment for all off site activties with an allergies in mind.

All parents/carers

All parents/carers (whether their child has an allergy or not) are responsible for:

- Being aware of and understanding the school's Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy and considering the safety and wellbeing of students with allergies;
- Providing the school via the Welfare Officer with information about their child's medical needs, including dietary requirements and allergies, history of their allergy, any previous allergic reactions or anaphylaxis. They should also inform the school of any related conditions, for example asthma, hay fever, rhinitis or eczema;
- Considering and adhering to any food restrictions or guidance the school has in place when providing food, for example in packed lunches, as snacks or for fundraising events;
- Refraining from telling the school their child has an allergy or intolerance if this is a preference or dietary choice; and
- Encouraging their child to be allergy aware.

Parents/carers of children with allergies

In addition to the above, the parents/carers of children with allergies should:

- Work with the school to fill out an Individual Healthcare Plan and provide an accompanying Allergy Action Plan;

- If applicable, provide the school or their child with two labelled adrenaline pens and any other medication, for example antihistamine (with a dispenser, i.e. spoon or syringe), inhalers or creams;
- Ensure medication is in-date and replaced at the appropriate time;
- Ensure their child has access to their allergy medication, including two adrenaline pens if prescribed, on the journey to and from school;
- Update school with any changes to their child's condition and ensure the relevant paperwork is updated too;
- Provide the school with an up-to-date photograph of their child and sign the associated permission for it to be shared appropriately as part of their allergy management; and
- Support their child to understand their allergy diagnosis and to advocate for themselves and to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of an allergic reaction occurring e.g. not eating the food to which they are allergic.

All students

All students at the school should:

- Be allergy aware;
- Understand the risks allergens might pose to their peers and respect measures to support them;
- Learn how they can support their peers and be alert to allergy-related bullying;
- Learn how to recognise an allergic reaction and support their peers and staff in case of an emergency.

Students with allergies

In addition to the above, students with allergies are responsible for:

- Knowing what their allergies are and how to mitigate personal risk;
- Avoiding their allergen as best as they can;
- Understanding the importance of following the school specific processes of lunch and snack services and how that mitigates risk;
- Understanding that they should notify a member of staff if they are not feeling well, or suspect they might be having an allergic reaction;
- Carrying at least one adrenaline auto-injectors with them at all times, and capability appropriate. They must only use them for their intended purpose;
- Understanding how and when to use their adrenaline auto-injector;
- Talking to the Designated Allergy Lead or a member of staff if they are concerned by any school processes or systems related to their allergy;
- Raising concerns with a member of staff if they experience any inappropriate behaviour in relation to their allergies;
- Students permitted to leave the school site [during the school day] should know what to do if they have an allergic reaction off school premises. This should include how to treat themselves and raise the alarm to get help; and
- Ensuring they have their medication with them on the journey to and from school.

Information and Documentation

Register of students with an allergy

The school has a register of students who have a diagnosed allergy. This includes children who have a history of anaphylaxis or have been prescribed adrenaline pens, as well as students with an allergy where no adrenaline pens have been prescribed.

Individual Healthcare Plans

Each pupil with a significant allergy has an Individual Healthcare Plan. The information on this plan includes:

- Known allergens and risk factors for allergic reactions;
- A history of their allergic reactions;
- Detail of the medication the pupil has been prescribed including dose, this should include adrenaline pens, antihistamine etc;
- A copy of parental consent to administer medication, including the use of spare adrenaline pens in case of suspected anaphylaxis;
- A photograph of each pupil; and
- A copy of their Allergy Action Plan.

Assessing Risk

Allergens can crop up in unexpected places. Staff (including visiting staff) will consider allergies in all activity planning and include it in risk assessments. Some examples include:

- Classroom activities, for example craft using food packaging, science experiments where allergens are present, food lessons or cooking;
- Bringing animals into the school, for example a dog or hatching chick eggs can pose a risk;
- Running activities or clubs where they might hand out snacks or food “treats”. Ensure safe food is provided or consider an alternative non-food treat for all students; and
- Planning special events, such as cultural days and celebrations.

Inclusion of students with allergies must be considered alongside safety and they should not be excluded. If necessary, adapt the activity. The School will ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Food, Including break and lunchtime

Catering in school

The school is committed to providing a safe meal for all students, staff and visitors, including those with food allergies.

- Due diligence is carried out with regard to allergen management when appointing catering staff;
- All catering staff and other staff preparing food will receive relevant and appropriate allergen awareness training;
- Anyone preparing food for those with allergies will follow good hygiene practices, food safety and allergen management procedures;
- The catering team will endeavour to get to know the students with allergies and what their allergies are, supported by school staff;
- The catering team will endeavour to provide varied meal options to students and staff with allergies;
- The school has robust procedures in place to identify students with food allergies. Allergies are flagged on the cashless catering system as a failsafe to stop a student buying something they shouldn't.
- Food containing the main 14 allergens will be clearly labelled . Other ingredient information will be available on request.
- Pre-packaged food will comply with PPDS legislation (Natasha's Law) requiring the allergen information to be displayed on the packaging;
- Where changes are made to the ingredients this will be communicated to students with dietary needs by catering team

Medication and Adrenaline Devices

People at risk of anaphylaxis are prescribed two adrenaline devices which they should both be available to them in school and on off site activities at all times. Serious anaphylaxis is a time critical situation; delays in administering adrenaline have been associated with fatal reactions. Those requiring an adrenaline device need to carry one with them at all times.
Adrenaline devices must be stored at room temperature (in line with manufacturer's guidelines) and not be exposed to extremes of heat. They should not be refrigerated or left in direct sunlight.

Spare Adrenaline Devices

Heathfield Community College holds 4 spare adrenaline devices for use in emergency situations. These are not a replacement for a student's own adrenaline device. Students prescribed adrenaline are expected to have their own adrenaline devices with them at school for use in an emergency.

The locations of spare adrenaline pens are clearly signposted. These are in a clearly labelled station by Welfare desk, and in the emergency grab bag on the Welfare sick bay door.

Adrenaline Devices for off-site activities

- No child with a prescribed adrenaline pen will be able to go on an off site activity without two of their own devices. It is the off site activity leader's responsibility to check they have them;

- Adrenaline pens will be kept close to the students at all times e.g. not stored in the hold of the coach when travelling or left in changing rooms;
- Adrenaline pens will be protected from extreme temperatures;
- Staff accompanying the students will be aware of students with allergies and be trained to recognise and respond to an allergic reaction; and
- Consider whether to take spare adrenaline pens to off-site activities. This should be recorded as part of the risk assessment process.

Responding to an Allergic Reaction / Anaphylaxis

In the event of anaphylactic reaction:

Students should, whenever possible, assume responsibility for their emergency kit. However, symptoms of anaphylaxis can come on very suddenly, so school staff need to be prepared to administer medication if the young person cannot.

- Adrenaline should be administered as soon as possible, within five minutes. **Do not wait** to contact the emergency services before administering adrenaline. Document the time given and use stop watch to time from administration.
- The child, young person or individual should not be moved. Adrenaline devices should be brought to them (whether their own prescribed ADs or "spare" ADs).
- Follow the Echo Emergency response to bring in the relevant staff to support.
- If the child, young person or individual **has their own prescribed adrenaline devices**, these should be used in the first instance.
- If the child, young person or individual has been **prescribed an adrenaline devices but does not have it with them**, "spare" adrenaline devices can be used.
- If the child, young person or individual's **prescribed adrenaline devices are not available or misfire**, "spare" adrenaline devices can be used.
- If the individual has serious allergy and asthma and there is any doubt if they are presenting with anaphylaxis or having an asthma attack always administer the adrenaline or inhaler first.
- If anaphylaxis is suspected but the pupil does not have a prescribed adrenaline pen or Allergy Action Plan, lie the pupil down with their legs raised, call 999 and explain anaphylaxis is suspected. Inform the operator that spare adrenaline pens are available and follow instructions from the operator. The MHRA says that in exceptional circumstances, a spare adrenaline pen can be administered to anyone for the purposes of saving their life;

- If, after 5 minutes, there is no improvement, use a second adrenaline pen document the time given, and call the emergency services again and inform them that a second dose of adrenaline has been given;
- Do not move the pupil until a medical professional/ paramedic has arrived, even if they are feeling better; and
- Anyone who has had suspected anaphylaxis and received adrenaline **must** go to hospital, even if they appear to have recovered. A member of staff should accompany them in an ambulance until a parent or guardian arrives.

Training

The school is committed to training all staff annually to give them a good understanding of allergy.
This includes:

- Understanding what an allergy is;
- How to reduce the risk of an allergic reaction occurring;
- How to recognise and treat an allergic reaction, including anaphylaxis
- How the school manages allergy, for example Emergency Response Plan, documentation, communication etc;
- Where adrenaline pens are kept (both prescribed pens and spare pens) and how to access them, and encouraged to practice with trainer pens.
- The importance of inclusion of students with food allergies, the impact of allergy on mental health and wellbeing and the risk of allergy related bullying;
- Understanding food labelling; and
- Taking part in an anaphylaxis drill. This will include an exercise simulating an event where a pupil or member of staff has an allergic reaction and testing the whole school response.