



READING BLUE COAT

Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy

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1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy outlines Reading Blue Coat School's approach to allergy management, including how the whole-school community works to reduce the risk of an allergic reaction happening and the procedures in place to respond if one does. It also sets out how we support our students with allergies to ensure their wellbeing and inclusion, as well as demonstrating our commitment to being an Allergy Aware School.

This policy applies to all staff, students, parents and visitors to the school and should be read alongside these other policies:

Health and Safety Policy, Administration of Medication Policy, First Aid Policy, Educational Visits Policy

2. WHAT IS AN ALLERGY?

Allergy occurs when a person reacts to a particular food or 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.

3. 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, 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 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 AAI, adrenaline pens or by the brand name EpiPen. There are currently three brands licensed for use in the UK: EpiPen, Emerade and Jext Pen. For the purposes of this policy we will refer to them as AAI.

ALLERGY ACTION PLAN: This is a document filled out by a healthcare professional, detailing a person's allergy and their treatment plan.

INDIVIDUAL HEALTHCARE PLAN: A detailed document outlining an individual student's condition, history, treatment, risks and action plan. This document should be created by schools in collaboration with parents/carers and, where appropriate, students. All students with an allergy should have an Individual Healthcare Plan and it should be read in conjunction with their Allergy Action 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.

SPARE PENS: Schools are able to purchase spare adrenaline pens. These should be held as a back-up, in case students' prescribed AAI are not available. They can also be used to treat a person who experiences anaphylaxis but has not been prescribed their own adrenaline.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Reading Blue Coat School takes a whole-school approach to allergy management.

4.1 Designated Allergy Lead

The Designated Allergy Lead is the Bursar. 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 students and parents with concerns or questions about allergy management (Contact is delegated to the School's Nurse Manager and Wellbeing Team)
- Ensuring allergy information is recorded, up-to-date and communicated to all staff (the collation of information is delegated to the School's Nurse Manager)
- 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 have a good awareness of the school's Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy, and other related procedures
- Keep a record of any allergic reactions or near-misses and ensure an investigation is held as to the cause and put in place any learnings
- Regularly reviewing and updating the *Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy*
- Ensuring staff receive an annual anaphylaxis update

At regular intervals the Designated Allergy Lead will check procedures and report to the SLT.

4.2 Nurse Manager/ Wellbeing team -

responsible for:

- Collecting and coordinating the paperwork (including Allergy Action Plans and Individual Healthcare Plans) and information from families (this is likely to involve liaising with the Admissions Team for new joiners)
- Support the Designated Allergy Lead on how this information is disseminated to all school staff, including the Catering Team, occasional staff and staff running clubs
- Ensuring the information from families is up-to-date, and reviewed annually (at a minimum)
- Coordinating medication with families and ensuring spare AAI medication on site is in date. [Whilst it's the parents and carers responsibility to ensure medication is up to

date, the Wellbeing Team should also have systems in place to regularly remind parents to check this].

- Keeping an adrenaline pen register for School AAI medication including brand, dose and expiry date. The location of Spare Pens should also be documented.
- Reviewing the stock of the School's spare adrenaline pens (check the School has enough and the locations are correct) and ensuring staff know where they are
- Regularly checking spare pens are where they should be, and that they are in date
- Replacing the spare pens when necessary
- Providing on-site adrenaline pen training for other members of staff and students and refresher training as required e.g. before school trips
- Any other responsibilities delegated by Designated Allergy Lead

4.3 Admissions Team

The Admissions Team is likely to be the first to learn of a student or visitor's allergy. They should work with the Designated Allergy Lead and the Wellbeing Team to ensure that:

- There is a clear method to capture allergy information or special dietary information at the earliest opportunity [this should be in place before a school visit, an Open Day or Taster Days if food is offered or likely to be eaten]
- There is a clear structure in place to communicate this information to the relevant parties (i.e. Wellbeing Team, Catering Team)
- Visitors (for example at Open Days and events) are aware of the catering set up and if food is to be offered and plans for medication if the child is to be left without parental supervision

4.4 All staff

All school staff, to include teaching staff, operations staff, occasional staff (for example sports coaches and music teachers) are responsible for:

- Championing and practising allergy awareness across the School
- 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
- Being able to recognise and respond to an allergic reaction, including anaphylaxis
- Taking part in training as required (at least once a year) and to tell a manager if you have not received any in the last 12 months

- 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*

4.5 All parents

All parents and 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 Wellbeing Team 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
- Encouraging their child to be allergy aware

4.6 Parents of students with allergies

In addition to point 4.5, the parents and 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 their child with two labelled AAIs. Any other medication to be clearly labelled on the correct packaging with prescribing instructions and handed into the medical centre with written consent provided.
- Ensure medication is in-date and replaced at the appropriate time
- Update the School with any changes to their child's condition and ensure the relevant paperwork is updated too
- Sign the associated permission for their child's photo to be shared appropriately as part of their allergy management.
- 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 they are allergic to.

4.7 All students

All students at the School should:

- Be allergy aware
- Understand the risks allergens might pose to their peers
- Learn how they can support their peers and be alert to allergy-related bullying.
- Older students will learn how to recognise and respond to an allergic reaction and to support their peers and staff in case of an emergency
- Students buying or bringing in food from home should check the ingredients to ensure they are adhering to food restrictions and school guidance about food being brought into school

4.8 Students with allergies

In addition to point 4.7, 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
- Understand that they should notify a member of staff if they are not feeling well, or suspect they might be having an allergic reaction
- Carrying two adrenaline auto-injectors with them at all times. They must only use them for their intended purpose
- Understand how and when to use their adrenaline auto-injector
- Talking to the Designated Allergy Lead, Nurse Manager 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

5. INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION

5.1 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.

5.2 Individual Healthcare Plans

Each student with an 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 student 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 student
- A copy of their Allergy Action Plan

6. 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 tech 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.
- 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.

7. FOOD, INCLUDING MEALTIMES & SNACKS

7.1 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

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- 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 Catering Team has robust procedures in place to identify students with food allergies. These are:
 - Severity driven report with RAG status identified for all students with an allergy is provided by the Wellbeing Team to the Catering Team
 - Catering General Manager is Allergen Champion and all of the Kitchen Team are Team Champions
 - Allergen matrix is produced daily for food prepared and signed by the Allergen Champion and a second Team Champion
 - New students with allergies are introduced to the Catering Team Allergen Champion and directed to the Allergen Counter for lunch service
 - Students on special diets have a Pre-Plated plan where their meal is pre-plated in the kitchen area rather than the main servery
- Food containing the main 14 allergens (see Allergens definition) will be clearly identified for students, staff and visitors to see. Other ingredient information will be available on request.
 - For students or staff with allergies to food other than the “main 14” the Catering Team discuss these directly with the student or staff member
 - Capsicum, pineapple and coconut are identified for all students, staff and visitors to see
- Food packaged to go 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 the Catering Allergen Champion
- The School’s policy on products with Precautionary Allergen Labelling or “May Contain’ labelling is that these are identified and labelled for awareness to all staff, students and visitors
- Reading Blue Coat School and it’s Catering Team have a no nut policy. Nominated suppliers or nut free suppliers are used in the purchase of food items. There is also no provision of “may contain nuts” food products

- All food products sold on site as part of the “Café” provision follow the above procedures, are all labelled fully and a Team Champion from the Catering Team is present
- All self-service points display a disclaimer advising there is the possibility of cross-contamination from serving utensils. Clean plates can be requested by any student, staff member or visitor

7.2 Food brought into school

All food brought into school, taken on school trips and sports fixtures or sold as part of events and fundraisers should have full ingredients lists provided and displayed. There is a Risk Assessment in place for all events and fundraisers and the strict “No Nuts” policy is followed.

7.3 Food bans or restrictions

- The School is an Allergen Aware school. We have students with a wide range of allergies to different foods, so we encourage a considered approach to bringing in food.
- We try to restrict peanuts and tree nuts as much as possible on the site and check all foods coming into the kitchen.
- All food coming onto school premises or taken on a school trip or to a match should be checked to ensure peanuts and tree nuts are not an ingredient in another product. Please check the label on all foods brought in. Common foods that contain these goods as an ingredient include: packaged nuts, cereal bars, chocolate bars, nut butters, chocolate spread, sauces.

7.4 Food hygiene for students

- Students are responsible for ensuring they wash their hands before and after eating
- Sharing, swapping or throwing food is not allowed
- Water bottles and packed lunches should be clearly labelled

8. SCHOOL TRIPS AND SPORTS FIXTURES

- Staff leading the trip will have a register of students with allergies with medication details. They should also be aware of any members of staff with allergies who are accompanying the trip.
- Allergies will be considered on the risk assessment and catering provision put in place
- Parents may be consulted if considered necessary, or if the trip requires an overnight stay

- Staff (and some students, if appropriate) accompanying the trip will be trained to recognise and respond to an allergic reaction
- Allergens will be clearly labelled on catered packed lunches
 - Staff will receive an Allergen Matrix with the catered packed lunches
 - Each lunch for a student or staff member with a known allergy will be in a separate bag, labelled with their name
- If attending Match Tea at another school, details of their dietary requirements will be sent ahead to ensure they have a safe meal.
- See 13.3 Adrenaline Pens section for School Trips and Sports Fixtures

9. INSECT STINGS

Those with a known insect venom allergy should:

- Avoid walking around in bare feet or sandals when outside and when possible keep arms and legs covered.
- Avoid wearing strong perfumes or cosmetics
- Keep food and drink covered

The Grounds Manager will monitor the grounds for wasp or bee nests. Students (with or without allergies) should notify a member of staff if they find a wasp or bee nest on the School site and avoid them.

10. ANIMALS

It is normally the dander that causes a person with an animal allergy to react.

Precautions to limit the risk of an allergic reaction include:

- A student with a known animal allergy should avoid the animal they are allergic to
- If an animal comes on site a risk assessment will be done prior to the visit
- Areas visited by animals will be cleaned thoroughly
- Anyone in contact with an animal will wash their hands after contact
- School trips that include visits to animals will be carefully risk assessed

11. ALLERGIC RHINITIS/ HAY FEVER

Refer to the *First Aid Policy* and *Administration of Medication Policy* for further information.

12. INCLUSION AND MENTAL HEALTH

Allergies can have a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing. Students may experience anxiety and depression and are more susceptible to bullying.

- No child with allergies should be excluded from taking part in a school activity, whether on the School site or a school trip.
- Students with allergies may require additional pastoral support including regular check-ins from their Tutor, etc
- Affected students will be given consideration in advance of wider school discussions about allergy and school Allergy Awareness initiatives
- Bullying related to allergies will be treated in line with the School's *Anti-Bullying Policy*

13. ADRENALINE PENS

[See the government guidance on Adrenaline Pens in Schools.](#)

13.1 Storage of adrenaline pens

- Students prescribed with adrenaline pens will have two in date AAI's on them at all times.
- Spot checks will be made to ensure adrenaline pens are where they should be and in date
- Adrenaline pens must not be kept locked away
- Adrenaline pens should be stored at moderate temperatures (see manufacturer's guidelines), not in direct sunlight or above a heat source (for example a radiator)
- Used or out of date pens will be disposed of as sharps or handed into the local pharmacy for correct disposal.

13.2 Spare pens

The School has 6 spare adrenaline pens to be used in accordance with government guidance.

The adrenaline pens are clearly signposted and are stored in the following locations:

- Wellbeing Centre
- Sports Centre
- Dining Hall
- School House
- Boat House
- RAB

The Nurse Manager is responsible for:

- Deciding how many spare pens are required
- What dosage is required, based on the Resuscitation Council UK's age-based guidance (see page 11)
- Which brand(s) to buy. Schools are recommended to buy a single brand if possible to avoid confusion.
- The purchasing of spare adrenaline pens which can be obtained at low cost from a local pharmacy. See government guidance above
- Distribution around the site and clear signage

13.3 Adrenaline pens on school trips and match days

- No child with a prescribed adrenaline pen will be able to go on a school trip without two of their own pens. It is the trip leader's responsibility to check they have them.
- Both adrenaline pens will be kept by the student on them at all times.
- 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

14. RESPONDING TO AN ALLERGIC REACTION /ANAPHYLAXIS

- If a student has an allergic reaction they will be treated in accordance with their Allergy Action Plan and a member of staff will instigate the School's Emergency Response Plan
- If anaphylaxis is suspected adrenaline will be administered without delay, lying the student down with their legs raised. They will be treated where they are and medication brought to them.
- A student's own prescribed medication will be used to treat allergic reactions if immediately available.
- This will be administered by the student themselves [if age appropriate] or by a member of staff. Ideally the member of staff will be trained, but in an emergency **anyone** can administer adrenaline.
- If the student's own adrenaline pen is not available or misfires, then a spare adrenaline pen will be used.
- If anaphylaxis is suspected but the student does not have a prescribed adrenaline pen or Allergy Action Plan, a member of staff will ensure they are lying down with their legs raised, call 999 and explain anaphylaxis is suspected. They will 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 and call the emergency services to tell them you have done so.
- The student will not be moved until a medical professional/ paramedic has arrived, even if they are feeling better.
- Anyone who has had suspected anaphylaxis and received adrenaline must go to hospital, even if they appear to have recovered. A member of staff will accompany the student in an ambulance and stay until a parent or guardian arrives.
- Any used adrenaline pens must be handed to the Paramedics attending.

15. TRAINING

The School is committed to training all staff annually to give them a good understanding of allergies. 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
- 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

16. ASTHMA

It is vital that students with allergies keep their asthma well controlled, because asthma can exacerbate allergic reactions. Please refer to the *Asthma Policy* for further information.

17. REPORTING ALLERGIC REACTIONS


The School will log allergic reaction incidents and near-misses via the iProtectu accident and incident reporting system. All incidents will also be reported on iSAMS.

The Catering Team will be involved in the investigation process immediately if the allergic reaction incident is caused by or suspected to be caused by the food served at any catering outlet within the School. Their process is:

- Log the incident onto their compliance system

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- Raise the incident to the attention of the Regional Operations Manager
- The Catering Company will investigate the incident
- Liaison with the School and parents at all times

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