

St. Margaret's C.E.



# **St. Margaret's C of E. Primary School**

## **Food Allergy & Intolerance Policy**

Developed: June 2021

Review: May 2023

Ratified by Governors: February 2022

## **SECTION ONE - INTRODUCTION**

St Margaret's Primary School recognises that a number of community members (pupils, parents, visitors and staff) may suffer from potentially life-threatening allergies or intolerances to certain foods.

We are committed to a whole school approach to the care and management of those members of the School community. This policy looks at food allergy and intolerances.

The School's position is not to guarantee a completely allergen free environment, rather to minimise the risk of exposure by hazard identification, instruction and information. This will encourage self-responsibility to all those with known allergens to make informed decisions on food choices and to provide help and assistance for our youngest pupils. It is also important that the School has clear plans for an effective response to possible emergencies.

## **SECTION TWO – AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **2.1 Policy Scope**

The School is committed to proactive risk food allergy management through:

- Ensuring that robust systems in place to ensure accurate and timely sharing of information relating to food allergies and intolerances with clearly defined responsibilities.
- Supporting pupils with the management of food allergies and intolerances. The encouragement of self-responsibility and learned avoidance strategies amongst those suffering from allergies.
- Working with the catering team to ensure that food labelling, menu planning and all aspects of food preparation support the needs of those within our school community who have food allergies.
- Provision of staff awareness on food allergies/intolerances, possible symptoms (including anaphylaxis) recognition and treatment.

The intent of this policy is to minimise the risk of any person suffering allergy-induced reaction, or food intolerance whilst at St Margaret's or attending any School related activity. The policy sets out guidance for staff to ensure they are suitably prepared to manage the day to day needs of pupils with food allergies and to address emergency situations should they arise. The policy also outlines the expectations of all those involved in the preparation or distribution of food within the school and of parents and other individuals, in informing the school of any food allergies.

## 2.2 Allergy information

True food allergies are reproducible adverse reactions to a particular food that involve the immune system. Virtually all known food allergens are proteins. They can be present in the food in large amounts and often survive food-processing conditions. Allergic reactions are characterised by the rapid release of chemicals in the body that cause symptoms, which can occur within minutes or up to an hour or more after ingestion of the allergen. The proportion of the population with true food allergy is approximately 1-2% of adults and about 5-8% of children, which equates to about 1.5 million people in the UK.

The common causes of allergies relevant to this policy are the 14 major food allergens:

- Cereals containing Gluten
- Celery including stalks, leaves, seeds and celeriac in salads
- Crustaceans, (prawns, crab, lobster, scampi, shrimp paste)
- Eggs - also food glazed with egg
- Fish - some salad dressings, relishes, fish sauce, some soy and Worcester sauces
- Soya (tofu, bean curd, soya flour)
- Milk and dairy - also food glazed with milk
- Nuts, (almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecan nuts, Brazil nuts, pistachio, cashew and macadamia (Queensland) nuts, nut oils, marzipan)
- Peanuts - sauces, cakes, desserts, ground nut oil, peanut flour
- Mustard - liquid mustard, mustard powder, mustard seeds
- Sesame Seeds - bread, bread sticks, tahini, hummus, sesame oil
- Sulphur dioxide/Sulphites (dried fruit, fruit juice drinks)
- Lupin, seeds and flour, in some bread and pastries
- Molluscs, (mussels, whelks, oyster sauce, land snails and squid).

The allergy to nuts is the most common high risk allergy however, it is important to ensure that all allergies and intolerances are treated equally as the effect to the individual can be both life-threatening and uncomfortable, if suffered.

Coeliac disease is not an allergy. Whilst it is classified as a food intolerance it is not like other intolerances in that it is an 'auto-immune' disease, which means that the body produces antibodies that attack its own tissues. In coeliac disease this attack is triggered by gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye and barley. This intolerance to gluten causes an inflammatory response that damages the gut. Villi (tiny, finger-like projections that line the gut) become inflamed and then flattened (villous atrophy), leading to a decreased surface area for absorption of nutrients from food. People with undiagnosed coeliac disease can, as a result, have a wide range of digestive

symptoms and can suffer from nutritional deficiencies. Other food intolerances may also require management and awareness.

### **2.3 Links with other policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Administration of Medicines and Supporting Medical Conditions in School and Whole School Food policies.

## **SECTION THREE - PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The School has clear procedures and responsibilities to be followed in meeting the needs of pupils with medical needs relating to food allergies or intolerances.

### **3.1 Initial Information Provided Regarding Food Allergies or Intolerances**

The parents or carers of all new starters to the school are required to complete an online or paper data collection form that asks for the details of any food intolerances or allergies. If allergies or food intolerances are listed the school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) will follow this up with a phone call to parents for further information & medical proof.

For children starting in the nursery & reception classes, information regarding food allergies will be discussed at home or during pre-school visits alongside any other medical needs.

A meeting can be arranged between the parent/carer and the SENCO to further discuss a child's needs. The SENCO will then record and relay this information to school staff and/or food providers such as breakfast club staff, catering staff and midday staff.

Where a child transfers from another school or nursery, the school SENCO will try and obtain any relevant information regarding how the previous school or setting managed the food allergy in order to provide continuity.

It is parents' responsibility to ensure that if their child's medical needs change at any point that they make the school aware and a revised medical needs/allergy information form must be completed.

Members of staff or volunteers will be asked to disclose any food allergies as part of their induction.

### **3.2 How the School Uses this Information**

All medical needs and allergen/food intolerance information received via the online or paper forms is stored confidentially within the school's management information system (SIMS) and is held electronically & centrally so that the information can be accessed by appropriate members of staff as required.

Medical information for pupils is private and confidential however in order to ensure that medical needs can be properly managed, information is shared with school staff. This is done in several ways:

- Before the start of a new academic year, medical needs information, including details of food allergies, are shared with the receiving class teacher as part of our transition process. This information is collated by the SENCO and passed onto teachers. It is the class teachers' responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with the information provided and that any other adults working with the children are aware of their needs as well.
- At the start of the academic year, the SENCO will oversee the completion of the school's Medical & Confidential Spreadsheet. This contains confidential information for all school staff relating to the medical needs of all pupils in the school and includes sections on food allergies and intolerances amongst other medical conditions. The SENCO will update the spreadsheet and share with all relevant staff when new information is received.
- Key medical needs information is on a separate tab at the bottom of the daily electronic register as an additional reminder to any new staff (e.g. supply teacher) who may be teaching the class.
- The SENCO will inform the school kitchen of any pupils who have food allergies or intolerances. An Allergy Identification Board containing a photograph and details of every child with an allergy/food intolerance, is available in the kitchen during every food service. The board is kept securely locked in the Catering Supervisors office when the kitchen is closed.
- Where a food allergy significantly impacts on a child's day to day activity, a care plan might be put in place e.g. a child who requires tube feeding or is required to eat at a separate time. This will be constructed in conjunction with the SENCO, school staff, parents and healthcare professionals.
- Key medical needs information is available to class staff, via the Medical & Confidential Spreadsheet, and should be consulted when children are taken off site.

### **3.3 Lunchtime**

Children are able to have a school dinner or bring a packed lunch from home. If children are having a school dinner, they make their selection from the menu board displayed in the dinner hall at lunchtime. Teaching and catering staff support children with their menu choices. Sample menus are also available online so that parents can discuss food options and preferences with their children. Menus are subject to change at short notice as menu options are reliant on deliveries and food item availability.

An Allergy Identification board containing a photograph and details of every child with an allergy/food intolerance, is available in the kitchen during every food service. The board is kept securely locked in the Catering Supervisors office when the kitchen is closed.

The school kitchen caters for a range of food allergy needs. Where needs are very specific, it may be beneficial for a meeting to be arranged between parents and the SENCO to discuss dietary requirements that can in turn be discussed with the school's Catering Supervisor.

Children are told that they are not allowed to share food at lunchtimes. Midday supervisors observe and assist the children at lunchtime in order to reduce the opportunity for children to share food, although we cannot guarantee that this will not happen.

### **3.4 Breakfast Club**

The Allergy Identification Board is visible to Breakfast Club staff so that they are aware of any food allergies that the children attending the club might have.

With advance notice the Breakfast Club will be able to cater for a variety of food allergy needs e.g. use of soya milk or gluten free bread. Separate equipment (e.g. toasters) will be used to avoid cross contamination.

### **3.5 Responsibilities**

#### **3.5.1 School Staff Responsibilities**

Key school staff responsibilities are outlined in section 3.2.

Additional responsibilities include:

- Supporting those children who have school dinners with their menu choices.
- Liaising with parents regarding the management of food allergies.
- SENCO organises annual whole school Allergy & Anaphylaxis training at the beginning of each academic year, using the National College online training resource.
- The school has a number of first aiders who would be called upon to assist in cases of allergic reaction including anaphylaxis. A number of staff have also had training in how to administer an epi-pen to those children who have an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP).
- School keeps a spare Epi-pen in a grab bag in the school office that the office staff will take out in the event of a fire or emergency evacuation. The spare Epi-pen can be used in the event of an emergency if a child with an IHCP requires emergency assistance.
- The school will contact parents and the emergency services, if required, in the event that a child suffers an allergic reaction. The school's Administration of Medicines and Supporting Medical Conditions in School policy outlines the school's response to medical emergencies.

### **3.5.2 Catering Staff Responsibilities**

Catering staff will:

- familiarise themselves with the allergy & intolerance needs of our pupils in order for correct meals to be consumed;
- identify & record ingredients for every recipe on the menu (and substitute recipes) that may pose a risk to allergy sufferers, enabling them to assist in relevant children's choices;
- Ensure rigorous food hygiene is maintained to reduce risk of cross contamination;
- Ensure suppliers provide information regarding the content of their products.

### **3.5.3 Parental Responsibilities**

Parents are responsible for:

- Completing the data collection form (available on-line or in paper format) and ensuring that any information regarding food allergies for their child is included.
- Completing a Food Allergy Notification form if requested by school to do so.
- Updating the school if their child's medical needs change at any point. Parents are requested to keep the school up to date with any changes in allergy management with regards to clinic summaries, re-testing and new food challenges.
- Ensuring that any required medication (Epi-pens or other adrenalin injectors, inhalers and any specific antihistamine) is supplied, in date and replaced as necessary. The parents of all children who have an epi-pen in school must complete a written Individual Healthcare Plan in conjunction with the SENCO.
- Attending any meeting as required to share further information about their child's food allergy, to plan for food management in school or to complete a Individual Care Plan.
- Informing school if an episode of anaphylaxis occurs outside of school.

### **3.5.4 Pupil Responsibilities**

- Children of any age must be familiar with what their allergies are and the symptoms they may have that would indicate a reaction is happening.
- Children are encouraged to take increased responsibility for managing choices that will reduce the risk of allergic reaction. Expectations are age appropriate.

- Children are not allowed to share food with each other.

## **SECTION FOUR – MANAGEMENT OF FOOD ALLERGIES IN OTHER AREAS OF SCHOOL LIFE**

### **4.1 Rewards and Celebrations**

On occasions, food items are used as part of the school's reward system, this may include squash and biscuits for award winners each term, or end of term tea parties/picnics. On these occasions, staff will endeavour to make suitable adjustments in order to ensure that children with food allergies feel included, e.g. substituting food items.

Sometimes children will bring items into school to distribute to classmates when it is their birthday. It is school policy that these items are not food items.

### **4.2 Curriculum Activities & After School Clubs**

As part of the school curriculum, children may be involved in activities that involve preparing food (e.g. DT lesson) or tasting food (e.g. tasting food from other countries). Teachers will take the needs of children with food allergies into account when planning these activities and will make modifications where possible to allow participation. When a third party is involved in delivering a food related workshop, the class teacher will be responsible for ensuring that the dietary needs of pupils are taken into consideration.

This also applies to after school clubs e.g Cookery Club.

### **4.3 Educational Visits**

The lead member of staff for an educational visit will ensure that food allergy considerations are made in any activity that may involve food.

When a child with a food allergy participates in a residential visit, their dietary needs will be planned for, in conjunction with the activity centre.

### **4.4 Charity Events**

If the School hosts any 'cake sales' or similar events for charity it is important that no food poses a risk to the end user, however, this is difficult for the school to monitor. Where products are not made on site, but sold by the school, appropriate signage will be put in place. This will state the following:

*'This item was not produced at St Margaret's Primary School therefore we cannot guarantee that it does not contain nuts or any other allergen'.*

It should be left to the discretion of the person buying the food that they accept the risk that allergens may be present.

The same will apply to any cake sales organised by the Church or Parent Groups.

#### **4.5 Events Organised by Parent Groups (e.g Year 6 Leavers Parties)**

Parent groups may provide food for consumption at an event or offer food items for sale (e.g sweets/drinks). Items for sale are sold in their original packaging. It is the parents' decision whether their children will be allowed to consume the food provided or purchase other food/drink items at the event when they are not present.

The school is unable to supervise the consumption of food or purchase of items, at these events, with regard to children with food allergies. In these circumstances, parents are advised to speak to a member of the parent group in order for an alternative arrangement to be considered if possible (e.g. bringing in something from home).

### **SECTION FIVE - MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This policy is formally reviewed by the Governing Body every two years. The policy review takes into consideration the views of all stakeholders. This policy is available to all stakeholders on the school website or alternatively from the school office.