

Tas Valley Church Schools Federation

Allergies Policy



Formally adopted by the Governing Board of:-	Tas Valley Federation
On:-	
Chair of Governors:-	Diane Perry-Yates
Last updated:-	

Allergies Policy

Name of school:	Tas Valley Church Schools Federation
Date of Policy:	September 2022
Date of Review:	September 2025
Members of staff Responsible:	Senior Leadership Team

1. Introduction

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. Anaphylaxis is a severe systemic allergic reaction. It is at the extreme end of the allergic spectrum. The whole body is affected often within minutes of exposure to the allergen, but sometimes it can be hours later. Causes often include foods, insect stings, or drugs.

Definition: Anaphylaxis is a severe life threatening generalised or systemic hypersensitivity reaction.

This is characterised by rapidly developing life-threatening airway / breathing / circulatory problems usually associated with skin or mucosal changes. It is possible to be allergic to anything which contains a protein, however most people will react to a fairly small group of potent allergens.

Common UK Allergens include (but not limited to):- Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Sesame, Milk, Egg, Fish, Latex, Insect venom, Pollen and Animal Dander.

This policy sets out how Tas Valley Federation will support pupils with allergies, to ensure they are safe and are not disadvantaged in any way whilst taking part in school life.

2. Role and Responsibilities

Parent responsibilities:

- On entry to the school, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of any allergies. This information should include all previous severe allergic reactions, history of anaphylaxis and details of all prescribed medication.
- Parents are to supply a copy of their child's Allergy Action Plan (BSACI plans preferred) to school. If they do not currently have an Allergy Action Plan this should be developed as soon as possible in collaboration with a healthcare professional e.g. Schools nurse/GP/allergy specialist.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring any required medication is supplied, in date and replaced as necessary.
- Parents are requested to keep the school up to date with any changes in allergy management. The Allergy Action Plan will be kept updated accordingly.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Staff will complete regular anaphylaxis training.

- Staff must be aware of the pupils in their care (regular or cover classes) who have known allergies as an allergic reaction could occur at any time and not just at mealtimes. Any food-related activities must be supervised with due caution.
- Staff leading school trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies. Trip leaders will check that all pupils with medical conditions, including allergies, carry their medication. Pupils unable to produce their required medication will not be able to attend the excursion.
- The school will ensure that the up to date Allergy Action Plan is kept with the pupil's medication.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all medication is in date however the school will check medication kept at school on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry. Some medications have a shortened expiry date once opened, e.g. Cetirizine. If a staff member opens this medication, parents will be informed accordingly.
- The school keeps a register of pupils who have been prescribed an AAI and a record of use of any AAI(s) and emergency treatment given.

Pupil Responsibilities:

- Pupils are encouraged to have a good awareness of their symptoms and to let an adult know as soon as they suspect they are having an allergic reaction.
- Pupils who are trained and confident to administer their own auto-injectors will be encouraged to take responsibility for carrying them on their person at all times.

3. Allergy Action Plans

Allergy action plans are designed to function as Individual Healthcare Plans for children with food allergies, providing medical and parental consent for schools to administer medicines in the event of an allergic reaction, including consent to administer a spare adrenaline autoinjector.

Tas Valley Federation recommends using the British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI) Allergy Action Plan to ensure continuity. This is a national plan that has been agreed by the BSACI, the Anaphylaxis Campaign and Allergy UK. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to complete the allergy action plan with help from a healthcare professional (e.g. GP/School Nurse/Allergy Specialist) and provide this to the school.

4. Emergency Treatment and Management of Anaphylaxis

What to look for:

- swelling of the mouth or throat
- difficulty swallowing or speaking
- difficulty breathing
- sudden collapse / unconsciousness
- hives, rash anywhere on the body
- abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting
- sudden feeling of weakness

- strong feelings of impending doom

Anaphylaxis is likely if all of the following 3 things happen:

- sudden onset (a reaction can start within minutes) and rapid progression of symptoms
- life threatening airway and/or breathing difficulties and/or circulation problems (e.g. alteration in heart rate, sudden drop in blood pressure, feeling of weakness)
- changes to the skin e.g. flushing, urticaria (an itchy, red, swollen skin eruption showing markings like nettle rash or hives), angioedema (swelling or puffing of the deeper layers of skin and/or soft tissues, often lips, mouth, face etc.) Note: skin changes on their own are not a sign of an anaphylactic reaction, and in some cases don't occur at all

If the pupil has been exposed to something they are known to be allergic to, then it is more likely to be an anaphylactic reaction. Anaphylaxis can develop very rapidly, so a treatment is needed that works rapidly. Adrenaline is the mainstay of treatment and it starts to work within seconds. Adrenaline should be administered by an injection into the muscle (intramuscular injection)

What does adrenaline do?

- It opens up the airways
- It stops swelling
- It raises the blood pressure

Adrenaline must be administered with the minimum of delay as it is more effective in preventing an allergic reaction from progressing to anaphylaxis than in reversing it once the symptoms have become severe.

ACTION:

- Stay with the child and call for help. **DO NOT MOVE CHILD OR LEAVE UNATTENDED**
- Remove trigger if possible (e.g. Insect stinger)
- Lie child flat (with or without legs elevated) – A sitting position may make breathing easier
- **USE ADRENALINE WITHOUT DELAY** and note time given. (inject at upper, outer thigh - through clothing if necessary)
- **CALL 999** and state **ANAPHYLAXIS**
- If no improvement after 5 minutes, administer second adrenaline auto-injector
- If no signs of life commence CPR
- Phone parent/carer as soon as possible All pupils must go to hospital for observation after anaphylaxis even if they appear to have recovered as a reaction can reoccur after treatment.

5. Supply, storage and care of medication

Anaphylaxis kits are kept safely, not locked away and accessible to all staff. Medication should be stored in a box and clearly labelled with the pupil's name and a photograph. The pupil's medication storage box should contain:

- adrenaline injectors i.e. EpiPen® or Jext® (two of the same type being prescribed) •
- an up-to-date allergy action plan
- antihistamine as tablets or syrup (if included on plan)
- spoon if required
- asthma inhaler (if included on plan).

It is the responsibility of the child's parents to ensure that the anaphylaxis kit is up-to-date and clearly labelled, however the school will check medication kept at school on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry. Parents can subscribe to expiry alerts for the relevant adrenaline auto-injectors their child is prescribed, to make sure they can get replacement devices in good time.

Some medications have a shortened expiry date once opened, e.g. Cetirizine. If a staff member opens this medication, parents will be informed accordingly.

Storage

AAIs should be stored at room temperature, protected from direct sunlight and temperature extremes.

Disposal

AAIs are single use only and must be disposed of as sharps. Used AAIs can be given to ambulance paramedics on arrival or can be disposed of in a pre-ordered sharps bin.

6. Staff Training

The Headteacher is responsible for coordinating all staff anaphylaxis training and the upkeep of the school's anaphylaxis policy.

7. Inclusion and safeguarding

Tas Valley Federation is committed to ensuring that all children with medical conditions, including allergies, in terms of both physical and mental health, are properly supported in school so that they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential.

8. Catering

All food businesses (including school caterers) must follow the Food Information Regulations 2014 which states that allergen information relating to the 'Top 14' allergens must be available for all food products.

If a parent/carer notifies the school about an allergy, they are directed to contact Norse Catering, who provide our school meals. An individual menu can be agreed with the parent, and a system is in place to ensure that the kitchen, midday supervisors and school office are aware of the dietary requirements when ordering, preparation and delivery of the meal.

The school menu is available for parents to view in advance with all ingredients listed and allergens highlighted.

Where food is provided by the school, staff should be educated about how to read labels for food allergens and instructed about measures to prevent cross contamination during the handling, preparation and serving of food.

Examples include: preparing food for children with food allergies first; careful cleaning (using warm soapy water) of food preparation areas and utensils.

Foods containing nuts are discouraged from being brought in to school.

Use of food in crafts, cooking classes, science experiments and special events (e.g. fetes, assemblies, cultural events) needs to be considered and may need to be restricted/risk assessed depending on the allergies of particular children and their age.

9. School trips

Staff leading school trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies. Trip leaders will check that all pupils with medical conditions, including allergies, carry their medication. Pupils unable to produce their required medication will not be able to attend the excursion. All the activities on the school trip will be risk assessed to see if they pose a threat to allergic pupils and alternative activities planned to ensure inclusion. Overnight school trips may be possible with careful planning and a meeting for parents with the lead member of staff planning the trip should be arranged. Staff at the venue for an overnight school trip should be briefed early on that an allergic child is attending and will need appropriate food (if provided by the venue). Sporting Excursions Allergic children should have every opportunity to attend sports trips to other schools. The school will ensure that the P.E. teacher/s are fully aware of the situation. The school being visited will be notified that a member of the team has an allergy when arranging the fixture. A member of staff trained in administering adrenaline will accompany the team. If another school feels that they are not equipped to cater for any food-allergic child, the school will arrange for the child to take alternative/their own food. Most parents are keen that their children should be included in the full life of the school where possible, and the school will need their co-operation with any special arrangements required.

10. Allergy awareness

Tas Valley Federation supports the approach advocated by The Anaphylaxis Campaign and Allergy UK towards nut bans/nut free schools. They would not necessarily support a blanket ban on any particular allergen in any establishment, including in schools. This is because nuts are only one of many allergens that could affect pupils, and no school could guarantee a truly allergen free environment for a child living with food allergy. They advocate instead for schools to adopt a culture of allergy awareness and education. A 'whole school awareness of allergies' is a much better approach, as it ensures teachers, pupils and all other staff aware of what allergies are, the importance of avoiding the pupils' allergens, the signs & symptoms, how to deal with allergic reactions and to ensure policies and procedures are in place to minimise risk.

11. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years.