

Greenwich House Independent School

Food Allergies and Acute Allergic Reactions

For a complexity of reasons, some understood and others to be discovered, food allergies are far more common today than in the past. It must not be assumed that it is merely the diagnosis of these problems that has made this condition more fashionable these days than hence forth.

There are still those who state, (without proof) that society is becoming soft and these things are in reality, unimportant.

Such attitudes are ill considered and potentially dangerous.

It is an indisputable fact that the Acute Allergic Reactions are potentially deadly and their onset often swift and unremitting.

The health of people so inflicted has often been left severely impaired, brain damage has on occasions permanently destroyed their quality of life and in the most severe cases death has very suddenly taken the lives of babies and adults alike.

As a provider of child care, we have a duty to do all we can to prevent known allergic reactions from occurring and to control through medication or other means and according to parental/medical guidance the extremes of potential reactions.

It should be accepted by everyone that not all allergies reactions are violent or life threatening at first.

Many can start and remain as minor rashes, sickness, or other innocuous reaction that either go undiagnosed or untreated. They have however, on occasions, a tendency to increase in seriousness over time. For example, a child or adult can be stung by a wasp and have nothing more than what would be considered a normal reaction to this event e.g. a small, sore swelling. However, if over a period of time, this person is stung again and then again, in some cases but not by any means in all cases, the reaction increases in intensity with each sting to the point when a severe anaphylactic reaction occurs. Such anaphylactic reaction can cause death if treatment and expertise is not at hand.

Other acute allergic reactions occur 'out of the blue' and can be very frightening to witness. Medical help should be sought immediately.

Most allergic reactions however are known and it is vital that we arm ourselves with the required knowledge to either prevent them or deal with them.

This policy document and its associated routines and practices is designed to alleviate many of the possible hazards to children or staff who are a part of Greenwich House School, Kindergarten and Crèche.

Allergies to Foods

Allergies to foods tends to be specific to certain groups of food e.g. Milk (lactose) sensitivity or food colourings.

In the case of milk allergies for example, it is not just milk itself that can cause a problem, but also foods or food products containing milk that can cause an allergic reaction i.e. Cheese, cheese spreads, milk shakes, ice creams made with milk, milk jellies, etc.

The staff should therefore adopt the following routines to prevent exposure to potentially dangerous food groups.

Staffing Issues

The member of staff responsible for briefing all staff involved in caring and feeding a child with an identified food allergy is:-

- In the case of the pre-school departments (Kindergarten and Crèche) Mrs. M. Morley.
- In the case of the School, Mrs. J Brindle will assume this responsibility.
- In the absence of Mrs. Morley, the responsibility falls on Mrs E Brindle. Mrs E Brindle will be informed of this additional responsibility on these occasions.
- In the absence of the above, a qualified carer will assume this responsibility and will be informed of this.
- In the case of the School, Mrs. J Brindle will assume this responsibility. In her absence, Mrs. A Brindle will take over this role. In Mrs. J Brindle and Mrs. A Brindle's absence, Mrs. G Dunthorne will take on this role. In all the above members of staff are absent, a person nominated by one of the above will assume the responsibility.

The Role of the School Cook and Kitchen

The School Cook should refer daily to the Pupil/staff allergies record which will be posted and updated as necessary in a prominent place. All menus are displayed saying please inform the school cook or Mrs Brindle if there are any concerns re food ingredients for the week.

The food allergy record will provide the following information:-

1. The name of the child/member of staff concerned.
2. The type of allergy i.e. Lactose allergy.
3. The types of food/s which must not be given.
4. The type of foods to be used as substitutes.
5. The child's/ member of staff's doctor and telephone number.
6. The telephone number and location of the nearest Hospital with an Accident and Emergency Department (normally Louth County Hospital).
7. Medicines/treatments to be given in an emergency, e.g. Antihistamine pills/epi-pens, etc.

NB If you feel that you are inadequately trained to use an epi-pen or other prescribed equipment, please tell the school management who will arrange training at the earliest opportunity.

In the absence of the School Cook, anyone acting in the capacity of Temporary Cook should be made aware of the need to refer to the Pupil/Staff Allergies Record referred to above.

School Records

On entry each parent/guardian must fill in a profile of their child's needs, including any pre existing medical conditions. **This includes all allergies, however mild.**

Staff with responsibility for inducting children into the School/Kindergarten or Crèche should SPECIFICALLY ASK IF THIS CHILD HAS ANY ALLERGIES, which should then be recorded on the child's records and the Pupil/staff Allergies record immediately.

Spend sufficient time with each new client to fully understand the nature of the allergy and what action is necessary on our part should an incident occur at Greenwich House.

Staff suspecting allergic reaction should report them to a senior member of staff and take fast and positive action according to the standing instructions in the Pupil/Staff Allergies Record. The School Head teacher or her nominated representative should be alerted.

A letter should be provided by the parent/s of any child with an allergy, specifying its nature, which foods/items should be avoided, which foods are to act as alternatives/ substitutes, treatments/medicines taken and the name, address and telephone number of the family doctor.

These letters should be kept on the school in a place accessible to all staff at all times.

The location of such information **should be made known to all including supply staff who are particularly vulnerable to the lack of such knowledge.**

All staff should also ask where this book is kept and note its location. The book will be called Children/Staff Allergies Action Record.

Feeding

Baby Bottle containers should be marked with a notice stating:

**Be allergy alert – Is this Milk/Food safe for this particular child?
Check the Pupil/Staff Allergy record now.**

Fridge Doors and other food storage should also be similarly posted.

Special Foods

Special foods provided for individual babies/children should be clearly labeled with the child's name. They should never be used for other children.

Parents should be contacted immediately if the child is left without its special food.

Never attempt to substitute other foods/products without obtaining parental permission.

Record the date and time of the telephone conversation and the action recommended by the parent.

Crèche and Kindergarten Rooms

All the above rooms should have a copy of the Pupil/Staff Allergies Chart referred to in the section concerned with the Role of the Cook/kitchen.

School

Similar staff/pupil Allergy Records should be available upstairs in the School.

..... Head Teacher

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