



01904 409763
headoffice@yorkchildcare.co.uk
www.yorkchildcare.co.uk

Food Allergy and Intolerances Policy

Statement of Intent

This policy is concerned with a whole setting approach to the health care and management of those children suffering from specific allergies, food intolerances, specific dietary requirements and preferences.

York Childcare setting comply with the Early Years Statutory Framework (EYFS 2025), which requires providers to take all reasonable steps to ensure children are not exposed to risks and to promote good health, including the management of allergies and medical needs.

York Childcare settings are aware that children who attend may suffer from food, bee/wasp stings, animal or nut allergies and we believe that all allergies should be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional and appropriate way.

The setting aim is to minimise exposure to nuts and other high-risk allergens. However, we cannot guarantee a completely allergen-free environment.

The EYFS 2025 states that the provider must obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances, and any special health requirements. As such parents are asked to provide details of allergies in the child's enrolment form, which is submitted before starting the setting. A Safe Food Agreement will be completed with parents, senior staff, and where appropriate the cook. All information will be shared with all staff especially those involved in preparing and handling food.

Aim

The intent of this policy is to minimise the risk of any child suffering from allergy-induced anaphylaxis whilst at the setting.

An allergic reaction to nuts is the most common high-risk allergy and as such demands more rigorous controls throughout the policy.

The underlying principles of this policy include:

- The establishment of effective risk management practices to minimise the child's exposure to known trigger foods and insects.
- Staff training and education to ensure effective emergency response to any allergic reaction situation.

This policy applies to all members of the setting's community:

- Children
- Staff
- Parents
- Visitors

Definitions

Allergy – A condition in which the body has an exaggerated response to a substance (e.g. food or drug) also known as hypersensitivity.

Allergen – A normally harmless substance that triggers an allergic reaction in the immune system of a susceptible person.

Allergy Plan – A plan for managing known allergies.

Anaphylaxis – Anaphylaxis or anaphylactic shock is a sudden, severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction to food, stings, bite or medicines.

Coeliac Disease – A condition where the immune system attacks the bodies tissue when gluten is consumed.

EpiPen/Annapen – Brand name for syringe style device containing the drug Adrenaline – which is ready for immediate inter-muscular administration.

Food Intolerances - A food intolerance is when there is difficulty digesting certain foods or ingredients in food.

Gluten Intolerance – A comparatively newly recognised condition.

Healthcare Plan – A detailed document outlining an individual child's condition, treatment, and location of medication/EpiPen.

Lactose Intolerance – A common disorder arising from the inability to digest lactose (milk sugar). This is not a milk allergy.

Minimised Risk Environment – An environment where risk management practices (e.g. risk assessments, safe food agreements) have minimised the risk of (allergen) exposure.



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Safe Food Agreement – Documented agreed foods which the child is to avoid and those the child may have. Completed with the parent, senior setting staff and the setting's cook.

Procedures and Responsibilities for Allergy, Food Intolerance, Health Care Needs and Cultural Preference Management

General

- The involvement of parents and staff in establishing individual health care plans, allergy plans and safe food agreements.
- The establishment and maintenance of practices for effectively communicating a child's safe food agreement and health care/allergy plan with all relevant staff.
- Staff training in anaphylaxis management, including awareness of triggers and first aid procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.
- Age-appropriate education of the children with severe food allergies.

Mealtime Procedures

All children at the setting have a colour coded placemat which is used at snack/mealtimes to ensure diets are adhered to. The placemats have a picture of the child, their name, and dietary requirements. There is an allergy file in each room and allergy lists displaying the children who have dietary requirements for the purpose of if there is a change of staff in rooms and serves as a visual reminder for all. We consider seating to avoid cross contamination of food from child to child.

In line with EYFS 2025 an adult must sit with children during meals to ensure safety and minimise risks. Where appropriate, age/stage discussions will also take place with all children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods.

Staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy. Please refer to our Food Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy.

Medical Information

The setting will seek updated information via Safe Food Agreements, Allergy Management Plans and Healthcare Plans every 6 months. Furthermore, any

changes in a child's medical condition at any point must be reported to the setting.

- The Manager/SENCO will ensure that a Safe Food Agreement/Healthcare/Allergy Plan is in place and updated for each child.
- For children with an allergic condition the setting requires parents/carers to provide written advice from a GP/Paediatrician/Allergy Nurse which explains the condition, defines the allergy triggers and any required medication.
- Practitioners and the child's key person are required to review and familiarise themselves with the allergy, intolerances, cultural preferences and medical information.
- Recent photographs of the children and their allergy plan/safe food agreement will be posted in relevant rooms with parents' permission.
- Risk assessments for outings must include children with allergies.
- The wearing of a medic-alert bracelet is allowed by the setting.

Medical Information EpiPens/Anapens

Where EpiPens/Anapens (Adrenaline) are required in the Healthcare/Allergy Plan:

- Parents/carers are responsible for the provision and timely replacement of the EpiPen.
- The EpiPens are located in relevant locations approved by the setting Manager.
- A risk assessment is in place and attached to the Healthcare/Allergy Plan.
- EpiPens are stored in an accessible, clearly labelled location, out of children's reach but quickly accessible to staff at all times (including outdoors and on outings). They travel with the child at all times.

Food Intolerances including Lactose Intolerance and Gluten Intolerance

Staff are aware of the differences between allergies and intolerances. A Safe Food Agreement will be in place for those children with a food, lactose and gluten intolerance. Although this is not usually serious, however eating the food can make the child feel unwell. Staff understand the impact both physical and mentally on children who have a food intolerance and are committed to supporting the child's wellbeing.

Coeliac Disease

Staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of Coeliac Disease. Staff ensure ingredients are checked and alternatives provided. We will follow specialist advice from parents, GPs and dieticians.



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Parents/Carers Role

Parents/Carers are responsible for providing, in writing, accurate and current medical information to the setting.

Parents/Carers to complete a Safe Food Agreement and Healthcare/Allergy Plan including:

- The allergen (the substance the child is allergic to).
- The nature of the allergic reaction (from rash, breathing problems to anaphylactic shock).
- What to do in the case of allergic reaction, including any medication to be used and how it is used.
- Control measures – such as how the child can be prevented from getting into contact with the allergen.
- Parents/carers must sign the risk assessment.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to provide the setting with up-to-date medication/equipment clearly labelled in a suitable container.

In the case of life saving medication such as EpiPens the child will not be allowed to attend the setting without it.

Parents are required to provide up-to-date emergency contact information.

Snacks and lunches brought into Setting where appropriate are provided by each child's parent/carer. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer that the contents are safe for the child to consume.

Parents should liaise with Staff about appropriateness of snacks and any food related activities (e.g. cooking/baking)

Staff's Role

Staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with the policy and adhere to Health & Safety regulations regarding food and drink.

If a child's Enrolment Form states that they have an allergy, then a Safe Food Agreement and Healthcare Plan is needed. It must be in place before the child starts attending sessions. A Risk Assessment should be carried out and any actions

identified to be put in place. The Risk Assessment should be attached to the child's Healthcare Plan.

Upon determining that a child attending setting has a severe allergy, a team meeting will be set up as soon as possible where ALL staff concerned attend to update knowledge and awareness of the child's needs.

All staff who come into contact with the child will be made aware of what treatment/medication is required by the Manager and where any medication is stored.

All staff are to promote handwashing before and after food.

Snack time biscuits and snacks are monitored by staff and are peanut, nut free and other allergens free depending on the children attending. All staff should know the procedures at snack and lunch time to ensure the safety of children with allergies.

However, staff cannot guarantee that foods will not contain nut traces.

All tables are cleaned with an appropriate approved solution.

Children are not permitted to share food.

As part of the staff Paediatric First Aid training (PFA), EpiPen use, and storage has been discussed.

Emergency medication should be easily accessible, especially at times of high risk.

Staff should liaise with parents/carers about snacks and any food-related activities.

Actions

In the event of a child suffering an allergic reaction:

- We will delegate someone to contact the child's parent/carer.
- If a child becomes distressed or symptoms become more serious telephone 999.
- Keep calm, make the child comfortable and give the child space.
- If medication is available, it will be administered as per training and in conjunction with the Healthcare Plan and Medication Policy.

- If parents/carers have not arrived at Setting by the time an ambulance arrives a member of staff will accompany the child to hospital.



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Role of Other Parents/Carers

The setting will make all reasonable adjustments to meet children's dietary and medical needs in line with the Equality Act 2010. In exceptional circumstances where needs cannot be safely met, options will be discussed with parents.

Parents are responsible for ensuring safe preparation, storage, and transportation of food to the setting when it has been agreed that food from home will be provided. The setting is not responsible for food prepared at home in line with the Food Safety Requirements.

Snacks and lunches brought to the setting by other parents/carers should be peanut and nut free. The setting will ensure that parents/carers are regularly reminded and will monitor the contents of any lunches and snacks sent in from home.

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