

GDF ALLERGY AWARENESS & SAFETY POLICY

Updated for September 2026 – Benedict's Law / Allergy Safety in Schools

Document Control

Policy owner	Gradually Developing Futures (GDF)
Effective date	1 September 2026
Previous review date	1 September 2025
Next review date	1 September 2027, or sooner if legislation/guidance changes
Status	Updated to reflect the 2026 statutory framework for allergy safety in schools in England

1. Policy Statement

GDF recognises its responsibilities for the safety and wellbeing of its pupils, staff and visitors and is aware of the potential for individuals within the organisation to suffer from allergies. GDF therefore has a policy to raise awareness of the potential dangers of allergens and to ensure that proportionate controls are in place to reduce the risk of allergic reactions and to support a rapid and effective emergency response.

This policy has been updated to reflect the Department for Education statutory guidance "Allergy safety in schools", published in July 2026, and the allergy-safety provisions introduced through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 (commonly referred to as Benedict's Law). From 1 September 2026, schools in scope in England must have a dedicated whole-school allergy safety policy and have regard to the statutory guidance. The policy must be published and reviewed at least annually.

The purpose of this policy is to identify food and other allergen risks within GDF, set out reasonable measures to reduce exposure, ensure that pupils with allergies are supported and included, and establish clear arrangements for recognising and responding to allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis.

GDF recognises that allergic reactions can be life-threatening and that no school can guarantee an allergen-free environment. The aim is therefore effective risk management, clear communication, appropriate training, rapid access to emergency medication and learning from incidents and near misses.

2. Scope

This policy applies across the whole GDF community, including pupils, all employees, supply and agency staff, volunteers, contractors, catering staff and relevant visitors. It applies during the school day and, so far as reasonably practicable, during clubs, activities, educational visits, transport and residential or off-site provision.



www.graduallydevelopingfutures.co.uk

©2021 GDF

Registered office: 2nd Floor South, One Castle Park, Tower Hill, Bristol, BS2 0JA
Company no: 07150627

3. Policy Aims

- Identify and manage the risks associated with allergies and anaphylaxis.
- Identify safeguards that reduce the likelihood of allergen exposure and ensure that emergency arrangements are effective.
- Ensure pupils with allergies are safely included in the full life of the school and are not unnecessarily excluded from activities, trips, clubs, meals or educational opportunities.
- Ensure every member of staff has appropriate allergy awareness and emergency-response knowledge.
- Ensure pupils with allergies who require active management have an appropriate Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) and, where appropriate, an Allergy Action Plan.
- Ensure incidents, near misses and relevant safety drills are recorded, reviewed and used to improve practice.

4. Responsibilities and Leadership

GDF will appoint a named senior leader to have overall responsibility for allergy safety. The governing body/academy trust or equivalent leadership body will provide oversight of the policy and allergy-related risk management.

- The named senior leader will ensure that this policy is implemented, published, reviewed at least annually and communicated to the school community.
- Allergy-related risks will be considered within the school's wider risk-management arrangements and risk register where appropriate.
- A named governor/trustee or equivalent will provide oversight of allergy safety and receive assurance about training, incidents, near misses, emergency medication and policy review.
- The Allergy Lead will liaise with parents/carers, pupils, the SENCO/medical lead where appropriate, catering providers and relevant healthcare professionals.
- The school will maintain appropriate records while respecting confidentiality and UK data-protection requirements.

5. Potential Threats and Risk Areas

- Allergenic food brought into GDF in packed lunches, snacks or food shared by pupils or staff.
- Food containing allergens used in teaching, cooking, food technology, science, art or other activities.
- Food served by GDF or its catering provider.



www.graduallydevelopingfutures.co.uk

©2021 GDF

Registered office: 2nd Floor South, One Castle Park, Tower Hill, Bristol, BS2 0JA
Company no: 07150627

- Cross-contact between foods, utensils, surfaces, equipment or hands.
- Contact between people who have handled allergenic food and an allergic pupil without appropriate hand hygiene.
- Unclear, incomplete or incorrect allergen information from food suppliers or caterers.
- Substitution of food products without checking allergen information.
- Allergen exposure during trips, clubs, transport, residential visits or external activities.
- Intentional or accidental sharing, swapping or misuse of food.
- Allergy-related bullying, teasing, threats or deliberate exposure.
- A first allergic reaction occurring in a pupil or adult who has no previously known allergy.

6. Reasonable Limitations and the 'Allergen-Free' Principle

GDF will take proportionate and reasonable steps to reduce exposure to known allergens. However, it is not generally possible to guarantee an entirely allergen-free environment. GDF will not describe itself as a completely 'nut-free' or 'allergen-free' school because such a statement could create false reassurance.

Where commercially packaged foods carry precautionary allergen labelling such as 'may contain' or 'made in a factory that handles...', GDF will assess the risk in the context of the individual pupil and the activity. Such products will not automatically be regarded as safe simply because the allergen is not an intentional ingredient.

Where an individual pupil's IHP or healthcare advice requires stricter avoidance, GDF will follow the individual arrangements set out in that plan.

7. Identification, Information and Individual Healthcare Plans

- Parents/carers must inform GDF as soon as possible when a pupil has a diagnosed allergy or when allergy-related medical information changes.
- GDF will seek sufficient information to understand the pupil's known allergens, symptoms, emergency medication, emergency response and any relevant healthcare advice.
- Pupils whose allergies require active management by the school will have an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP), developed with the pupil/parents/carers and, where appropriate, relevant healthcare professionals.
- The IHP and any Allergy Action Plan will identify the pupil's allergens, signs and symptoms, medication, emergency procedures, staff responsibilities and arrangements for activities and trips.
- Plans will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there is a significant change in the pupil's condition, treatment, medication or school circumstances.
- Relevant staff will have access to the information they need to keep the pupil safe, while personal and medical information will be shared on a need-to-know basis.



www.graduallydevelopingfutures.co.uk

©2021 GDF

Registered office: 2nd Floor South, One Castle Park, Tower Hill, Bristol, BS2 0JA
Company no: 07150627

8. Actions by Parents and Carers

- Parents/carers should inform GDF promptly of any allergy diagnosis, suspected allergy, change in allergy status or change in prescribed medication.
- Parents/carers should provide appropriate medical documentation and prescribed medication/AAls as requested and ensure these remain in date and usable.
- Parents/carers should work with GDF to complete and keep the pupil's IHP/Allergy Action Plan up to date.
- Parents/carers should inform the school about relevant allergy risks associated with food brought into school.
- Parents/carers should reinforce with their child the importance of not sharing or swapping food and of reporting symptoms promptly.

9. Food, Catering and Allergen Management

- GDF will obtain and maintain reliable allergen information for food provided by the school or its catering provider.
- Catering and food-handling arrangements will follow applicable food safety and allergen legislation and HACCP-based procedures.
- Food handlers will receive appropriate training in food hygiene, allergen management, cross-contact prevention and the school's allergy procedures.
- Where allergen information is uncertain, food will not be served to a pupil with a relevant allergy until the ingredients and allergen information have been verified.
- Ingredient substitutions must be checked for allergen changes before food is served.
- Where allergenic ingredients are stored or handled openly/loosely, they will be appropriately controlled and stored to reduce cross-contact.
- Shared utensils, work surfaces and equipment will be managed to reduce cross-contact, particularly during food preparation and teaching activities.
- Pupils will be discouraged from sharing or swapping food.
- Hand hygiene will be encouraged after eating and after activities involving food allergens.

10. Staff Training and Awareness

All GDF staff will receive allergy awareness and emergency-response training appropriate to their role. The training will cover recognition of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis, emergency response, the use of adrenaline auto-injectors, the school's allergy policy, individual plans, incident/near-miss reporting and staff responsibilities.

Training will not be restricted to first aiders or medical staff. It will include teaching staff and other staff who may reasonably come into contact with pupils, including relevant lunchtime, catering, premises, transport, wraparound, temporary, supply and support staff.



www.graduatellydevelopingfutures.co.uk

©2021 GDF

Registered office: 2nd Floor South, One Castle Park, Tower Hill, Bristol, BS2 0JA
Company no: 07150627

GDF will maintain training records and ensure that staff joining the organisation are appropriately briefed. Refresher training will be provided in accordance with current statutory guidance and the school's training programme.

11. Spare Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs)

GDF will hold spare, in-date adrenaline auto-injectors for emergency use in accordance with the statutory guidance and the needs of the school population. Spare AAIs are for emergency use where an individual's own prescribed device is unavailable, unusable or insufficient, and they do not replace a pupil's prescribed medication.

- Spare AAIs will be stored in pairs and in a location that is known to staff and readily accessible in an emergency.
- AAIs will not be locked away in a way that could cause avoidable delay.
- The storage location will protect the devices from inappropriate temperatures, direct sunlight and damage, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- A designated member of staff will check spare AAIs regularly, including expiry date and physical condition, and record the checks.
- The number and strength of spare devices will reflect the age and needs of the pupils and the school's site arrangements, following current DfE guidance.
- For larger or dispersed sites, GDF will consider whether additional pairs are required so that emergency medication can reach the person who needs it without avoidable delay.

12. Emergency Response to Suspected Anaphylaxis

Any allergic reaction may become serious. If anaphylaxis is suspected, staff must act immediately in accordance with the pupil's IHP/Allergy Action Plan, current emergency guidance and their training.

- Administer the person's prescribed adrenaline auto-injector without delay when anaphylaxis is suspected, following the device instructions and individual plan.
- If the person's prescribed device is unavailable or unusable, use a suitable spare school AAI where permitted and appropriate.
- Call 999 and state that anaphylaxis is suspected; request an ambulance.
- A second adrenaline dose may be required after 5 minutes if symptoms have not improved, in accordance with current emergency guidance and the device/individual plan.
- Do not allow the person to walk around or leave them alone; remain with them and monitor them while waiting for emergency services.
- Follow the instructions of the ambulance service and provide information about the allergen exposure, medication given and timing of doses.
- Parents/carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable.
- The incident will be recorded, reviewed and reported through the school's incident/medical reporting arrangements.



www.graduallydevelopingfutures.co.uk

©2021 GDF

Registered office: 2nd Floor South, One Castle Park, Tower Hill, Bristol, BS2 0JA
Company no: 07150627

13. Incidents, Near Misses and Learning

GDF will record and review significant allergic reactions, suspected anaphylaxis, medication incidents and relevant near misses. Reviews will consider what happened, whether the policy and individual plans were followed, whether communication was effective and what action is needed to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Learning from incidents, near misses and allergy-safety drills will be used to update risk assessments, staff training, individual plans and this policy where appropriate.

14. Inclusion, Trips, Activities and Pupil Wellbeing

- Pupils with allergies will be fully included in school life wherever reasonably practicable.
- Risk management will focus on enabling safe participation rather than routine exclusion.
- Educational visits, residential trips, clubs, sports, transport and other activities will consider allergy risks in advance and ensure access to prescribed medication and appropriate emergency arrangements.
- Staff leading activities will know which pupils have relevant allergies and how to access their individual plans and medication.
- GDF will take allergy-related bullying seriously. Deliberate exposure, threats or jokes about a pupil's allergy will be treated as a safeguarding/behaviour concern and managed under the relevant school procedures.

15. Communication and Policy Promotion

- This policy will be published on the GDF website and made available to parents/carers and staff.
- New families will be informed about the school's allergy arrangements.
- Staff will receive induction information and ongoing training.
- Pupils will receive age-appropriate allergy awareness education through teaching, assemblies and other appropriate activities.
- Parents/carers and relevant visitors will be informed of arrangements where necessary to reduce allergen risk.
- The school will communicate clearly that pupils should not share or swap food.

16. Monitoring and Review

The named senior leader will monitor implementation of this policy, including staff training, IHPs, emergency medication, incident and near-miss records, safety drills, catering arrangements and risk assessments.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there is a significant incident, change in legislation or statutory guidance, change in school circumstances, or evidence that arrangements need to be strengthened.



www.graduallydevelopingfutures.co.uk

©2021 GDF

Registered office: 2nd Floor South, One Castle Park, Tower Hill, Bristol, BS2 0JA
Company no: 07150627

17. Relationship with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside GDF's policies and procedures relating to supporting pupils with medical conditions, first aid, safeguarding, SEND, food safety, educational visits, behaviour/anti-bullying, health and safety, medication and data protection.

Appendix 1 – The 14 Regulated Food Allergens

The following 14 allergens are recognised as regulated allergens under UK food information requirements. Where they are intentionally used as ingredients, they must be declared in accordance with applicable food information rules. The list below is for awareness and is not a substitute for checking the full ingredient/allergen information for individual products.

- **Cereals containing gluten:** Wheat, rye, barley and oats. Commonly found in bread, cakes, pasta, pastry, cereals, breadcrumbs, batter, couscous, sauces and other foods.
- **Crustaceans:** Crab, lobster, prawns and similar shellfish. May occur in seafood dishes, stocks, pastes and sauces.
- **Eggs:** Egg and egg products. Common in cakes, pasta, mayonnaise, quiche, sauces, desserts and glazed foods.
- **Fish:** Fish and fish products. Can occur in sauces, stocks, dressings, pizzas, relishes and Worcestershire sauce.
- **Peanuts:** Peanuts and peanut products. Can occur in spreads, sauces, confectionery, desserts and Asian-style dishes.
- **Soybeans:** Soya and soya products, including tofu, miso, edamame, soya flour and textured soya protein.
- **Milk:** Milk and milk products, including butter, cheese, cream, yoghurt and milk powders.
- **Nuts:** Almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecans, Brazil nuts, pistachios, macadamia/Queensland nuts and their products.
- **Celery:** Celery, celeriac, leaves and seeds. Can occur in stocks, soups, sauces, salads and celery salt.
- **Mustard:** Mustard seeds, powder and prepared mustard. Common in sauces, dressings, marinades, breads and curries.
- **Sesame:** Sesame seeds and products such as tahini and sesame oil. Common in breads, houmous and dressings.
- **Sulphur dioxide and sulphites:** Used as preservatives in some dried fruit, meat products, soft drinks and other foods. Declaration applies above the relevant legal threshold.
- **Lupin:** Lupin seeds and flour, sometimes used in bread, pastries, pasta and gluten-free products.
- **Molluscs:** Mussels, squid, snails, whelks, oysters and similar molluscs. Can occur in seafood dishes and sauces.

Appendix 2 – Key 2026 Compliance Checklist

- Dedicated whole-school allergy safety policy in place, published and reviewed at least annually.



www.graduatellydevelopingfutures.co.uk

©2021 GDF

Registered office: 2nd Floor South, One Castle Park, Tower Hill, Bristol, BS2 0JA
Company no: 07150627

- Named senior leader responsible for allergy safety.
- Named governor/trustee or equivalent oversight.
- Allergy risks included in wider risk-management arrangements.
- All staff receive allergy awareness and emergency-response training.
- Individual Healthcare Plans in place for pupils whose allergies require active management.
- Prescribed medication and individual Allergy Action Plans are accessible.
- Spare in-date adrenaline auto-injectors are held, stored appropriately and checked regularly.
- Emergency response arrangements are understood and tested where appropriate.
- Allergy incidents and near misses are recorded, reviewed and used for learning.
- Trips, clubs and activities include appropriate allergy planning.
- Catering and food-handling arrangements include reliable allergen information and cross-contact controls.
- Allergy-related bullying and deliberate exposure are addressed.

Sources and Legislative Basis

This update is based on the Department for Education statutory guidance “Allergy safety in schools” published in July 2026, and the allergy-safety provisions in the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026. It should be read with the current DfE guidance and any subsequent updates.

Important: This document is a policy drafting aid and should be checked against GDF’s exact legal status, local authority/trust arrangements, catering arrangements and the latest statutory guidance before formal adoption.



www.graduallydevelopingfutures.co.uk

©2021 GDF

Registered office: 2nd Floor South, One Castle Park, Tower Hill, Bristol, BS2 0JA
Company no: 07150627