

Allergies and food intolerance

Statement of Intent

This policy is concerned with a whole Nursery approach to the health care and management of those children suffering from specific allergies. Mother Hen Nursery is 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 professionally and appropriately. Mother Hen Nursery's position is not to guarantee a completely allergen-free environment, but rather to minimise the risk of exposure, encourage self-responsibility, and plan for effective responses to possible emergencies. The Early Years Statutory Framework (EYFS 2023) states that the provider must obtain information about any dietary requirements/allergies. As such parents are asked to provide details of allergies in the child's enrolment form, which is submitted before starting nursery.

Aim

This policy intends to minimise the risk of any child suffering from allergy-induced anaphylaxis whilst at nursery. 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 nursery community:

- Children
- Nursery 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

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

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

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

Safe Food Agreement – Documented agreed foods that the child is to avoid and those the child may have. Completed with the parent senior nursery staff and the nursery cook.

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

Procedures and Responsibilities For Allergy Management General

- The involvement of parents and staff in establishing individual health care plans and safe food agreements.
- The establishment and maintenance of practices for effectively communicating a child's safe food agreement and health care 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 children with severe food allergies.

Medical Information

The nursery will seek updated information via Healthcare Plans every 6 months. Furthermore, any changes in a child's medical condition at any point must be reported to the nursery.

- The Manager/SENCO will ensure that a Safe food Agreement/Healthcare Plan is in place and updated for each child.
- For children with an allergic condition the nursery requires parents/carers to provide written advice from a GP/Paediatrician/Allergy Nurse which explains the condition and defines the allergy triggers and any required medication.
- Practitioners and the child's key person are required to review and familiarise themselves with the medical information.

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- Recent photographs of the children and their allergy plan 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 nursery.

Medical Information EpiPens/Anapens

Where EpiPens/Anapens (Adrenalin) is required in the healthcare Plan:

- Parents/carers are responsible for the provision and timely replacement of the EpiPen.
- The EpiPens are located in the medicine cabinet at the bottom of the stairs.
- A risk assessment is in place and attached to the Healthcare Plan.

Parents/Carers Role

Parents/Carers are responsible for providing, in writing, accurate and current medical information to the nursery. Parents/Carers to complete a Healthcare plan including:

- The allergen (the substance the child is allergic to).
- The nature of the allergic reaction (from rash, and breathing problems to anaphylactic shock).
- What to do in the case of an 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 nursery 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 nursery without it.

Parents are required to provide up-to-date emergency contact information. Snacks and lunches brought into the nursery 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 the 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 adhering to health & safety regulations regarding food and drink. If a child's enrolment form states that they have an allergy, a 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 nursery 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 depending on the children attending. All staff should know the procedures at snack and lunchtime 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 first aid course, 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 the nursery by the time an ambulance arrives a member of staff will accompany the child to the hospital.

Role of Other Parents/Carers

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

All food intolerances and emerging food allergies are taken very seriously and risk assessed accordingly.