



Allergy Policy

Downside School believes that the safety and wellbeing of those members of its school community who suffer from specific allergies and are at risk of anaphylaxis are the responsibility of the whole school community.

The School cannot guarantee a completely allergen free environment therefore it aims to minimise the risk of exposure, encourage self-responsibility, and plan for an effective response to possible emergencies.

Downside School will ensure arrangements are in place to support pupils with allergies and in doing so ensure that such pupils can access and enjoy the same opportunities at school as any other child. The School will focus on the individual pupil and how their medical condition impacts on their school life.

The Head of Nursing, with assistance from the Director of Pastoral care and the House teams, has overall responsibility for ensuring Individual Health Care Plans are in place, monitored, and communicated appropriately to the rest of the school community. This core team will also work with parents to establish prevention and treatment strategies.

Staff will be sufficiently trained to recognise and manage severe allergies in school including any emergency situations that may arise during the school day.

The School will ensure that the catering department are aware of individual allergic pupil's requirements which will enable the catering staff to give further advice to each individual pupil as needed.

Aims of Policy:

- To minimise the risk of an allergic/anaphylactic reaction while the pupil is involved in school activities either on or off site.
- To be proactive in the awareness and support offered to pupils with allergies.
- To ensure that staff members respond appropriately to an allergic/anaphylactic event by initiating appropriate treatment, including competently administering an adrenaline auto-injection device.
- To raise, the awareness of allergy/anaphylaxis and its management through education and policy implementation.
- To give parents and pupils confidence in the school's ability to provide effective support and show an understanding of how allergies impact on a child's ability to learn as well as to increase their confidence and promote self-care.

Downside School will:

- Establish clear procedures and responsibilities to be followed by staff in meeting the needs of pupils with allergies.
- Coordinate the involvement of the admissions department, parents, health centre, pastoral staff and the pupil in establishing an individual medical care plan when required.
- Ensure effective communication of individual pupil medical needs to relevant teachers and other relevant staff.
- Provide First Aid staff training that includes anaphylaxis management, and awareness of triggers and first aid procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure educational visit planning includes advance checks that 'safe' food is provided or that an effective control is in place to minimise risk of exposure for pupils with allergies. Where a pupil is prescribed an auto-injection device the staff member in charge will ensure they or another supervising staff member is trained in its use, and capable of performing any possible required medical treatment as outlined in the pupil's health care plan.
- Providing, as far as is practicable, a safe and healthy environment in which people at risk of allergies and anaphylaxis can participate equally in all aspects of school life.
- Encourage self-responsibility and learned avoidance strategies amongst pupils suffering from allergies.
- Raise awareness about allergies and anaphylaxis amongst the school community.
- Ensure each staff member has adequate knowledge of allergies, anaphylaxis and emergency procedures.
- Promote food allergy information (including anaphylaxis) during INSET training.

The school will review policies after a reaction has occurred, updating and monitoring the policy and health care plans on an ongoing basis.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Admissions team is responsible for:

- Contacting parents for required medical documentation regarding a child's allergy. (The responsibility lies with parents to ensure this information is provided).
- Ensuring that there is an effective system to regularly update and disseminate medical information to staff and others, including supply staff.
- Ensuring that parents are reminded of their responsibility to provide a current Action Plan.

The Head of Nursing is responsible for

- Ensuring that House staff are trained in the use of auto-injection devices and management of anaphylaxis and that similar training/information is provided periodically to all other staff.
- Getting feedback from staff following their participation in allergy/anaphylaxis management training.
- Routinely review each pupil's auto-injection device to ensure that it remains complete and is in date.

- Checking Emergency kits around the school each term to ensure they are stored correctly, are still in date and ready for use.

Teaching Staff are responsible for:

- Acquiring knowledge of the signs and symptoms of severe allergic reaction.
- Understanding the information provided in the pupil health care plans, and implementing the emergency plan if a reaction is suspected.
- Participating in relevant in-service training (INSET) regarding pupils with life-threatening allergies including demonstration of how to use an auto-injection device.
- Determining suitable protocols regarding the management of food in the classroom e.g. during science or cooking activities where allergens may be used.
- Reinforcing appropriate classroom hygiene practices e.g. hand washing before and after eating or tasks potentially leading to contamination.
- Responding immediately to reports of pupils being teased or bullied about their food allergies.
- Following Allergy Action Plan and call 999 when life-threatening allergy-related symptoms occur.

Catering Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring all foods and snacks served by them are nut free
- Being aware of pupils and staff who have severe food allergies.
- Communicating effectively to pupils and staff if dishes contain known allergen ingredients

The Director of Pastoral Care is responsible for:

- Audit enrolment documentation to ensure it is current and complete.
- Discuss this policy and its implementation with parents/guardians of pupils at risk of allergy/anaphylaxis and gauge their satisfaction in relation to their child.
- Respond in a timely and appropriate manner to any complaints received in relation to this policy.
- Review the adequacy of the response of the school if a pupil has an allergic/anaphylactic reaction and consider the need for additional training and other corrective action.

Parents are responsible for:

- Notify the school of the pupil's allergies. Ensure there is clear communication.
- Give permission for Allergy medicine of the same type, but not specifically prescribed should it be required e.g. pupil has left medicine in house and is having a reaction.
- Work with the school to develop a plan that accommodates the pupil's needs throughout the school including in the classroom, in dining areas, in House, during school-sponsored activities.

- Provide written medical documentation, instructions and medications as directed by a doctor. Replace medications after use or upon expiry.
- Educate the pupil in allergy self-management, including what foods are safe and unsafe, strategies for avoiding allergens, how to spot symptoms of allergy, how and when to tell an adult of any reaction, and how to read food labels.
- Review policies and procedures with the school staff, Head of Nursing, the pupil's doctor and the pupil (if age appropriate) after a reaction has occurred.

The Pupil is responsible for:

- Not exchanging food or utensils with others.
- Eating anything with unknown ingredients.
- Notifying a staff member immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic.
- Notify a staff member immediately if they believe they are having a reaction, even if the cause is unknown.
- Learning to recognise personal symptoms.
- Keeping emergency medications on their person at all times.
- Notifying an adult if they are being picked on or threatened by other students as it relates to their food allergy, so this can be dealt with under the Bullying Policy.
- Developing greater independence to keep themselves safe from anaphylactic reactions.

Evaluation and Review

This policy shall be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. This shall be annual as diarised in the H&S calendar and particularly after a serious allergic reaction has occurred at the school. It shall be automatically amended to conform to amendments and changes in rules and regulations.

Appendix I - Definitions

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

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

Allergic reaction – A reaction to an allergen. Common signs and symptoms include one or more of the following: hives, generalised flushing of the skin, tingling around the mouth, swelling of tissues of the throat and mouth, difficulty breathing, abdominal pain, nausea and/or vomiting, alterations in heart rate, sense of impending doom, sudden feeling of weakness, collapse and unconsciousness.

Anaphylaxis – Anaphylaxis, or anaphylactic shock, is normally a sudden, severe and potentially life threatening allergic reaction to food, stings, bites, or medicines though a delayed reaction is possible in certain cases.

EpiPen – Brand name for syringe style device containing the drug adrenaline which is ready for immediate intramuscular administration.

Minimised Risk Environment - An environment where risk management practices have minimised the risk of (allergen) exposure to a reasonable level. Not an allergen-free environment.

Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) - A comprehensive plan for the care of children with special health care needs, including food allergies and action plan for location of EpiPen.

Appendix 2 – Management of specific allergies

1. Nut Related Aspects

The school caterers have a nut-free policy and do not serve nuts in any of the food they prepare for the school. This does not extend to those foods labelled “may contain traces of nuts”.

Pupils are encouraged to self-manage their allergy as far as possible in preparation for life after school where nut-free environments are rare.

2. Dairy and Egg-Related Aspects

Pupils with dairy product or egg allergies are managed by the School in consultation with the parents on a case by case basis.

3. Insect-Related Aspects

Diligent management of wasp, bee and ant nests on School grounds and proximity. This must include the effective system for staff reporting to management, and a system of timely response to eradicating nests.

4. Latex-Related Aspects

If a pupil is allergic to latex they should avoid contact with some everyday items including, rubber gloves (unless latex-free), balloons, pencil erasers, rubber bands, rubber balls, and tubes and stoppers used for science experiments.

Recognition:

- Impaired breathing: this may range from a tight chest to severe difficulty
- There may be a wheeze or gasping for air
- Signs of shock
- Widespread blotchy skin eruption

- Swelling of the tongue and throat
- Puffiness around the eyes
- Anxiety

Reviewed by: M Pye – Head of Nursing Care

Authorised by: C Murphy

Position : Director of Pastoral Care

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