



Keeping children with food allergies safe in schools

A 12-point action plan



All nursery and school staff should be trained in allergy awareness, allergy management, and how to respond in a food allergy emergency, including administration of medication. Lists and photos of children with food allergies should be available to all staff to ensure they can be easily identified and their needs met throughout the school day.



The Government's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' safeguarding guidance needs to be updated and strengthened to include specific reference to children with food allergies.



All schools and nurseries should have a specific allergy policy which includes an anaphylaxis plan.



All schools and nurseries should have an individual healthcare plan in place for every child with a diagnosed food allergy, and these should always include Paediatric Allergy Action Plans and an Anaphylaxis Risk Assessment.



All schools and nurseries should record and report all known instances of food allergic reactions and near-misses. This record keeping should be included in the evaluation criteria for Ofsted inspections.



All schools should be funded to hold in-date spare adrenaline auto injectors (AAIs) at the suitable required dosage, with all staff trained in their use. If funding is not available, schools should be able to purchase AAIs at the NHS Drug Tariff Price.



All schools should have an allergy-aware anti-bullying policy. Schools should ensure their behaviour and anti-bullying policies include awareness of food allergy-related bullying.



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All schools should clearly indicate where their catering is sourced from on their website and in welcome documents for new pupils/parents. School food transparency is vital. Catering companies should make ingredients and allergen information for their menus readily available. **There should be mandatory minimum standards for all caterers in education settings, regardless of their commissioning.**



All under 5s who are eligible for free milk under the School Milk Subsidy Scheme or the Nursery Milk Scheme should have access to **free dairy-free alternatives.**



Children on Free School Meals should be entitled to an appropriate allergen-free hot meal wherever possible. In extreme cases, where schools are proven to be unable to provide suitable food, a fair compensation scheme should be in place for parents to be reimbursed the full price of an allergen-free packed lunch.



Inclusive free breakfast clubs for children with food allergies: The Government's new initiative to provide universal free breakfast clubs is a positive step toward healthier, more engaged students and could be especially helpful for families with food allergies, who incur 14.4% higher costs on weekly groceries. Children with food allergies need safe food options so they can enjoy breakfast without hesitation and breakfast clubs need to be aware of children with food allergies and provide alternative food options for them.

All government guidelines around food allergy safety in schools should apply equally to breakfast clubs, and schools should be supported to ensure alternative provision is in place for pupils with food allergies



A new approach using digital allergy awareness: Allergy and other medical records should be digitised and updated throughout a child's life, in a way that allows parents to easily make schools and other institutions aware of any food allergy or special medical requirement. This could most easily be achieved by making adjustments to the NHS Patient Access App, including encouraging parental sign up during postpartum health visits, ensuring Red Book records are transferred onto the app digitally, and improving the update system to ensure records are up-to-date.