

# WEST PARK ACADEMY

## Allergen Policy



**Reviewed: July 2024**

## Introduction

A food allergy is defined as an adverse health effect arising from a specific immune response that occurs reproducibly on exposure to a given food. The immune response can be severe and life-threatening. Although the immune system normally protects people from germs, in people with food allergies, the immune system mistakenly responds to food as if it were harmful.

One way that the immune system causes food allergies is by making a protein antibody called immunoglobulin E (IgE) to the food. The substance in foods that cause this reaction is called the food allergen. When exposed to the food allergen, the IgE antibodies alert cells to release powerful substances, such as histamine, that causes symptoms that can affect the respiratory system, gastrointestinal tract, skin, or cardiovascular system and lead to a life-threatening reaction called anaphylaxis. Although the number of children with food allergies in any one school may seem small, allergic reactions can be life-threatening.

An **allergic reaction** is the body's reaction to an allergen and can be identified by, but not limited to, the following symptoms:

- Hives
- Generalised flushing of the skin
- Itching and tingling of the skin
- Tingling in and around the mouth
- Burning sensation in the mouth
- Swelling of the throat, mouth or face
- Feeling wheezy
- Abdominal pain
- Rising anxiety
- Nausea and vomiting
- Alterations in heart rate
- Feeling of weakness

**Anaphylaxis**, which is also referred to as anaphylactic shock, is a sudden, severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. This kind of reaction may include the following symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing
- Feeling faint
- Reduced level of consciousness
- Lips turning blue
- Collapsing
- Becoming unresponsive

Retained Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 was incorporated into domestic law under the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and sets out requirements on the provision of food information to

consumers which includes the labelling of prepacked food and drink in the UK. This regulation requires food businesses to provide allergy information on food sold unpackaged, in for example: catering outlets; deli counters; bakeries; sandwich bars and school canteens. There will also be changes to existing legislation on labelling allergenic ingredients in pre-packed foods. The regulation requires caterers in all sectors to provide information on the presence of allergens in all menu items.

Rules and legislation details are available from:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eur/2011/1169/contents>

The regulation has listed 14 allergens that need to be identified if they are used as ingredients in a dish.

The allergens are:

Celery  
Cereals Containing Gluten  
Crustacean  
Eggs  
Fish  
Lupin  
Milk  
Molluscs  
Mustard  
Nuts  
Peanuts  
Sesame Seeds  
Soya  
Sulphur Dioxide.

Catering staff will need to be trained to be allergen aware and consistent in communicating with customers who have allergies.

Failing to produce this information will breach the Food Safety Act.

The information will need to be available on demand either verbally or in written format and will be monitored and inspected via Environmental Health Officers.

The government introduced legislation during October 2021 known as 'Natasha's Law' which mandates full ingredients labelling for foods which are prepacked for direct sale (PPDS).

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses>

## **Purpose**

The purpose of having an Allergen Policy is:

- Assist and support West Park Academy to achieve compliance with current legislation
- Support implementation of a food allergy management system within catering
- To set out communication methods from parent to administration to catering for pupils, staff and visitors with allergies

- To provide a clear statement of how West Park Academy communicates with pupils, staff and visitors who have allergies.
- Ensure employees understand their obligations and standards expected with regard to handling allergens to ensure safety of pupils, staff and visitors with allergies at all times
- Ensure the highest standards of practice are followed by identifying Academy standards and procedures

## **Communication**

### **Parents**

Information on known allergies is requested from parents at the point of filling out forms when a pupil starts at West Park Academy. Parents may report a food allergy at any point in the school year and may inform school of any changes to a known food allergy.

When parents report a food allergy to the school office, class teacher or SEN staff, parents should provide the following:

- A recent photo of the child
- Information about the food allergen, including a confirmed written diagnosis from the child's doctor or allergist
- Information about signs and symptoms of the child's possible reactions to known allergens
- Information about the possible severity of reactions, including any history of prior anaphylaxis (even though anaphylaxis can occur even in children without a history of prior anaphylaxis)
- Treatment for responding to a food allergy reaction or emergency, including whether an epinephrine auto-injector should be used
- Information about other conditions, such as asthma or exercise-induced anaphylaxis that might affect food allergy management
- Contact information for parents and doctors, including alternate phone numbers in case of an emergency.

### **Administration**

A care plan is created using the information provided by parents.

The school office will forward any existing care plans to the designated member of staff in school who is responsible for pupils with care plans and medical conditions.

When allergies are reported after admission, the designated member of staff will prepare a care plan. The designated member of staff will provide the child's class teacher and the school office with a copy of care plans for pupils with food allergies. The school office will provide the school kitchen with allergy information including school meal or packed lunch requirements and a photo of the child. Care plans are checked with the school nurse if necessary. Care plans will be updated for any changes or updates to allergy information and passed to the school kitchen staff, school office and the child's class teacher.

## **Catering Staff**

The school kitchen will have a photograph displayed where staff only can see highlighting pupils with allergies, their allergy information and what food they must avoid. Catering staff have access to this information throughout the day when catering is in operation. A copy of the care plan will be passed to the class teacher to ensure they are aware of the pupil's allergies and what foods they must avoid. A record of this is stored on the Staff Shared drive.

The catering manager will document any pre-orders for pupils with known allergens and display this information in the kitchen. The catering team will liaise with lunchtime staff on a daily basis regarding any orders for pupils/staff or visitors.

It is not a legal requirement to display allergens on the menu, however we provide an allergen matrix on the school website alongside the school dinner menus to assist parents should pre-orders be required.

The catering manager will display posters and notices in the dining hall encouraging staff, pupils and visitors with allergies to talk to the team and inform them of allergies.

The catering manager will display notices telling customers allergens may be present in the food prepared on site. On request the catering manager will meet with parents to plan a menu specific for their child's needs. The Allergen Policy will also be displayed on the website under Parents: School Meals

## **Control Procedures**

The catering manager follows the Safer Food Better Business HACCP system. Produce is purchased from designated suppliers using agreed products and brands as per recipe. Supplier lists are stored in the kitchen.

A photograph of pupils with food allergies is held in the kitchen in the allergen file. Catering staff have access to allergen file for up to date information on pupils with allergies.

Staff are trained to refuse any goods on delivery that are split, damaged, dented or in poor condition in line with safer food better business system.

Staff are trained to check deliveries for substitute products that may contain allergens, to check for labels displaying "new improved recipe" in case an allergen has been added.

Hard copies of recipes that include all menu items prepared on site will be available in the catering department. The catering team will have access to these at all times and will be aware where they are stored. The catering manager will have access to the Academy on-line nutritional software where the recipes are stored in case a paper copy is lost or damaged. The catering manager will have access to suppliers on-line support system to look up products and query ingredients. The catering manager can call all suppliers to request product information and a list of these numbers is displayed in the kitchen.

The Catering Manager has a Level 3 Award in Managing Allergens in Catering. All catering staff are trained on how to read labels correctly when looking for allergens, how to check recipes for allergens and how to communicate with customers with allergies.

A system is in place to prepare meals ordered for children and staff with allergies in a dedicated area to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Staff are trained not serve foods if they are in any doubt of an allergen being present.

### **Food allergen labelling**

The school adheres to allergen labelling rules for pre-packed food goods, in line with the Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019, also known as Natasha's Law.

The school will ensure that all food is labelled accurately, that food is never labelled as being 'free from' an ingredient unless staff are certain that there are no traces of that ingredient in the product, and that all labelling is checked before being offered for consumption.

### **Food labelling**

Food classed as 'pre-packed for direct sale' (PPDS) will clearly display the following information on the packaging:

- The name of the food
- The full ingredients list, with ingredients that are allergens emphasised, e.g. in bold, italics, or a different colour

### **Events in School**

Events in school are required to comply with the new legislation and this would include events such as: a charity cake sale, garden fete, Christmas lunch for the community, biscuits for production evenings etc.

When food for these events is produced in the school kitchen, a copy of the relevant allergen information will be made available. For an event where pupils or staff or visitors are supplying food they must supply the relevant information to school. Teachers and support staff will be aware of any allergies to ensure any items brought into class can be checked (ie Birthday cakes from home, cooking ingredients, lesson resources etc).

A form will be given to the person responsible for the organisation of the event to document what will be sold or provided and what allergens if any are present in the food. This form should be seen before the goods are sold or provided. It is the person responsible for the event to gather this information and to make sure this information is available.

If products are bought in ready cooked for an event such as a pack of cakes but are sold loose out of the packaging, the packaging needs to be kept for allergen information for the customers. West Park Academy cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of the information from another source and this is highlighted on the form (Appendix 1). If any departments or visitors require advice on what is required they can contact the schools catering departments. The form after the event should be stored within catering department in case any queries emerge in the weeks after the event. It is recommended that these records are stored for 3 months.

## **School Trips and Residential Visits**

Details of known food allergies for pupils on school trips or residential visits are supplied to the staff accompanying the children on these trips. This information is documented on the risk assessment and is communicated in advance to any company/establishment providing the children food so that alternative arrangements can be made and precautions taken where necessary. This information is also supplied to the visit provider for all residential visits ie Robinwood, London to ensure that the children are catered for and alternative arrangements are made and precautions taken where necessary.

## **Validation**

The school kitchen will be inspected by Environmental Health to confirm that they are compliant with the new legislation. The catering manager will monitor and observe staff when preparing allergens to confirm they are following correct procedures. The catering manager will communicate allergen information to the kitchen staff on a daily basis before service.

## **Breach of Policy**

Any breach of policy will be investigated initially by the Finance Manager. The investigation will identify the circumstances surrounding the breach, a review of operating procedures, staff competency and training. Additionally the Finance Manager will produce an action plan to ensure that measures are in place to ensure future breaches do not occur. The decision to implement the staff disciplinary policy will depend on the nature of the breach and will again be the responsibility of the Finance Manager, in conjunction with the Principal. A full report will be provided to the Governors should a breach occur.

**Appendix 1**

**School Event** .....

**Date** .....

**Person Responsible for event**.....

**Person cooking/ supplying food for event** .....

Please fill in the allergen details overleaf for any food products on sale or available at the event.

Food sold or available that is pre packed with allergen labelling is not required to be listed.

Food that is sold loose out of packaging is required to be listed.

This information must be available at all school events. Failure to provide this information will result in products not being sold or available at the event.

**Please note: West Park Academy is not responsible for the accuracy of the information of allergens on products prepared outside of the catering department.**

