



MERRYLANDS
PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Food Allergy Policy

Policy updated:	January 2026
Approved by Governors:	February 2026
Review date:	February 2027

Introduction

Merrylands Primary School and Nursery recognises that a number of community members (pupils, parents, visitors, and staff) may suffer from potentially life-threatening allergies or intolerances to certain foods.

Merrylands Primary School and Nursery is committed to a whole school approach to the care and management of those members of the school community. This policy looks at food allergy and intolerances and should be read alongside the school's first aid and medication policies.

The school's position is not to guarantee a completely allergen free environment, rather to minimise the risk of exposure by hazard identification, instruction, and information. This will encourage self-responsibility to all those with known allergens to make informed decisions on food choices and to provide help and assistance for the youngest pupils. It is also important that the school has clear plans for an effective response to possible emergencies.

Aims

The School is committed to proactive risk food allergy management through:

- ensuring that robust systems are in place to ensure accurate and timely sharing of information relating to food allergies and intolerances with clearly defined responsibilities
- supporting pupils with the management of food allergies and intolerances
- ensuring that menu planning and all aspects of food preparation support the needs of those within our school community who have food allergies
- provision of staff awareness/training on food allergies/intolerances, possible symptoms (including anaphylaxis) recognition and treatment

The intent of this policy is to minimise the risk of any person suffering allergy-induced reaction, or food intolerance whilst at Merrylands Primary School and Nursery or whilst attending any school related activity.

Allergy information

A food allergy is a reaction by the body's immune system to a particular food. Virtually all known food allergens are proteins. They can be present in food in large amounts and often survive food-processing conditions. Allergic reactions are characterised by the rapid release of chemicals in the body that cause symptoms, which can occur within minutes or up to an hour or more after ingestion of the allergen.

The common causes of allergies relevant to this policy are the 14 major food allergens:

- cereals containing Gluten (wheat, rye, barley and oats)
- celery including stalks, leaves, seeds, and celeriac in salads
- crustaceans, (prawns, crab, lobster, scampi, shrimp paste)
- eggs - also food glazed with egg
- fish - some salad dressings, relishes, fish sauce, some soy and Worcester sauces
- soya (tofu, bean curd, soya flour)
- milk and dairy - also food glazed with milk
- nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecan nuts, Brazil nuts, pistachio, cashew, and macadamia (Queensland) nuts, nut oils, marzipan)

- peanuts - sauces, cakes, desserts, ground nut oil, peanut flour
- mustard - liquid mustard, mustard powder, mustard seeds
- sesame seeds - bread, bread sticks, tahini, hummus, sesame oil
- sulphur dioxide/sulphites (dried fruit, fruit juice drinks)
- lupin, seeds, and flour, in some bread and pastries
- molluscs (mussels, whelks, oyster sauce, land snails and squid)

Procedures and Responsibilities

The school has clear procedures and responsibilities to be followed in meeting the needs of pupils with medical/dietary needs relating to food allergies or intolerances.

The parents or carers of all new starters to the school are required to complete an allergens questionnaire on which the details of any food intolerances or allergies should be shared (see Appendix 1). If details are unclear or ambiguous, the school will follow this up with a phone call to parents for further information which will be recorded by the school. If required, a meeting can be arranged with school staff in order to further discuss a child's needs.

Where a child transfers from another school or nursery, the school will try and obtain any relevant information regarding how the previous school or setting managed the food allergy in order to provide continuity.

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that if their child's medical/dietary needs change at any point that they make the school aware, and a revised allergens form is completed.

Members of staff or volunteers will be asked to disclose any food allergies as part of their induction.

All medical/dietary needs information is stored confidentially yet centrally so it can be accessed by appropriate members of staff as required.

Medical information for pupils is private and confidential however in order to ensure that medical needs can be properly managed, information is shared with school staff. This is done in several ways:

- at the start of each academic year, medical needs information, including details of food allergies, are shared with the new class teacher. It is the class teachers' responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with the information provided and that any other adults working with the children are aware of their needs as well
- the office staff will inform the catering staff of any pupils who have food allergies or intolerances.
- where pupils or staff have an allergy which may result in anaphylaxis and have an epi-pen in school, their photo and additional information is displayed in the medical room
- where a food allergy significantly impacts on a child's day to day activity, a care plan might be put in place e.g. a child who requires tube feeding or is required to eat at a separate time. This will be constructed in conjunction with school staff, parents, and healthcare professionals
- key medical needs information will be available when children are taken off site

Lunchtime

Children are able to have a school dinner or bring a packed lunch from home. If children are having a school dinner, they make their menu selection at the start of the school day when the register is taken. Staff support children with their menu choice based on individual allergen information. The menus are also available online so that parents/carers can help children make an informed choice before they come into school. An allergen matrix is also displayed on the school website which outlines which allergens are present in each meal on the menu.

The school kitchen caters for a range of food allergy needs. Where needs are very specific, it may be beneficial for a meeting to be arranged between parents, school staff and catering staff to discuss dietary requirements. Sometimes menu substitutions can be made to accommodate allergy needs – this is at the discretion of the school kitchen and is dependent on resources available.

If children have a food allergy which can be triggered by contact with certain food substances, as well as ingestion, the school will ensure that due consideration is given to where the child is seated in the dining hall and the cleaning of tables. Children are told that they are not allowed to share food at lunchtimes. Midday assistants observe and assist the children at lunchtime in order to reduce the opportunity for children to share food, although we cannot guarantee that this will not happen.

Response to allergic reactions

The school has a number of first aiders who would be called to assist in the case of an allergic reaction including anaphylaxis. A number of staff have also had training in how to administer an epi-pen to those children who have an Allergy Management Plan.

The school will contact parents and the emergency services, if required, in the event that a child suffers an allergic reaction. The school's medical needs policy outlines the school's response to medical emergencies.

Catering Staff Responsibilities

The catering staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- they familiarise themselves with the medical/dietary needs of the pupils in order for correct meals to be consumed
- menus/allergen matrix clearly identify ingredients that may pose a risk to allergy sufferers, enabling informed choices to be made
- rigorous food hygiene is maintained to reduce risk of cross contamination
- suppliers provide information regarding the content of their products
- as an additional precaution, staff are alerted to food allergies by wristbands worn by the children
- knowledge of allergens is kept up to date through regular training

Parental Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for:

- completing the allergens questionnaire and ensuring that any information regarding food allergies for their child is included

- updating the school if their child's medical/dietary needs change at any point. Parents are requested to keep the school up to date with any changes in allergy management with regards to clinic summaries, re-testing and new food challenges
- ensuring that any required medication (epi-pens or other adrenalin injectors, inhalers and any specific antihistamine) is supplied, in date and replaced as necessary. The parents of all children who have an epi-pen in school must complete a written Allergy Management Plan
- attending any meeting as required to share further information about their child's food allergy, to plan for food management in school or to complete a care plan
- if an episode of anaphylaxis occurs outside school, the school must be informed

Pupil Responsibilities

- children of any age must be familiar with what their allergies are and the symptoms they may have that would indicate a reaction is happening
- children are encouraged to take increased responsibility for managing choices that will reduce the risk of allergic reaction. Expectations are age appropriate
- children are not allowed to share food with each other

Management of food allergies in other areas of school life

Celebrations - sometimes children will bring food items into school to distribute to their peers when it is their birthday. These are handed out at the end of the day so children can take them home and check with an adult before eating.

Curriculum Activities - as part of the school curriculum, children may be involved in activities that involve preparing food (e.g. DT lessons) or tasting food (e.g. tasting food from other countries). Teachers will take the needs of children with food allergies into account when planning these activities and will make modifications where possible to allow participation. When a third party is involved in delivering a food related workshop, the class teacher will be responsible for ensuring that the dietary needs of the pupils are taken into consideration.

Educational Visits - the lead member of staff for an educational visit will ensure that food allergy considerations are made in any activity that may involve food. When a child with a food allergy participates in a residential visit, their dietary needs will be planned for, in conjunction with the residential venue.

Nuts - due to an increased number of children with nut allergies in the school, we ask that parents do not send children into school or on a school trip with any nut based products in their lunchboxes or as a break time snack. This includes items such as peanut butter sandwiches or packets of nuts.

Fundraising Events - if the school hosts any 'cake sales' or similar events it is important that no food poses a risk to the end user, however, this is difficult for the school to monitor. Wherever possible, food allergen information will be displayed. Where products are not made on site, but sold by the school, appropriate signage will be put in place. Signage will explain that 'this item was not produced at Merrylands Primary School and Nursery, therefore we cannot guarantee that it does not contain nuts or any other allergen'. It should be left to the discretion of the person buying the food that they accept the risk that allergens may be present.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be updated if any change to the information is made during the academic year. The policy will be approved by the governing board.



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ALLERGY AND INTOLERANCE REQUEST FORM

Child's Name:

What is an allergy?

- allergies occur when the body's immune system reacts to a substance as though it is harmful
- it causes a release of histamine and other substances into the body
- a reaction usually occurs within a few minutes of eating the offending food

What is an intolerance?

- a food intolerance is a difficulty digesting certain food and having an unpleasant physical reaction to them such as bloating and tummy pain
- the symptoms usually happen a few hours after eating the food
- a child might only need to have eaten a small amount to have a reaction

Please tick the relevant boxes below

	Allergy	Intolerance
Celery		
Crustacea		
Eggs		
Fish		
Gluten		
Lupin		
Milk		
Molluscs		
Mustard		
Peanuts		
Sesame		
Soya		
Sulphite		
Tree Nuts		

Please tick the relevant boxes below

Dietary Requirements	
Vegetarian	
Vegan	
Pescatarian	
No Beef	
No Pork	
Other	

Parent/Carer Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....