



# **Nut Free Policy**

**Reviewed March 2017**

Cedar Lodge School aims to practise a nut free policy although we recognise that this cannot be guaranteed. This policy serves to set out all measures to reduce the risk to those children and adults who may suffer an anaphylactic reaction if exposed to nuts to which they are sensitive. The school aims to protect children who have allergies to nuts yet also help them, as they grow up, to take responsibility as to what foods they can eat and to be aware of where they may be put at risk.

## **Definition**

Anaphylaxis (also known as anaphylactic shock) is an allergic condition that can be severe and potentially fatal.

Anaphylaxis is your body's immune system reacting badly to a substance (an allergen), such as food, which it wrongly perceives as a threat.

The whole body can be affected, usually within minutes of contact with an allergen, though sometimes the reaction can happen hours later.

This policy refers to nuts but at present includes sesame seeds, pine kernels, coconut and sunflower seeds.

## **Symptoms**

The symptoms of anaphylaxis usually start between 3 and 60 minutes after contact with the allergen. Less commonly, they can occur a few hours or even days after contact.

An anaphylactic reaction may lead to feeling unwell or dizzy or may cause fainting due to a sudden drop in blood pressure.

Narrowing of the airways can also occur at the same time, with or without the drop in blood pressure. This can cause breathing difficulties and wheezing.

## **Other symptoms:**

- swollen eyes, lips, genitals, hands, feet and other areas (this is called angioedema),
- itching,
- a strange metallic taste in the mouth,
- sore, red, itchy eyes,
- changes in heart rate

- a sudden feeling of extreme anxiety or apprehension
- itchy skin or nettle-rash (hives)
- unconsciousness due to very low blood pressure
- abdominal cramps, vomiting or diarrhoea, or nausea and fever.

Anaphylaxis varies in severity. Sometimes it causes only mild itchiness and swelling, but in some people it can cause sudden death.

Anaphylaxis can lead to death if breathing becomes severely obstructed or if blood pressure becomes extremely low (known as shock).

If symptoms start soon after contact with the allergen and rapidly get worse, this indicates that the reaction is more severe.

## **Staff**

The onus falls on all staff to read and follow this policy both in school and when out on trips and outings.

• Caution must be taken at certain times of year such as Easter and Christmas. If Staff distribute confectionary care must be taken to ensure that no nuts are included in the product. Fruit sweets such as Haribo are a better alternative. Particular products that are a cause for concern are:

- Celebrations
- Roses
- Heroes
- Quality Street

All product packaging must be checked for warnings directed at nut allergy sufferers and if the following or similar are displayed, the product must not be used in school without supervision of staff and supervised hand washing:

- Not suitable for nut allergy sufferers
- This product contains nuts

Cedar Lodge School recognises that although most food intolerances produce symptoms that are uncomfortable, some people can suffer a severe food allergy with more serious consequences and in some instances these may even be life threatening.

A number of pupils in the school have severe or moderate allergies to food and amongst the most common is nut allergy. Cedar Lodge recognises that it has a duty of care to all its pupils. The school is therefore striving to be a nut free environment and aims to ensure that none of the foods provided, bought by or produced in the school contain nuts. We ask that no peanuts or tree nuts be brought into our school. Foods sent in for snack, lunch, or any class event (including parties, field trips, etc.) should be carefully checked to make sure they are peanut/tree nut-free. Families can help ensure that our school stays peanut/tree nut-free by reading packaging labels and reminding children not to share food with other children at school. We need to make sure that there is little opportunity for a child to be exposed to foods that could harm him/her.

The school is committed to pupil safety and therefore has created this policy to reduce the risk of children having allergy related events while in its care.

## Aims

- To reduce the likelihood of a pupil with a known food allergy displaying a severe reaction to a specific food while in school.
- To foster an understanding of and sense of responsibility for the specific needs of the individual members of the school community.
- To create an awareness of the action to take should someone with a severe food allergy display its symptoms.
- When pupils first come to Cedar Lodge parents are required to inform the school of any known food allergies that their child has.
- Parents should update this information if an allergy is diagnosed at any stage in their child's education.
- Parents must advise the school of the action that should be taken if their child develops the symptoms of an allergic reaction while in school.
- All members of staff are given the names of children who have specific food allergies through a confidential information sheet issued at the beginning of each school year.
- The school will provide training to enable staff to recognise the symptoms of an allergic reaction and to respond appropriately.

- Most of staff have been trained in the use of the EPIPEN should a child with a known food allergy go into anaphylaxis.
- All parents are advised to ensure that their child does not bring nuts or foods containing nuts into school.

## **Food provision in school**

The school canteen does not use nuts or nut oils in the preparation of food.

The Home Economics Department does not provide nuts or nut oils as ingredients for practical work and avoids foods containing nuts when taste testing.

When alerted to pupils with other food allergies/intolerances careful consideration will be given to the viability of the foods in question.

In addition the Home Economics department and canteen we aim to accommodate pupils with allergies/intolerances other than those concerning nuts.

Advice from parents regarding the specific needs of their child is seen as invaluable.

In the case of a pupil with multiple or unusual allergies, the school may require the parent to provide lunches and snacks to ensure the pupil's safety.

The school will attempt to avoid serving food with nuts, but cannot guarantee that products with nuts will never be present. Likewise, the school cannot monitor products sold at events attended by pupils off campus or served on trips. Therefore, pupils with severe food allergies must carefully monitor their food in these situations.

Cedar Lodge School cannot guarantee that there will be nothing in the school that might trigger an allergic reaction or that a pupil will never experience an allergy related event while at school. We appreciate your cooperation with this policy—the sacrifice of not having nuts or nut products in the school is a small one to make compared to the consequences a child with severe allergies could face. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school.

See [www.anaphylaxis.org.uk](http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk) for more information.