

014 Managing children with allergies

Policy statement

This policy is concerned with a whole preschool approach to the health care and management of members of the pre-school community suffering from specific allergies.

Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup (GEP) are aware that children who attend may suffer from food, bee/ wasp sting, animal or nut allergies and we believe that all allergies should be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional and appropriate way.

The GEP position is not to guarantee a completely allergen free environment, rather: to minimise the risk of exposure, encourage self-responsibility, and plan for effective response to possible emergencies.

GEP is committed to a no food and drink sharing.

Aim

The intent of this policy is to minimize the risk of any child suffering allergy-induced anaphylaxis whilst at preschool.

An allergic reaction to nuts is the most common high risk allergy, and as such demands more rigorous controls throughout the policy.

The underlying principles of this policy include:

- The establishment of effective risk management practices to minimise the exposure to known trigger foods and insects.
- Staff training and education to ensure effective emergency response to any allergic reaction situation.

This policy applies to all members of the pre-school community:

- Staff
- Parents / Guardians
- Volunteers
- Supply staff
- Students

Definitions

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

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

Anaphylaxis - Anaphylaxis, or anaphylactic shock, is a sudden, severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction to food, stings, bites, or medicines.

Epipen - Brand name for syringe style device containing the drug Adrenalin, which is ready for immediate inter-muscular administration.

Minimized Risk Environment- An environment where risk management practices (e.g. Risk assessment forms) have minimised the risk of (allergen) exposure.

Health Care Plan- A detailed document outlining an individual child's condition, procedures to minimise risk of exposure to allergen, treatment, and action plan in the event of an allergic reaction.

Procedures and Responsibilities for Allergy Management

General

- The involvement of parents and staff in assessing risk and establishing individual Health Care Plans if required.
- The establishment and maintenance of practices for effectively communicating a child's Health Care Plan to all relevant staff.
- Staff training in anaphylaxis management, including awareness of triggers and first aid procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.
- Age appropriate education of the children with severe food allergies.

Medical Information

When parents start their children at the pre-school they are asked if their child suffers from any known allergies. This is recorded on the registration form.

Any change in a child's medical condition during the year must be reported to the pre-school.

For children with an allergic condition, the pre-school requires parents / guardians to provide written advice from a doctor (GP), which explains the condition, defines the allergy triggers and any required medication.

The Supervisor will ensure that a Health Care Plan is established and updated for each child with a known allergy.

Key staff are required to review and familiarise themselves with the medical information. Parents train staff in how to administer special medication in the event of an allergic reaction.

Action Plans with a recent photograph for any children with allergies will be posted in the kitchen. Copies of these will be added to the register folder taken to forest school/woodland adventure.

Where children with known allergies are participating in any pre-school outings, the risk assessments must include this information.

The wearing of a medic-alert bracelet is allowed by the pre-school.

Medical Information (Epipens)

Where Epipens (Adrenalin) are required in the Health Care Plan:

- Parents/ guardians are responsible for the provision and timely replacement of the Epipens.
- The Epipens are located securely in relevant locations approved by the Supervisor.

Parent's role

Parents are responsible for providing, in writing, ongoing, accurate and current medical information to the pre-school.

Parents should work with the Supervisor to complete a risk assessment form, detailing: The allergen (i.e. the substance, material or living creature the child is allergic to such as nuts, eggs, bee stings, cats, etc).

The nature of the allergic reactions e.g. anaphylactic shock reaction, including rash, reddening of skin, swelling, breathing problems, etc.

What to do in case of allergic reactions, any medication used and how it is to be used (e.g. EpiPen).

Control measures – such as how the child can be prevented from contact with the allergen. A review date should be agreed.

If a child has an allergy requiring an EpiPen, or the risk assessment deems it necessary, a Health Care Plan must be completed and signed by the parents.

It is the responsibility of the parent to provide the pre-school with up to date medication/equipment clearly labelled in a suitable container.

In the case of life saving medication like EpiPens the child will not be allowed to attend without it.

Parents are also required to provide up to date emergency contact information.

Parents provide the child's lunch

It is their responsibility to ensure that the contents are safe for the child to consume.

Parents should liaise with staff about appropriateness of snacks and any food-related activities (e.g. cooking).

Role of other parents

In the event of a child with a life threatening allergy attending then we will ask that:

Snacks and lunches brought to the pre-school by other parents do not contain nuts or nut products.

The preschool will ensure that parents are regularly reminded and will monitor the contents of lunchboxes and snack.

Staff's role

Staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with the policy.

If a child's registration form states that they have an allergy then a risk assessment form is completed with the parent, see above.

This form is kept in the child's personal file and a copy is kept in the kitchen.

The child's Health Care Plan (if required) should be stored in the child's personal file.

Upon determining that a child attending pre-school has a severe allergy, a team meeting will be set up as soon as possible where all staff attend to update knowledge and awareness of child's needs.

All staff will be made aware of what treatment/medication is required by the Supervisor and where any medication is to be stored. This will include EpiPen use and storage.

Procedures to ensure the safety of the child with allergies at snack and lunch time will be agreed at this meeting and a lead staff member identified to ensure they are followed.

Staff should liaise with parents about snacks and any food-related activities.

Staff cannot guarantee that foods will not contain traces of nuts.

Children are not permitted to share food.

Food preparation - general

When preparing snack the staff member should be careful to avoid cross-contamination.

Tiny traces of allergenic foods can trigger reactions for some people.

Avoid using the same utensils for different foods without washing them thoroughly first with hot, soapy water.

Always clean preparation areas, utensils, hands, and even aprons after handling key allergens and before preparing other foods which do not contain them.

Try to segregate foods containing major allergens from other foods. If possible keep certain preparation areas nut free.

Cover and wrap dishes once they have been prepared.

Snack preparation

Staff member preparing snack will:

Check ingredients of any packaged item for allergen(s) and any warnings on label about possible contaminants during production. This must be carried out every session as ingredients and manufacturing processes can change.

Each day a notice board is displayed with the snack and any allergen(s).

A child with a severe allergy will have a Health Care Plan in place identifying the allergen, treatment and action plan in case of allergic reaction.

For each session we will display a list of children and their allergen(s).

We may ask the parent for a list of food products and food derivatives the child must not come into contact with.

We will work in partnership with the parents and take their advice on suitable alternatives to our regular snack options.

Meal time routine

We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.

Tables and crockery/cutlery used at meal times will be cleaned thoroughly.

All staff are to promote hand washing before and after eating.

At snack time the lead staff member will direct the team when serving food to ensure children receive the correct plate or if children are selecting food from a shared plate ensure this is suitable for every child.

The parent provides their child's packed lunch.

Children do not share packed lunch items.

In the event of a child with a life threatening allergy attending then we will ask that nuts or nut products are not sent to pre-school.

Cooking activities

We will keep a folder of recipes and highlight any allergens, including any in packaged ingredients. We will work in partnership with parents to ensure that a child is not prevented from taking part in our baking activity because of their allergy.

Actions

In the event of a child suffering an allergic reaction:

We will delegate someone to contact the child's parents.

If the child becomes distressed or symptoms become more serious we will telephone 999.

Keep calm, make the child feel comfortable and give the child space.

If medication is available it will be administered as per training and in conjunction with the GEP Administering medicines policy.

If medication is administered emergency services should be contacted.

If parents have not arrived by the time the ambulance arrives, a member of staff will accompany the child to hospital. The Supervisor will arrange for a committee member or parent to come into the setting to maintain adult:child ratios.

Insurance requirements

The Public Liability section of the insurance includes cover for administration of medication provided that the setting is fully compliant with the Safeguarding and Welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage in relation to administering medicine.

Oral medication

Details do not need to be forwarded to the Pre-school Learning Alliance, provided that it is prescribed by the child's GP or has the manufacturer's instructions clearly written on it and

The setting has the parent's/guardian's written consent and clear instructions on how to administer such medication.

Asthma inhalers and nebulisers are treated as "oral medication" for the purpose of this insurance.

Life saving or invasive medication (e.g. rectal diazepam or Buccal Midazolam for epilepsy or adrenalin injections/Epipens/Anapens and Jext Pens for anaphylactic shock caused by reaction to substances such as nuts and injections such as Insulin for Diabetes)

To extend the settings cover we will need to confirm in writing to the insurance team at the Pre-school Learning Alliance that, for each applicable child, we have received the following and can provide evidence if so required:

A letter or care plan from the child's GP/consultant stating the child's condition and the treatment required.

Parent's/guardian's written consent to allow staff to administer medication.

Proof of staff training in the administration of such medication by a qualified nurse or doctor. In the case of children requiring adrenalin injections for anaphylaxis, the AllergyWise online training provided at www.anaphylaxis.org.uk has been approved.

If you are unsure about any aspect, contact the Pre-school Learning Alliance Insurance Department on 020 7697 2585 or email membership@pre-school.org.uk.

Further guidance

Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings (2014)

Supporting pupils with medical conditions (Sept 2014)

Supporting pupils with medical conditions: links to other useful resources (Sept 2014)

Documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

009 GEP Administering medicines

010 GEP Animals in setting

011 GEP First aid

012 GEP Food and drink

013 GEP Health and hygiene

014 GEP Managing allergies – the major food allergens

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup:

Held on:

Date to be reviewed:

Signed on behalf of the committee:

Name of signatory:

Role of signatory:

All staff members and committee members will sign to indicate they have read, understood and agreed with the above policy.