

Policy Name	Allergen Policy
Policy Type	Statutory / Non-Statutory
Date of Origin	September 2025
Agreed on	
Author	Stephen Peach

Review Due Date	Review Completed	Amendments Y/N
September 2026	Y	Y
September 2027		

DESC values the mental health and wellbeing of every member of its community.

Our policies reflect the core values of respect and support for each other in every aspect of life. Our aim is that all in our community, through working together, to feel safe and secure in an environment, which enables and equips every individual to thrive and be respectful of each other's strengths and differences.

Respect, Aspiration, Resilience

Introduction

An allergy is a reaction of the body's immune system to substances that are usually harmless. The reaction can cause minor symptoms such as itching, sneezing or rashes but sometimes causes a much more serious reaction called anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a serious, life-threatening allergic reaction. It is at the extreme end of the allergic spectrum. The whole body is affected often within minutes of exposure to the allergen, but sometimes it can be hours later. Causes can include foods, insect stings, and drugs.

Most healthcare professionals consider an allergic reaction to be anaphylaxis when it involves difficulty breathing or affects the heart rhythm or blood pressure. Anaphylaxis symptoms are often referred to as the ABC symptoms (Airway, Breathing, Circulation). It is possible to be allergic to anything which contains a protein, however most people will react to a small group of potent allergens. Common UK Allergens include (but are not limited to): Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Sesame, Milk, Egg, Fish, Latex, Insect venom, Pollen and Animal Dander.

This policy sets out how Dacorum Education Support Centre will support learners with allergies, to ensure they are safe and are not disadvantaged in any way whilst taking part in Centre life. This policy will be published on the centre website and reviewed annually.

Role and responsibilities

Named Senior Allergy Lead: Stephen Peach

The Co-Headteachers designate the Business Manager as Senior Allergy Lead for DESC. The Senior Allergy Lead is responsible for policy oversight, staff training compliance, incident review, monitoring of healthcare plans and ensuring implementation of allergy safety procedures across all provisions.

Parent Responsibilities

- On entry to DESC, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the child's link mentor or First Aider of any allergies. This information should include all previous serious allergic reactions, history of anaphylaxis and details of all prescribed medication.
- Parents are to supply a copy of their child's Allergy Action Plan ([BSACI plans](#) preferred) to Centre. If they do not currently have an Allergy Action Plan this should be developed as soon as possible in collaboration with a healthcare professional.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring any required medication is supplied, in date and replaced as necessary.
- Parents are requested to keep DESC up to date with any changes in allergy management. The Allergy Action Plan will be kept updated accordingly.

Staff Responsibilities

- All staff will complete anaphylaxis training. Training is provided for all staff yearly in September and on an ad-hoc basis for any new members of staff.
- Staff must be aware of the learners in their care (regular or cover classes) who have

known allergies as an allergic reaction could occur at any time and not just at mealtimes. Any food-related activities must be supervised with due caution.

- Staff leading trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies. Trip leaders will check that all learners with medical conditions, including allergies, carry their medication. Learners unable to produce their required medication will not be able to attend the excursion.
- The Centre First Aider will ensure that the up-to-date Allergy Action Plan is kept with the learner's medication.
- It is the parents' responsibility to ensure all medication is in date; however, the Centre First Aider will check medication kept at the Centre on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.
- The Centre First Aider keeps a register of learners who have been prescribed an adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) and a record of use of any AAI(s) and emergency treatment given.

Learner Responsibilities

- Learners are encouraged to have a good awareness of their symptoms and to let an adult know as soon as they suspect they are having an allergic reaction.
- Learners who are trained and confident to administer their own AAIs will be encouraged to take responsibility for carrying them on their person at all times.

Allergy Action Plans

Allergy action plans are designed to function as individual healthcare plans for children with food allergies, providing medical and parental consent for Centres to administer medicines in the event of an allergic reaction, including consent to administer a spare adrenaline auto-injector. Dacorum Education Support Centre recommends using the British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology ([BSACI Allergy Action Plans](#)) to ensure continuity. This is a national plan that has been agreed by the BSACI, Anaphylaxis UK and Allergy UK. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to complete the allergy action plan with help from a healthcare professional (e.g. GP/Allergy Specialist) and provide this to the Centre.

All learners with diagnosed severe allergies will have an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) alongside their clinical Allergy Action Plan. Plans will be reviewed annually or sooner following any change in medical advice or allergic reaction.

Emergency Treatment and Management of Anaphylaxis

What to look for:

Symptoms usually come on quickly, within minutes of exposure to the allergen. Mild to moderate allergic reaction symptoms may include:

- A red raised rash (known as hives or urticaria) anywhere on the body
- A tingling or itchy feeling in the mouth
- Swelling of lips, face or eyes
- Stomach pain or vomiting.

- More serious symptoms are often referred to as the ABC symptoms and can include:
 - AIRWAY - swelling in the throat, tongue or upper airways (tightening of the throat, hoarse voice, difficulty swallowing).
 - BREATHING - sudden onset wheezing, breathing difficulty, noisy breathing.
 - CIRCULATION - dizziness, feeling faint, sudden sleepiness, tiredness, confusion, pale clammy skin, loss of consciousness.

The term for this more serious reaction is anaphylaxis. In extreme cases there could be a dramatic fall in blood pressure. The person may become weak and floppy and may have a sense of something terrible happening. This may lead to collapse and unconsciousness and, on rare occasions, can be fatal.

If the learner has been exposed to something they are known to be allergic to, then it is more likely to be an anaphylactic reaction.

Anaphylaxis can develop very rapidly, so a treatment is needed that works rapidly. **Adrenaline** is the mainstay of treatment, and it starts to work within seconds.

What does adrenaline do?

- It opens up the airways
- It stops swelling
- It raises the blood pressure

As soon as anaphylaxis is suspected, adrenaline must be administered without delay.

Action:

- Keep the learner where they are, call for help and do not leave them unattended.
- **LIE LEARNER FLAT WITH LEGS RAISED** – they can be propped up if struggling to breathe but this should be for as short a time as possible.
- **USE ADRENALINE AUTO-INJECTOR WITHOUT DELAY** and note the time given. AAls should be given into the muscle in the outer thigh. Specific instructions vary by brand – always follow the instructions on the device.
- **CALL 999** and state **ANAPHYLAXIS (ana-fil-axis)**.
- If no improvement after 5 minutes, administer second AAI.
- If no signs of life commence CPR.
- Call parent/carers as soon as possible.

Whilst you are waiting for the ambulance, keep the learner where they are. Do not stand them up, or sit them in a chair, even if they are feeling better. This could lower their blood pressure drastically, causing their heart to stop. All learners must go to hospital for observation after anaphylaxis even if they appear to have recovered as a reaction can reoccur after treatment.

Supply, storage and care of medication

Depending on their level of understanding and competence, learners will be encouraged to take responsibility for and to carry their own **two** AAls on them at all times (in a suitable bag/container).

For younger children or those not ready to take responsibility for their own medication, there should be an anaphylaxis kit which is kept safely, not locked away and accessible to all staff. In line with the requirements of Benedict's Law, DESC will maintain a minimum stock of spare in-date adrenaline auto-injectors (AAls), including age/weight appropriate devices, held in accordance with current Department for Education guidance.

Medication should be stored in a suitable container and clearly labelled with the learner's name. The learner's medication storage container should contain:

- Two AAls i.e. EpiPen® or Jext®
- An up-to-date allergy action plan
- Antihistamine as tablets or syrup (if included on allergy action plan)
- Spoon if required
- Asthma inhaler (if included on allergy action plan).

It is the responsibility of the child's parents to ensure that the anaphylaxis kit is up-to-date and clearly labelled; however the Centre First Aider will check medication kept at Centre on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.

Parents can subscribe to expiry alerts for the relevant AAls their learner is prescribed, to make sure they can get replacement devices in good time.

Older children and medication

Older children and teenagers should, whenever possible, assume responsibility for their emergency kit under the guidance of their parents. However, symptoms of anaphylaxis can come on **very suddenly**, so Centre staff need to be prepared to administer medication if the young person cannot.

Disposal

AAls are single-use only and must be disposed of as sharps. Used AAls can be given to ambulance paramedics on arrival or can be disposed of in a pre-ordered sharps bin. Sharps bins to be obtained from and disposed of by a specialist collection service.

If anaphylaxis is suspected **in an undiagnosed individual** call the emergency services and state you suspect ANAPHYLAXIS. Follow advice from them as to whether administration of the spare AAI is appropriate.

Storage

AAls should be stored at room temperature, protected from direct sunlight and temperature extremes.

Post-Incident Review

After every allergic reaction requiring medical intervention:

- an incident report will be completed;
- parents/carers informed;
- healthcare plans reviewed;
- risk assessments updated where required;
- learning points shared with appropriate staff.

Staff Training

The named staff members (at least 2) responsible for co-ordinating staff anaphylaxis training and the upkeep of the Centre's anaphylaxis policy are:

1. Stephen Peach – Senior Allergy Lead
2. Lindsey Woodley

All staff will complete either online AllergyWise or SSS Learning anaphylaxis training at the start of every new academic year. Training is also available on an ad hoc basis for any new members of staff.

Training includes:

- Knowing the common allergens and triggers of allergy
- Spotting the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and anaphylaxis. Early recognition of symptoms is key, including knowing when to call for emergency services
- Administering emergency treatment (including AAls) in the event of anaphylaxis –
- knowing how and when to administer the medication/device
- Measures to reduce the risk of a learner having an allergic reaction e.g. allergen avoidance, knowing who is responsible for what
- Managing allergy action plans and ensuring these are up to date
- A practical session using trainer devices (these can be obtained from the manufacturers' websites: www.epipen.co.uk and www.jext.co.uk)

Inclusion and safeguarding

Dacorum Education Support Centre is committed to ensuring that all children with medical conditions, including allergies, in terms of both physical and mental health, are properly supported in Centre so that they can play a full and active role in Centre life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential.

Catering

All food businesses (including Centre caterers) must follow the Food Information Regulations 2014 states that allergen information relating to the 'Top 14' allergens must be available for all food products. The Centre menu is available for parents to view in

weekly/fortnightly/monthly advance with all ingredients listed and allergens highlighted on the Centre website at www.desc.herts.sch.uk

The Centre First Aider will inform the Chef of learners with food allergies.

Parents/carers are encouraged to meet with the Chef to discuss their child's needs.

The Centre adheres to the following [Department of Health guidance](#) recommendations:

- Bottles, other drinks and lunch boxes provided by parents for learners with food allergies should be clearly labelled with the name of the learner for whom they are intended.
- If food is purchased from the Centre canteen/tuck shop, parents should check the appropriateness of foods by speaking directly to the catering manager.
- The learner should be taught to also check with catering staff, before purchasing food or selecting their lunch choice.
- Where food is provided by the Centre, staff should be educated about how to read labels for food allergens and instructed about measures to prevent cross contamination during the handling, preparation and serving of food. Examples include: preparing food for children with food allergies first; careful cleaning (using warm soapy water) of food preparation areas and utensils. For further information, parents/carers are encouraged to liaise with the Catering Manager.
- Food should not be given to primary Centre age food-allergic children without parental engagement and permission (e.g. birthday parties, food treats).
- Use of food in crafts, cooking classes, science experiments and special events (e.g. fetes, assemblies, cultural events) needs to be considered and may need to be restricted/risk assessed depending on the allergies of particular children and their age.

Centre trips

Staff leading Centre trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies. Trip leaders will check that all learners with medical conditions, including allergies, carry their medication. Learners unable to produce their required medication will not be able to attend the excursion.

All the activities on the trip will be risk assessed to see if they pose a threat to allergic learners and alternative activities will be planned to ensure inclusion. Overnight Centre trips should be possible with careful planning and a meeting for parents with the lead member of staff planning the trip should be arranged. Staff at the venue for an overnight Centre trip should be briefed early on that an allergic learner is attending and will need appropriate food (if provided by the venue).

Sporting Excursions

Allergic children should have every opportunity to attend sports trips to other Centres. The Centre will ensure that the P.E. teacher/s are fully aware of the situation. The Centre being visited will be notified that a member of the team has an allergy when arranging the fixture. A member of staff trained in administering adrenaline will accompany the team. If another Centre feels that they are not equipped to cater for any food-allergic child, the Centre will arrange for the learner to take alternative/their own food.

Most parents are keen that their children should be included in the full life of the Centre where possible, and the Centre will need their co-operation with any special arrangements required.

Allergy awareness and nut bans

Dacorum Education Support Centre supports the approach advocated by Anaphylaxis UK towards nut bans/nut-free Centres. They would not necessarily support a blanket ban on any particular allergen in any establishment, including in Centres. This is because nuts are only one of many allergens that could affect learners, and no Centre could guarantee a truly allergen-free environment for a learner living with food allergy. They advocate instead for Centres to adopt a culture of allergy awareness and education.

A 'whole Centre awareness of allergies' is a much better approach, as it ensures teachers, learners and all other staff are aware of what allergies are, the importance of avoiding the learners' allergens, the signs & symptoms, how to deal with allergic reactions and to ensure policies and procedures are in place to minimise risk.

Risk Assessment

Dacorum Education Support Centre will conduct a detailed individual risk assessment for all new joining learners with allergies and any learners newly diagnosed, to help identify any gaps in our systems and processes for keeping allergic children safe.

[Wiltshire Children Trust - Anaphylaxis Risk Assessment Example Template](#)

Useful Links

Anaphylaxis UK - <https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/>

Safer Centres Programme - [https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/education/safer- Centres-programme/](https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/education/safer-Centres-programme/)

AllergyWise for Centres online training - <https://anaphylaxis.org.uk/education/allergywise-for-schools-information/>

Allergy UK - <https://www.allergyuk.org>

Resources for managing allergies at Centre - <https://www.allergyuk.org/living-with-allergy/>

BSACI Allergy Action Plans - <https://www.bsaci.org/professional-resources/resources/paediatric-allergy-action-plans/>

Spare Pens in Centres - <http://www.sparepensinCentres.uk>

Department for Education Supporting learners at Centre with medical conditions - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803956/supporting-learners-at-Centre-with-medical-conditions.pdf

Department of Health Guidance on the use of adrenaline auto-injectors in Centres - [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/645476/Adrenaline auto injectors in Centres.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/645476/Adrenaline_auto_injectors_in_Centres.pdf)

Food allergy quality standards (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, March 2016) <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs118>

Anaphylaxis: assessment and referral after emergency treatment (The National Institute for

Health and Care Excellence, 2020)

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg134?unlid=22904150420167115834>

Policy Review

This policy was written and subsequently agreed by the Management Committee in September 2025.

It is next due for review in September 2027.

Signed:.....

Chair of Management Committee

Signed:.....

**Naomi Walker / Clare Winter
Co-Headteachers**

Date:.....

Date:.....