

St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation

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ADOPTED 12 FEBRUARY 2020

REVIEW JANUARY 2022

'Every effort will be made to avoid the occurrence of nuts, particularly peanuts, in schools within the Federation; these are outlined in this document. However, the phrase "Nut Free School" will not be used in the Policy.'

Allergy Awareness Policy

Our Vision is to raise the aspiration of all pupils to "Be the Very Best they can Be", through providing an engaging and Christian environment alongside an exciting broad and balanced curriculum striving to develop the skills, attitudes and Christian values of the whole Federation Community to face the new challenges of the 21st century with confidence.

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AIMS

St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation (which is referred to as the Federation in the rest of this document) recognise that the health and safety of our pupils and staff is paramount. We also recognise that there is a growing case for awareness of the potential for individuals within the Federation to suffer from allergies, particularly peanut allergies.

We have a responsibility to keep everyone safe in our Federation community (as Jesus protected his sheep and lambs). As we fulfil our duty of care in this, we are assured that all will flourish. Our Christian ethos, vision and values underpin all we do.

This policy has been introduced as we have pupils within our schools with peanut allergies which can result in anaphylaxis, a severe allergic reaction - the extreme end of the allergic spectrum - and is life threatening. This policy has been written in consultation with representatives from the Senior Leadership Team, Governing Body and parents. The basis of our approach is risk minimisation and education.

This Policy aims to:

- Identify potential threats and risks.
- Identify actions that the school community, staff and parents and carers can reasonably take to prevent the presence of food containing allergens, particularly peanuts, into schools within the Federation.
- Identify safeguards and training amongst members of staff and pupils in order to reduce the risk of an allergenic reaction taking place.
- Provide safely support, within the school environment for pupils and members of staff with severe allergies and anaphylaxis, to include the development and maintenance of a health care plan for these individuals.

For further information with respect to Individual Health Plans please refer to the Federation's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

PREVALENCE OF FOOD ALLERGIES

Food allergies affect approximately 1 in 50 pupils. It is possible that at school, pupils will encounter, and may accidentally ingest, one of many products which cause an allergic reaction. Pupils with a food allergy may react to tactile (touch) exposure or inhalation exposure. Not every ingestion exposure will result in anaphylaxis but the potential always exists. It can often be the case that each anaphylactic attack can be a lot worse than the one before. Whilst peanut allergy is the most likely to cause anaphylaxis and death, eight foods (peanuts, tree nuts, milk, egg, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish) account for the vast majority of total food allergies. When the symptoms to the allergic reaction are widespread and systemic, the reaction is termed "anaphylaxis". Anaphylaxis is the most severe and sudden form of allergic reaction and should be treated as a medical emergency.

Peanuts could potentially be brought into a school within the Federation via packed lunches, e.g.: peanut butter sandwiches, in food used for education, treats brought in

for birthdays, e.g.: Snickers in Celebration mixes or cakes/biscuits for school events. Other sweets that contain peanuts include: Lion bar, Picnic and Reece's, although this list is by no means exhaustive. Another potential threat is through contact between persons who have eaten or handled nut related foodstuffs (in or outside school) and allergy sufferers, without appropriate hand-washing.

There are also many foodstuffs that do not contain nuts but which are labelled as being produced in factories handling nuts, or that cannot be guaranteed nut free. It cannot be reasonably expected that all these items be kept out of our schools, or for members of staff to be daily checking every packed lunch. The Federation cannot therefore declare its schools to be nut free zones.

SYMPTOMS OF FOOD ALLERGIES

Symptoms and signs of anaphylaxis usually, but not always, occur immediately or within minutes of exposure to the trigger substance (allergen), but can in some cases be delayed for two hours or more. Symptoms and signs may include one or more of the following:

Initially, watery eyes and nose (hay fever like symptoms) which can very quickly progress to other symptoms such as:

- Vomiting
- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- Redness around the mouth and/or swelling of the tongue
- Swelling and tightness in the throat
- Difficulty in talking or a hoarse voice
- Shortness of breath, wheezing or persistent cough
- Dizzy/lightheaded
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy
- A feeling of impending doom.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Federation Community

The “school-dinner” caterers will comply with this policy and no peanuts, peanut paste, peanut butter (including dippers), nuts, “Nutella” spread or nutty muesli bars will be provided by the Federation. Parents and carers will be requested not to send food containing nuts (especially peanuts) into their school within the Federation; this includes all types of nuts, peanut butter, chocolate spreads containing nuts and food containing nuts. Families who supply home-baking for school events will be reminded of this through school newsletters.

New families will be informed of this policy in their Starter Pack when starting at their school within the Federation, with reminders published in newsletters. The Federation will communicate via specific letters (after the summer holiday) and email (after the Christmas and Easter holidays) that we have pupils with peanut allergies and request that no peanuts enter our schools in lunchboxes, as playtime snacks or as birthday treats. We trust members of our Federation community to respect these

guidelines and that members of staff will remain vigilant should any errant peanuts, or products containing peanuts be discovered. Parents will be reminded again of this stance three times a year in their schools' newsletters.

Pupils

Class Teachers may talk to specific classes with vulnerable pupils in them about allergy safety and the seriousness and potential life-threatening nature of allergies that may take place in the classroom environment. Pupils will continue to be told to wash hands before and after eating food. Pupils will also be encouraged not to share food. If any potentially harmful food is brought into school by mistake, pupils are encouraged to inform their Class Teacher so that risks may be minimised. For pupils with an allergy joining a school within the Federation in Reception, their year 6 buddy will receive basic training on the warning signs for allergic reactions.

Members of Staff

Members of staff undergo regular anaphylaxis first aid training including the identification of signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and use of appropriate medication to cater for these situations e.g.; EpiPens. EpiPens will be stored in two locations; in a small medical bag, which hangs on the Class Teacher's chair, and in the Federation school's lockable medical cabinet. It is the responsibility of the Teacher/Teaching Assistant in charge to ensure that EpiPens and anaphylaxis plan kits are taken on school trips and sporting events. They will be responsible for this equipment during the trip/event and pupils with allergies will be part of their group of children. Any documentation sent to parents regarding such events will contain reminders with respect to contents of pack lunches etc.

Individual anaphylaxis health care plans for pupils with a food allergy will be kept in the First Aid room and in the classroom of "at risk" pupils. Photographs will be displayed in the staff rooms and members of staff are expected to familiarise themselves with these. A mobile or other communication device will be available on each trip for emergency calls.

New members of staff will be notified of this policy on joining the Federation and existing members of staff will be regularly reminded of its contents specifically to avoid bringing peanut butter, nuts etc. into their school. In addition to members of staff, volunteers within the Federation will be made aware of this policy.

The Federation will make parents aware of typical school occasions (as pupils get older there are more occasions when food maybe provided without prior notice) and events where chances to exposure to allergy foods are increased. These include, but are not limited to birthdays/farewells, sporting events, discos, fundraisers and other events where food supervision is more difficult. The Federation will ask parents/carers who kindly donate food gifts for events such as the Christmas Fair to not donate foods which may contain nuts.

Parent and Carers

Parents and carers should:

- Inform their school within the Federation in writing that their child is at risk of anaphylactic reaction and give details of their allergies.
- Notify their school via a health care plan of any advice from a treating medical practitioner. The health care plan must contain a photograph of the pupil, a list of known allergies, parent contact information, symptoms and signs of mild and severe allergic reactions and actions to undertake in the event of an emergency.
- Provide written authorisation for their school to administer the EpiPen or other medication or to assist with a First Aider the pupil in question to administer the medication.
- Provide 2 EpiPens to their school for use with their child. They will need to ensure that the EpiPens are clearly labelled and not out of date, and replace them when they expire or after one has been used. The Federation will not undertake this task.
- Teach and encourage the pupil to self-manage.

Pupil with the Allergy

The Federation is keen that each pupil with an allergy becomes aware of the need to make good decisions regarding their allergies in adult life as well as at school. We recognise that young pupils are less able to manage their allergy. The “outside world” isn't going to be nut free and helping pupils to self-regulate and educate about the allergy is an extremely positive way for helping them stay safe.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every two years. The policy review will be undertaken by the Federation's Headteachers and the Governing Body's Policies Working Party.