



PURPLE OAKS ACADEMY

Allergy Safety Policy

Person responsible for this policy & it's implementation	Dr Ash Gering (Interim Head of school)
Review Frequency	Annually or when an incident is experienced
Date approved	September 26
Date of next review	September 27
Purpose	To minimize the risk of any individual suffering an allergic reaction whilst at school or attending any school related activity. To ensure staff are properly prepared to recognise and manage allergic reactions should they arise.
Links with other policies	Safeguarding Site-Specific Policy GAT Safeguarding Policy Behaviour Protocol GAT Health and Safety Policy

Introduction and Core Principles

Purple Oaks Academy is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for all Students, staff, visitors and volunteers with allergies, in line with Benedict's Law. We recognise that allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis, can be life-threatening and require prompt identification and treatment.

As a special school, Purple Oaks Academy recognises that some Students may be unable to independently recognise, communicate or manage the symptoms of an allergic reaction. Staff therefore take a proactive role in allergy awareness, risk reduction, supervision and emergency response.

The Academy operates a whole-school approach to allergy management, ensuring that:

- all staff receive annual allergy awareness training from the school nursing team.
- risks are identified and managed through individual risk assessments.
- Students medical needs are supported through Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs);
- emergency medication is accessible and available at all times;
- Students with allergies are fully included in all aspects of academy life.

Minimising Risk and Exposure to Allergens

Purple Oaks Academy minimises risk through:

- annual allergy awareness training for all staff;
- individual risk assessments for Students with allergies;
- clear communication with parents, carers and healthcare professionals;
- high standards of handwashing and environmental hygiene;
- careful management of food used within the curriculum;
- supervision during snack, lunch and food-based activities;
- risk assessments for educational visits and off-site activities;
- allergen awareness within PSHE and personal development programmes;
- monitoring and reporting of incidents and near misses.

Purple Oaks Academy operates as an allergy-aware school. The Academy actively discourages nuts and nut-containing products from being brought onto site where severe nut allergy risks have been identified, but cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment. This measure is intended to minimise the risk of accidental exposure for students, staff and visitors with severe nut allergies. While the Academy cannot guarantee that the environment is completely free from nuts, all reasonable steps will be taken to reduce risk, promote awareness and ensure appropriate allergy management procedures are in place.

Signs, Symptoms and Actions

Anaphylactic reactions usually begin within minutes of being in contact with the allergen i.e. eating a trigger food, though can occur several hours later (i.e. allergy to Mammalian meat). Anaphylaxis involves difficulty in breathing and affects the heart rhythm. In extreme cases there could be a dramatic fall in blood pressure leading to collapse.

Once started, anaphylaxis reactions progress quickly. Investigations into fatal anaphylaxis show that there is only a 20–30-minute window of opportunity during which steps can be taken to prevent death – therefore giving emergency adrenaline **immediately** and calling Emergency Services (999) is crucial. **Anaphylaxis always requires an emergency response**

Anaphylaxis can occur without any other signs (such as a skin rash) being present. Always consider anaphylaxis in someone with a known food allergy who has sudden difficulty in breathing. Giving adrenaline in this context is very safe and may be lifesaving.

The most common causes of "whole body" allergic reactions – including anaphylaxis – are:

- foods (e.g. peanuts, tree nuts, cow's milk/dairy foods, egg, wheat, fish/shellfish and sesame);
- insect stings (e.g. bee, wasp);
- medication (e.g. antibiotics, pain medicines such as ibuprofen);
- latex (e.g. rubber gloves, balloons, swimming caps).

Even for a food allergy, most anaphylaxis reactions require the person to have eaten the food, although less serious allergic reactions can happen through skin or other contact. Anaphylaxis reactions due to skin contact are very rare. Students who have a skin reaction need monitoring for at least an hour.

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
- mild throat tightness
- sudden change in behaviour

These symptoms are treated with antihistamines.

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, persistent cough.
- **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.

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

Action:

- Keep the individual where they are, call for help and do not leave them unattended.
- **LIE individual 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 DEVICE WITHOUT DELAY** and note the time given. AAls should be given into the muscle in the outer thigh or nasal into the nostril. 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 adrenaline device
- If no signs of life commence CPR.
- Call parent/carer as soon as possible.

Whilst you are waiting for the ambulance, keep the individual 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 individuals must go to hospital for observation after anaphylaxis even if they appear to have recovered, as a reaction can recur after treatment.

Food Provision and Catering

Purple Oaks Academy will:

- work closely with catering providers to ensure compliance with Food Standards Agency allergen requirements;
- provide allergen information for all meals supplied by the Academy (documented on the online menu)
- ensure allergens are clearly identified and communicated to relevant staff;
- maintain systems to identify students requiring special diets;
- use a minimum two-person checking process when meals are prepared and served for Students with allergies;
- ensure all food used in curriculum activities is appropriately labelled;
- discourage food sharing between students;
- seek parental consent before food is brought into school for celebrations or special events.

Because many Purple Oaks students have additional communication and learning needs, staff will actively supervise meal and snack times.

Medication and Adrenaline Devices

Students prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors (AAls) should have two prescribed devices available at school at all times. Individual students who have these devices have them stored in their classroom or kept in their bags to be carried around with them.

Purple Oaks Academy maintains spare emergency adrenaline devices in accordance with statutory guidance which is kept in the medical cabinet in the Medical room.

Emergency Adrenaline Kit

The Academy holds:

- 2 x EpiPen Junior (150mcg)

- 2 x EpiPen (300mcg)

(or equivalent brands according to stock availability)

Stored in clearly labelled **orange Emergency Anaphylaxis Kits** located:

- Medical Room
- Emergency adrenaline devices will be located so that they can be accessed and administered within five minutes of a suspected anaphylactic reaction anywhere on the school site.

Purple Oaks Academy will ensure that an appropriate emergency medical kit, including any required allergy medication and adrenaline auto-injectors, is taken on every educational visit, trip and off-site activity. This is to ensure that no pupil or member of staff is left vulnerable and that emergency treatment can be provided promptly should it be required.

Locations will be reviewed annually and whenever Student needs change.

The designated Allergy Lead is responsible for:

- monthly checks of all devices;
- monitoring expiry dates;
- arranging replacement medication before expiry;
- ensuring emergency kits remain fully stocked.

Student Self-Management

Purple Oaks Academy recognises that students have varying levels of independence.

Where appropriate:

- Students will be encouraged to understand their allergies;
- Students may carry their own medication if agreed through their IHP or risk assessment;
- support will be tailored to each student's communication, cognition and physical needs.

For many students attending Purple Oaks Academy, staff will retain primary responsibility for ensuring emergency medication is available and accessible.

Staff Training

All staff receive annual allergy awareness and anaphylaxis training.

Training includes:

- recognising allergic reactions;
- recognising anaphylaxis;
- emergency procedures;
- administration of adrenaline auto-injectors;
- use of spare AAls;
- understanding Individual Healthcare Plans;
- reducing allergen exposure;
- reporting incidents and near misses.

New staff, volunteers, agency staff and regular contractors will receive allergy safety information and emergency response instruction before working unsupervised with students.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal (Head of school)

The Principal will ensure:

- statutory duties are met;
- appropriate procedures are implemented;
- resources are available to support allergy management;
- staff receive adequate training.

Designated Allergy Lead

The Allergy Lead will:

- maintain the allergy register;
- oversee Healthcare Plans;
- coordinate training;
- monitor incidents and near misses;
- liaise with families and healthcare professionals;
- monitor emergency medication.

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- following this policy;
- understanding students allergy needs;
- implementing Healthcare Plans;
- reducing risks of allergen exposure;
- responding appropriately to emergencies.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- informing the academy of allergies and changes in medical needs;
- providing up-to-date medication;
- supplying current medical documentation;
- participating in Healthcare Plan reviews.

Identification of Students with Allergies

Purple Oaks Academy will collect information through:

- admission paperwork;
- annual medical data updates;
- Healthcare Plan reviews;
- direct communication with parents and healthcare professionals.

Relevant information will be recorded securely on the school's Management Information System and shared with staff on a need-to-know basis.

Individual Healthcare Plans

Purple Oaks Academy will ensure that:

- all students with significant allergies have an Individual Healthcare Plan;
- plans are reviewed annually or sooner if circumstances change;
- allergy action plans provided by healthcare professionals are attached to Healthcare Plans;
- staff are informed of changes promptly.

Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities

All visits will include:

- allergy risk assessments;
- access to required medication;
- trained staff;
- emergency communication arrangements;
- consideration of food provision and allergen exposure.

No Student will be excluded from an activity solely because they have an allergy.

Recording Incidents and Near Misses

The Academy will record all:

- allergic reactions;
- episodes of anaphylaxis;
- medication administration;
- near misses involving allergen exposure.

The Academy adopts a learning-focused, no-blame approach to reporting allergy incidents and near misses to improve systems and reduce future risk.

The Governing Body/Trust Board will receive periodic reports on allergy incidents, near misses and policy effectiveness.

Wellbeing and Inclusion

Purple Oaks Academy recognises the emotional impact allergies can have on students and families.

The Academy will:

- promote understanding and awareness;
- actively challenge allergy-related bullying;
- ensure students with allergies are fully included in academy life;
- plan celebrations and events in an inclusive manner;
- work closely with families to reduce anxiety and promote confidence.

Safeguarding

Failure to provide essential medical information or prescribed medication may constitute a safeguarding concern. Any such concerns will be considered in line with the Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, following any serious incident, or when statutory guidance changes.