



The Priory School, Hitchin

Supporting children with allergies (including anaphylaxis)

Background

Food allergies are increasing, affecting approximately 5-8% of UK children. Severe reactions (anaphylaxis) can be life-threatening and may occur in school, sometimes in students with no previous diagnosis.

- Around 20% of severe allergic reactions happen in school settings.
- Rapid recognition and response are critical to saving lives.

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 severe reaction called anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is a severe, rapidly progressive allergic reaction that is potentially life threatening. 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. There are students at The Priory School, Hitchin (TPSH) who suffer from allergies and are at risk of anaphylaxis.

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.

The most common allergens in school aged children are **peanuts, eggs, tree nuts (e.g. cashews), cow's milk, fish and shellfish, wheat, soy, sesame** and **certain insect stings** (particularly **bee stings**).

The key to prevention of anaphylaxis in schools is knowledge of the student who has been diagnosed as at risk, awareness of allergens, and prevention of exposure to those allergens.

Partnerships between schools and parents/carers are important in helping the student avoid exposure. Adrenaline given through an adrenaline auto-injector (such as an EpiPen, Jext or Emerade) into the muscle of the outer mid-thigh is the most effective first aid treatment for anaphylaxis.

Purpose

TPSH is committed to promoting a whole school approach to healthcare, welfare and wellbeing, and to the safe management of all members of our community living with allergies. We believe all allergies should be taken seriously and managed professionally. We aim to:

- Provide robust systems to prevent and respond to allergic reactions, including emergencies with all staff being trained to recognise symptoms and act immediately, including being trained to administer an AAI.
- Promote independence and self-management for life beyond school.
- Ensure full inclusion of all students in school life.
- Maintain a culture of awareness and safety across the whole school community.

We recognise our legal duty to support students with medical conditions and will make reasonable adjustments to enable full participation in all aspects of school life.

Roles and Responsibilities

School Allergy Leads: Matt Blayney (Headteacher) and Karen Jenkins (Business Manager)

The school allergy leads will be responsible for:

- Leading whole-school allergy awareness.
- Ensuring annual staff training which includes:
 - a. Knowing the common allergens and triggers of allergies.
 - b. 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.
 - c. Administering emergency treatment (including AAIs) in the event of anaphylaxis – knowing how and when to administer the medication/device.
 - d. Ensuring that spare AAIs are held in the school café and main office.
 - e. Overseeing AAI provision and policy review.

School First Aid Team Lead: Jo Wilcox (Office Manager)

- Maintaining up-to-date allergy records and action plans through communication with parents.
- Coordinating medical information and medication.
- Maintaining the allergy register.
- Checking medication expiry and liaising with parents.
- Ensuring that any reaction or near miss is recorded and reported internally and, if required, in accordance with RIDDOR.

All Staff

- Know students with allergies in their care and check key information for classes they cover (on Arbor)
- Recognise symptoms of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis
- Complete annual training
- Staff leading school trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies. Trip leaders will check that all students with medical conditions, including allergies, carry their medication. Students unable to produce the required medication will not be able to attend the excursion
- Promote allergy awareness and ensure inclusion

Parents/Carers

- Provide up-to-date medical information and allergy action plans; parents must provide an annual update to ensure we can safeguard children with allergies
- Supply in-date medication (including two AAIs where prescribed)
- Inform school of any changes in symptoms and known allergens
- If your child has additional needs that might make it more challenging for them to meet the responsibilities expected of students (below) to liaise with the Learning Support team

Students with Allergies

- Understand their allergies and triggers and take steps to avoid these, including checking allergen boards, if their allergy is one of the top 14 or one causing a known anaphylactic response to one of our students and asking staff to confirm that their allergen(s) are not present, if choosing an item that is not pre-packaged or if they have any doubts.
- Carry and use medication where appropriate.
- Inform staff immediately if symptoms occur.

Prevention

- All the top 14 allergens are clearly labelled (either on packaging or, for foods produced in school, on the allergen boards at the pods or in the canteen, in line with the Food Information Regulations of 2014. An annual external audit of our catering provision checks that we are fully compliant with this requirement, and the catering runs additional spot checks.
- In addition, we add to our information boards, the allergens known to cause an anaphylactic response to one of our students (where parents have made this known to us).
- Menus and ingredient lists are available in advance (request from dstevens@priory.herts.sch.uk)
- Catering staff are informed and can answer queries from students about allergens
- Catering staff are trained in allergen awareness
- Cross-contamination controls in place, although we cannot guarantee no cross contamination occurs owing to the nature of our busy and small cooking and self-service area.

Allergens in school

The school is not allergen-free; Anaphylaxis UK does not support bans in schools on any allergen as it can create a false sense of reassurance as no school can guarantee that it is truly allergen free.

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

- High-risk foods may be discouraged on some trips, in line with their risk assessment
- Lessons involving food are risk assessed

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Recognising that allergies can affect wellbeing, the school provides:

- Pastoral support
- Monitoring for bullying or anxiety

School Trips

- Students with allergies will not be excluded from trips or visits away from the school site.
- Staff are informed and trained
- Medication and AAls are carried and accessible with students prescribed AAls being required to carry two devices on trips (checked by staff before setting off)
- Activities are risk assessed.

Recognising and responding to allergic reactions

What to look for:

- Symptoms usually come on quickly, within minutes of exposure to the allergen, but can also occur hours after exposure. Mild to moderate allergic reaction symptoms may include:
 - a. a red raised rash (known as hives or urticaria) anywhere on the body
 - b. a tingling or itchy feeling in the mouth
 - c. swelling of lips, face, or eyes
 - d. stomach pain or vomiting
- Severe (Anaphylaxis – ABC symptoms):
 - i) **AIRWAY** - swelling in the throat, tongue, or upper airways (tightening of the throat, hoarse voice, difficulty swallowing)
 - ii) **BREATHING** - sudden onset wheezing, breathing difficulty, noisy breathing
 - iii) **CIRCULATION** - dizziness, feeling faint, sudden sleepiness, tiredness, confusion, pale clammy skin, loss of consciousness.

The term for this more severe 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 student 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 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 the airways
- It stops swelling
- It raises blood pressure

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

Training and emergency response

Key staff are made aware of any students with anaphylaxis or those who have received a recent diagnosis and are reminded of the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis, and also how to treat this. **All staff receive anaphylaxis training and training on how to use an adrenaline auto-injector at the beginning of each academic year, delivered by the NHS. TPSH stock two spare adrenaline auto-injectors, one is held in the school café and another is held in the main office.**

If a student thinks they may be having anaphylaxis then a first aider must be called to the student. We will also call 999. Teachers and other school staff, who have contact with the student at risk of anaphylaxis, are encouraged to undertake training in anaphylaxis management including how to respond in an emergency.

The school's first aid procedures and student's IAHCP will be followed when responding to an anaphylactic reaction, including administering antihistamine, or adrenaline. Staff are aware that sometimes additional shots of adrenaline may be required.

All staff receive annual allergy and anaphylaxis training, including:

- Recognising symptoms
- Emergency response procedures
- AAI use
- Risk reduction strategies

Emergency Procedure (Anaphylaxis):

1. Keep the child where they are, call for help and do not leave them unattended
2. LIE CHILD FLAT WITH LEGS RAISED – they can be propped up if struggling to breathe but this should be for as short a time as possible
3. USE ADRENALINE AUTO-INJECTOR WITHOUT DELAY and note the time given. AAI's should be given into the muscle in the outer thigh. Specific instructions vary by brand – always follow the instructions on the device.
4. CALL 999 and state ANAPHYLAXIS (ana-fil-axis)
5. If there is no improvement after 5 minutes, administer second AAI in the OPPOSITE THIGH to the one used for first AAI
6. If no signs of life commence CPR
7. Call parent/carers as soon as possible
8. The student must go to hospital for observation.

Whilst you are waiting for the ambulance, keep the student 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.

In order to support children with allergies to effectively manage day-to-day life (as they will need to do when they become an independent adult), we encourage all students to carry their own autoinjector and ensure that it is in their possession at all times. Spare autoinjectors are held in school, one in the main office and one in the café.

The school café will ensure that allergens are made clear on food cooked on-site. Any food purchased externally will include ingredient lists. Students are also encouraged to ask about ingredients should they be unsure.

Individual Anaphylaxis Health Care Plans

At the beginning of each school year or when a child joins the school, parents/carers are asked if their child has any medical conditions on their Essential Details Form. As soon as the school is made aware of a new student with anaphylaxis, or a current student with a new diagnosis, we will contact the parents/carers before the start of term or at the time of diagnosis.

The school will ensure that an Individual Anaphylaxis Health Care Plan (IAHCP) is developed in consultation with the student's parents/carers, for any student who has been diagnosed by a medical practitioner as being at risk of anaphylaxis. The IAHCP will be in place as soon as practicable after the student is enrolled and where possible before their first day of school.

The student's IAHCP will be reviewed, in consultation with the student's parents/carers:

- as applicable, or upon parental update.
- if the student's condition changes.
- immediately after the student has an anaphylactic reaction.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to:

- provide a completed Anaphylaxis Action Plan.
- inform the school if their child's medical condition changes, and if relevant provide an updated Anaphylaxis Action Plan.

Communication

- Key members of staff will be informed of a child's allergies and IAHCP. This information will be stored on the school's MIS system so that every member of staff will be able to familiarise themselves with a child's needs, and the appropriate support required. This information will also be shared with specific colleagues, e.g. trip leaders and PE staff prior to departure or regular fixtures.

Useful Links

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

Safer Schools Programme: <https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/education/safer>

AllergyWise for Schools online training: <https://www.allergywise.org.uk/p/allergywise-for-schools1>

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

Whole school allergy and awareness management: <https://www.allergyuk.org/schools/whole-school-allergy-awareness-andmanagement>

BSACI Allergy Action Plans - <https://www.bsaci.org/profession>