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Guidance

Allergy guidance for schools

Updated 18 October 2019

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The [standards for school food in England](#) allow schools and colleges to substitute items from their usual menus if certain items are in short supply.

If you're making changes to your menus or substituting food products, you must make sure you can continue to meet any special dietary needs. This includes pupils who cannot eat certain ingredients due to an allergy or other medical condition. If you need to adapt your menus at short notice, you must make sure that the needs of these pupils are still met.

This guide lists practical advice and resources to help schools manage allergy risks.

Legal requirements for schools and caterers

Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014, schools have a duty to support pupils at their school with medical conditions.

Our statutory guidance explains your responsibilities in [supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#). You should make sure that you support pupils with any

medical conditions in school. This could include ensuring that a child with an allergy is able to eat a school lunch.

The [Food Information Regulations 2014](#) requires all food businesses including school caterers to show the allergen ingredients' information for the food they serve. This makes it easier for schools to identify the food that pupils with allergies can and cannot eat.

Practical measures and advice

If you're making changes to your menus or substituting food products, you must continue to meet any special dietary needs.

To make sure you continue to meet these pupil's needs, you should:

- check any product changes with your food suppliers
- ask your caterers to read labels and product information before using them
- use the [Food Standards Agency's allergen matrix](#) to list the ingredients in all your meals
- ensure allergen ingredients remain identifiable

The Food Standards Agency has produced [guidance for food businesses](#) to help with this. It includes information on:

- the 14 most common allergens
- food labelling requirements
- handling allergen ingredients and
- further training

Read the [allergen guidance for institutional caterers](#). It includes information for school caterers on:

- processes to help identify pupils with allergies
- methods to help cross-reference allergies against particular food types or ingredients

Dealing with a severe reaction

The NHS has advice on [food allergies](#). It contains information on symptoms and treatment. They also have more detailed advice on the [treatment of anaphylactic reactions](#).

Read the Anaphylaxis Campaign advice on [what to do in an emergency](#).

All primary and secondary schools can buy adrenaline auto-injectors from a pharmacy, without a prescription, for use in emergencies. Read the Department of Health and Social Care's guidance on [using emergency adrenaline auto-injectors in schools](#).

Most allergic reactions are less severe, check the [NHS advice on symptoms](#).

Other resources

Allergy UK has [fact sheets and resources for schools](#) covering a wide range of allergies.

The Anaphylaxis Campaign has advice to help schools [manage severe allergic conditions](#).

You can find a model to help develop individual health care plans in annex A of the [supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#) guidance.

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