University of Warwick Nursery
Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy

Purpose	To minimise the risk of any child suffering a serious allergic reaction whilst at the University Nursery or attending any organisation related activity. To ensure staff are properly prepared to recognise and manage serious allergic reactions should they arise.
Links with other policies	Consider Health and Safety and Safeguarding
Review Frequency	3 yearly or if an incident occurs (near miss or reaction)
Date approved	April 2026
Date of next review	April 2029

The named staff members (at least 2) responsible for coordinating staff anaphylaxis training and the upkeep of the provider's anaphylaxis policy are:

Jo Warren, Nursery manager

Debbie Pinkerton, Assistant manager

Contents

1. **Introduction**
2. **Roles and responsibilities**
3. **Allergy action plans**
4. **Emergency treatment and management of anaphylaxis**
5. **Supply, storage and care of medication**
6. **'Spare' adrenaline auto-injectors in the provider**
7. **Inclusion and safeguarding**
8. **Food**
9. **Trips**
10. **Allergy awareness and nut bans**
11. **Risk assessment**
12. **Useful links**

1. 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 severe reaction called anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction. 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 fairly 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 the University Nursery will support children with allergies, to ensure they are safe and are not disadvantaged in any way whilst taking part in provider life.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Parent Responsibilities

- On entry to setting, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the setting Manager of any known 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 the setting. If they do not currently have an Allergy Action Plan this should be developed as soon as possible in collaboration with a healthcare professional e.g. GP/allergy specialist.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring any required medication is supplied, in date and replaced as necessary.
- Parents are requested to keep the setting up to date with any changes in allergy management. The Allergy Action Plan will be kept updated accordingly.

Staff Responsibilities

- All practitioners, Educators and apprentices are Paediactric First Aid trained which is updated every three years. All staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods which is sometimes called complementary feeding or weaning.
- Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. All babies and young children sit in key groups at mealtimes with their key person or staff member. This helps to prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions or choking incidents.

- Before a child is admitted to the setting, the Manager must obtain information about any food allergies that the child has. This information must be shared by the Manager with all staff involved in preparing and handling food.
- The setting's meals are provided by Nutrifresh Catering and meals are ordered to meet each child's requirements. On delivery of the meals, the kitchen staff check the order against each child's requirements. When meals are taken to each playroom, the staff recheck all meals and requirements before they are given to each child.
- Staff (regular or cover) must be aware of the children in their care who have known allergies as an allergic reaction that could occur at any time and not just at mealtimes. Any food-related activities must be supervised with considerable caution.
- Staff leading trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies. Trip leaders will check that all children with medical conditions, including allergies, carry their medication. Children must not leave the setting without staff carrying the child's medication.
- The Manager will ensure that the up-to-date Allergy Action Plan is kept with the child's medication. For complex reactions, the setting will produce a management plan with parents that staff will follow to ensure the child is kept safe from cross contamination
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all medication is in date, however, the staff will check medication kept at the setting is in date and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.

Child Responsibilities

- Children are encouraged to learn about their allergies and be taught to ask an adult, 'is this safe for me?'
- Children should be taught to let an adult know if they are feeling unwell.

3. 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 providers to administer medicines in the event of an allergic reaction, including consent to administer a spare adrenaline auto-injector. Each medication that staff need to administer to children is recorded on the setting's medication form which lists the information on the prescription label, expiry date, dosage and date/time to be administered with the permission signature the parents.

4. 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. **In younger children, anaphylaxis almost always involves skin reactions. In addition to swelling of the face, lips, tongue and eyes, hands and feet may also swell. The child may experience diarrhoea, and they may display sudden behaviour changes such as inconsolable crying, becoming clingy and refusing food.** The child 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 child has been exposed to something they are known to be allergic to, then it is more likely to be an anaphylactic reaction. The child will have been prescribed an auto- injector.

Anaphylaxis can develop very rapidly, so treatment that works rapidly is needed.

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.
Action:

- Keep the child where they are, call for help and do not leave them unattended.
- **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.
- **USE ADRENALINE AUTO-INJECTOR WITHOUT DELAY** and note the time given. AAIs 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/carer as soon as possible.

Whilst you are waiting for the ambulance, keep the child 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 children must go to hospital for observation after anaphylaxis even if they appear to have recovered as a reaction can re-occur after treatment.

5. Supply, storage and care of medication

Children in early years settings need adults to be responsible for their emergency medication. Their medication/anaphylaxis kit must be kept within 5 minutes of them, not locked away or behind a locked door and **accessible to all staff at all times.**

Medication is stored with the first aid box in the wall cupboard above the sink in each playroom. Medication that needs to be kept refrigerated is stored in an airtight bag and stored in the drawer of the left-hand fridge in the staff room. Each bag is clearly labelled with the child's name.

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

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

Disposal
AAIs are single use only and must be disposed of as sharps. Used AAIs can be given to ambulance paramedics on arrival or can be disposed of in a pre-ordered sharps bin.

6. 'Spare' adrenaline auto-injectors in providers

Only providers that are part of a school are permitted to obtain spare AAIs for emergency use. These may be used in children who are at risk of anaphylaxis when their prescribed AAI is unavailable, unusable, or out of date, or when a child is experiencing anaphylaxis for the first time.

Current legislation does not extend to independent or charity-run early years providers. As a result, these providers are currently unable to purchase spare AAIs for emergency use.

7. Inclusion and safeguarding

The University nursery is committed to ensuring that all children with medical conditions, including allergies, in terms of both physical and mental health, are properly supported in the setting so that they can play a full and active role in provider life, remain healthy and achieve their developmental milestones. The setting conforms to the Safer Eating requirements in Early Years Safeguarding 2025.

8. Food

The setting's caterers, Nutrifresh, follow the Food Information Regulations 2014 which states that allergen information relating to the 'Top 14' allergens must be available for all food products.

Parents of children with allergies are given a copy of the list of ingredients for every meal so they can track what their child is eating at the setting as well as advise regarding alternative meals if the allergies are complex.

The setting's 4 week rolling menu is available for parents to view on the nursery's website and a copy of the menus are emailed to all parents.

The setting adheres to safer eating as set out in the Early Years Safeguarding September 2025:

- Information must be shared by the Manager with all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food.
- At each mealtime and snack time kitchen staff and practitioners are responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
- Managers must ensure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods which is sometimes called complementary feeding or weaning.
- Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Where possible, staff will sit facing children whilst they eat so they can make sure children are prevented from food sharing and can be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.

The setting adheres to the following Department of Health guidance recommendations:

- Bottles, other drinks and lunch boxes provided by parents for children with food allergies should be clearly labelled with the name of the child for whom they are intended.
- The child, when old enough. should be taught to also check with staff, before eating 'is this safe for me?'
- Where food is provided at the setting, 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 food-allergic children without parental engagement and permission (e.g. birthday parties, food treats).
- Use of food in crafts, cooking, 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 children and their age.

9. Setting trips/walks around campus

Staff leading trips out of the nursery will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies. Staff will check that they have medication for children with allergies. If the medication is not present, the child will be unable to attend the trip as it wouldn't be safe.

All the activities on the trip will be risk assessed to see if they pose a threat to allergic children and alternative activities planned to ensure inclusion. A complete risk assessment is carried out before anyone leaves the nursery.

10. Allergy awareness and nut bans

The University nursery supports the approach advocated by Anaphylaxis UK towards nut bans/nut free providers. They would not necessarily support a blanket ban on any particular allergen in any establishment, including settings. This is because nuts are only one of many allergens that could affect children, and no provider could guarantee a truly allergen free environment for a child living with a food allergy. They advocate instead for providers to conduct a risk assessment and adopt a culture of allergy awareness and education.

A 'whole provider awareness of allergies' is a much better approach, as it ensures teachers, children and all other staff are aware of what allergies are, the importance of avoiding the children' allergens, the signs & symptoms, how to deal with allergic reactions and to ensure policies and procedures are in place to minimise risk. Risk assessments may determine that a section of the provision needs to be kept free of a particular allergen. In this instance, when the child has left that area of the provision or the child's allergies change, the risk assessment must be reviewed, and restrictions lifted.

11. Risk Assessment

The Manager will undertake a risk assessment for the setting and each individual child with allergies both newly joining and newly diagnosed. The risk assessments will identify the control measures that are needed to be implemented to keep the child with allergies safe; this may be separate toys for a baby/toddler with a milk allergy and is using anything that is likely to go into their mouth. The risk assessment will be used to help identify any gaps in our systems and processes for keeping allergic children safe.

12. Useful Links

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

- For Education:
- Guidance for Early Years: https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/education/guidance-for-rly-years-settings-2/

Training:

- AllergyWise® for Early Years Settings: https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/education/allergywise-for-early-years-settings-information/

Allergy awareness V nut bans: The nut free debate

Early Years Foundation Stage Safeguarding reforms: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6705184530536cb927482dd6/Early_years_foundation_stage_safeguarding_reforms_-_response.pdf