

Community Pre-schools Allergy Management Policy

Community Pre-schools recognise the seriousness of allergies and are committed to minimising the risk of allergic reactions through education, prevention, planning, and rapid response. This policy outlines the strategies and responsibilities necessary to create an allergy-aware setting, tailored to the needs of our children, staff, and the wider school community.

Objectives

- To protect children with known allergies from exposure to allergens within the pre-school environment.
- To foster a culture of awareness, safety, and inclusion among all children, staff, and families.
- To ensure all staff are trained in the identification and management of allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis.
- To encourage open communication between families and pre-school staff regarding allergy management.
- To provide clear protocols for prevention, identification, and emergency response relating to allergies.

This policy applies to all children enrolled in Community Pre-schools, their families, staff volunteers, and visitors. It encompasses all activities conducted on pre-school premises, as well as off-site excursions and events organised by the pre-school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Management

- Develop and regularly review this policy in consultation with staff, families, and relevant healthcare professionals.
- Ensure all staff receive up-to-date training in allergy awareness, prevention, and emergency response (including the use of adrenaline auto-injectors).
- Maintain a current register of children with allergies, including medical management plans and emergency contact details.
- Always ensure the availability of first aid kits and emergency medication, including during excursions and off-site activities.

Staff

- Familiarise themselves with each child's allergy details and management plan.
- Monitor food and environmental exposures to allergens, particularly during meal and snack times, cooking activities, and art/craft sessions.
- Communicate with families regarding menu planning, activities, and any potential risks.
- Follow established procedures in the event of an allergic reaction, including administering medication and seeking emergency medical assistance as required.

Families

- Inform the pre-school of their child's allergies upon enrolment and immediately notify staff of any changes.
- Provide the pre-school with a current allergy action plan, signed by a medical practitioner, and ensure all required medications are supplied, clearly labelled, and in-date.
- Work collaboratively with staff to identify potential risks and modify practices to reduce exposure to allergens.

Children

- Are encouraged to learn about their allergies in an age-appropriate way, including understanding safe foods and environments.
- Are supported to speak up if they feel unwell or are unsure about a food or activity.
- Will be guided to practice good hygiene, such as handwashing before and after meals.

Prevention Strategies

Food Management

- Establish a process for reviewing all food brought into or prepared on the premises to identify and address allergen risks.
- Provide allergy-safe alternatives and ensure all food is prepared and served in a way that minimises cross-contamination.
- Encourage families to provide clearly labelled food when supplying food from home.
- Discourage the sharing of food, utensils, and drink containers among children.
- Display clear signage regarding food allergies in relevant areas (e.g., kitchen, eating areas).

Environmental Controls

- Regularly clean surfaces, toys, and equipment to reduce allergen build-up.
- Monitor classroom materials, craft supplies, and plants for potential allergens (e.g., latex, nuts, pollen).
- Implement plans for safe participation in excursions, including risk assessments and carrying emergency medication.

Identification and Communication

- Maintain up-to-date records and photographs of children with allergies in appropriate, confidential locations.
- Ensure all staff, relief staff, and volunteers are informed about the needs and action plans for children with allergies.
- Use symbols or other visual cues to discreetly indicate allergy information for children as appropriate.
- Communicate with families about menu changes, special events, and any incidents involving allergies.

Emergency Response Procedures

- Follow each child's individual allergy action plan in the event of suspected exposure or reaction.
- Ensure staff are confident in recognising symptoms, which may include hives, swelling, difficulty breathing, vomiting, or collapse.
- Immediately administer prescribed emergency medication, such as antihistamines or adrenaline auto-injectors (e.g., EpiPen), as per the child's action plan.
- Call emergency services (e.g., 999 or 112) for any severe reaction (anaphylaxis).
- Notify the child's parents/guardians as soon as possible after the incident.
- Document the incident, actions taken, and outcome for record-keeping and review.

Training and Education

- All staff will undertake initial and refresher training at least annually in allergy management and anaphylaxis response.
- Children will be taught about allergies and inclusion in a sensitive, age-appropriate manner.
- Posters, books, and resources will be used to promote understanding and reduce stigma.

Policy Review and Continuous Improvement

- This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or more frequently if there are significant changes in legislation, best practice, or individual child needs.
- Feedback from staff, families, and health professionals will be sought to improve allergy management practices.
- All incidents and near-misses will be analysed to identify areas for improvement and further staff training.