RUSSET HOUSE SCHOOL

ALLERGY SAFETY POLICY

Aims

Russet House School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for pupils with allergies. The school aims to:

- Minimise allergen risks through effective risk assessment and management.
- Support pupils with allergies through Individual Healthcare Plans (HCPs).
- Promote awareness and understanding of allergies across the whole school community.
- Ensure that all staff can respond appropriately in the event of an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis.
- Enable pupils with allergies to participate fully in all aspects of school life.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of:

- DfE Allergy Safety in Schools Statutory Guidance (July 2026).
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School guidance and school policy.
- Department of Health and Social Care guidance on the use of emergency adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs) in schools.
- The Food Information Regulations 2014 and subsequent amendments.

This policy also algins with Allergy UK.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place to support pupils with allergies and will appoint an Allergy Lead from the Senior Leadership Team.

Allergy Lead

The Deputy Headteacher is appointed as the allergy lead and is responsible for:

- Maintaining the school's allergy register.
- Overseeing Individual Healthcare Plans.
- Ensuring that all medication is well managed and meets storage and expiry requirements.
- Coordinating staff training and awareness.
- Monitoring allergy incidents and near misses.
- Reporting relevant information and trends to governors.
- Ensuring emergency medication arrangements are effective.
- Reviewing and monitoring implementation of this policy.

Governors

A link Governor will be appointed for allergies who will:

- Ensure school policies and procedures are compliant.

- Meet with the Allergy Lead to monitor and review processes.

Special Schools Nursing Team

The nursing team will:

- Support the development and review of Individual Healthcare Plans.
- Assist in maintaining accurate medical information.
- Support training and management of medication.
- Act as the main point of contact regarding queries related to allergies.

All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Understanding allergy risks and risk-reduction measures.
- Following Individual Healthcare Plans and risk assessments.
- Ensuring medication is taken to all locations outside the classroom, including off site educational visits.
- Understanding emergency procedures and recognising the signs of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.
- Participating in required allergy training.
- Promoting an inclusive environment for pupils with allergies.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Informing the school of their child's allergy and medical needs.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date medical information.
- Providing prescribed medication, including AAIs where required.
- Ensuring medication remains in date and replacing medication as necessary.
- Participating in the development and review of Individual Healthcare Plans.

Pupils

Where appropriate to their age and understanding, pupils will:

- Learn about their allergies and associated risks.
- Follow agreed safety measures.
- Where communication allows (supported by visuals), inform an adult if they have been exposed to an allergen or feel unwell.

Supporting Pupils with SEND and wellbeing

As a special school, Russet House recognises that pupils with SEND may require additional support to manage allergy risks. Risk assessments and healthcare plans will take account of:

- Autism differences and learning difficulties
- Communication needs
- Sensory needs
- Co-occurring medical conditions

The school will provide pastoral support for pupils with allergies to help them feel safe, confident and to support their emotional well-being and address any anxiety related to managing their allergies.

There may be occasions where a pupil requires the use of a restrictive intervention to administer emergency medication in the best interest of a child and as a last resort (see Positive Behaviour Support Policy).

Risk Assessment and Management

The school will take reasonable steps to reduce allergen exposure and support pupils safely. The following controls will be implemented where appropriate:

- We acknowledge that it is impractical to enforce an allergen-free school, yet we strongly promote we are an allergy aware school. We encourage pupils and staff to not bring in certain high-risk airborne foods containing nuts or sesame to reduce the chances of someone experiencing a reaction. See Appendix 2.
- If a pupil brings these foods into school, the food will be un-opened, parents contacted and the food returned home.
- Environmental and activity-specific controls will be identified through risk assessments such as Food Preparation; Animals in Schools or any other activities with identified allergens.
- Tables wiped before and after snack time, or when any food is brought to a table activity,
- Regular handwashing routines will be promoted.
- Catering staff employed by Stir are informed of any pupil with a food allergy on a regular basis via the school office using the 'Special Diet Allergies Form' provided by Stir. In addition, the office also provides a list with pupil photos, outlining allergies or special diets. They follow all legal requirements related to their roles and responsibilities in order to provide food that is safe for those pupils to eat. (See Appendix 1 produced by Stir).
- Pupils with animal allergies will not interact with animals.
- For events, including educational visits that take place outside of the school, pupils with allergies will not be excluded from taking part. Instead, school will risk assess and plan accordingly.

Use of the Food Technology Room

When using the food technology room for cooking, baking, snack preparation, or food-based learning activities, staff must take all reasonable steps to minimise the risk of allergen exposure and ensure the safety of pupils with allergies.

Staff must:

- Check the allergy and dietary requirements before ordering, planning or delivering any food-related activity.
- Food is ordered through school, at the point of ordering no food containing nuts, sesame or specific known items will be ordered for the classes.
- Consider all allergy conditions before purchasing any food items for use in school.
- Read ingredient labels carefully before use and check for allergen information, even when products have been used previously.
- Not use foods containing allergens that pose a significant risk to pupils taking part in the activity.
- Prevent cross-contamination by thoroughly cleaning work surfaces, equipment, utensils and hands before and after food preparation using the cleaning provided by class.
- Ensure pupils wash their hands before and after handling food.
- Maintain appropriate supervision throughout the activity and be aware of pupils' individual allergy needs.

- Ensure allergy medication, including adrenaline auto-injectors (AAI) where required, is always accessible in accordance with the pupil's healthcare plan.
- Report any allergic reactions, near misses, or concerns immediately and follow the school's emergency procedures.

Planning other Food-Based Activities

- Staff must consider allergy risks during the planning stage of any food activity.
- Where there is any uncertainty regarding the suitability of an ingredient or activity, staff must seek advice from the designated allergy lead before proceeding.
- Pupil safety must take priority over curriculum activities, and alternative resources or activities should be provided where necessary to reduce risk.

Healthcare Plans (HCPs)

Pupils with allergies will be identified from the pupil's admissions forms and added to the school's allergy register (staff shared/HCPs). The Special School's Nursing Team will be immediately informed to assist in completing a full Health Care Assessment. They will gather information about known allergies from the pupil's parents and associated health care providers.

All pupils requiring allergy management will have an Individual Healthcare Plan developed in partnership with parents, carers and relevant healthcare professionals.
Plans will include:

- Details of allergens.
- Signs and symptoms of allergic reactions.
- Medication requirements. i.e. whether a pupil has been prescribed AAI(s) (and if so, what type and dose)
- Emergency procedures.
- Reasonable adjustments and risk-reduction measures, including where a pupil has been prescribed an AAI, whether parental consent has been given for use of the spare AAI, which may be different to the personal AAI prescribed for the pupil

Plans will be reviewed:

- On entry into the school.
- Following any significant allergic reaction or incident.
- Whenever a pupil's medical needs change, including changes in height and weight.

All employees have a responsibility to disclose any medical conditions including allergens as part of the school's safer recruitment process. Volunteers and agency staff have a responsibility to inform the school of any allergens. They are required to complete their own HCP and provide any medication to school which must be stored safely.

Allergic Reactions and Emergency Response

All staff will be trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.
Where anaphylaxis is suspected:

1. Follow the pupil's Individual Healthcare Plan.
2. Administer the pupil's prescribed AAI immediately, or a school spare AAI where appropriate and authorised.

3. Call 999 immediately and state that anaphylaxis is suspected.
4. Inform parents or carers as soon as possible.
5. Remain with the pupil until emergency services arrive.
6. A school AAI device will be used instead of the pupil's own AAI device if:
   - Medical authorisation and written parental consent have been provided, or
   - The pupil's own prescribed AAI(s) are not immediately available (for example, because they are broken, out-of-date, have misfired or been wrongly administered.

All allergic reactions and emergency responses will be recorded and reviewed.

Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs)

Russet House School will:

- Maintain spare emergency AAIs in accordance with national guidance, stored in the school's emergency grab bags (location – school office).
- AAIs will always be stored in pairs.
- AAIs will be stored and checked following the 'tag' system (see Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy)
- Staff will carry all pupils' AAIs in the labelled green medical bags and transition with them to any location outside their classroom to ensure adrenaline is administered within five minutes. They will **NOT** be locked away; will be stored at room temperature; and kept in a safe and suitably central location to which all staff have access at all times, but is out of the reach and sight of other pupils.
- Ensure prescribed and spare AAIs are clearly identified.
- Some pupils leave AAIs in school, for those who take prescribed adrenaline devices home, a member of school staff will safely hand over medication to the parent/carer/passenger assistant (signed for).
- Carry out monthly checks of expiry dates and stock levels for both AAIs and salbutamol inhalers and alert parents to expiry dates.
- AAIs can only be used once. Once an AAI has been used, it will be sent home with the pupil or handed to the medical professional. Once an AAI has been used it will be recorded using the pupil's 'medication recording sheet' found in the green bag.

Incident Reporting and 'Near Misses' (an event relating directly to a medical condition (including allergy) that did not result in harm but had the clear potential to do so, for example, where an error, admission, or system failure could reasonably lead to a serious incident had circumstances been slightly different DFE Allergy Safety in school July 26)

All allergy-related incidents and 'near misses' will be:

- Report incident to SLT and parents.
- Recorded promptly on CPOMs using the medical category.
- Investigated where appropriate.
- Actions taken to reduce future risk.
- Shared with relevant staff and governors where lessons can be learned to improve practice and reduce future risk.

Training

All staff (including permanent, agency and regular volunteers) will receive annual allergy awareness training at the start of each academic year provided by the Special Schools Nursing Team. Catering staff employed by Stir will also be invited.

Training ensures staff:

- Have an awareness of allergy, the risks it poses, how allergic reactions can occur and how to manage it
- Understand that allergy includes multiple conditions (food allergy, asthma, eczema, hay fever, others), which can co-exist
- Know where to find information on allergy triggers
- Can identify the range of symptoms of allergic reactions
- Understand and can recognise anaphylaxis
- Know how to respond in an emergency, including:
  - calling emergency services and informing parents
  - how to locate and administer emergency medication (adrenaline for anaphylaxis)
  - training on how to use the medication/device in an emergency (whether prescribed to a given person or a school's "spare" AAI devices)
- Understand the impact allergy can have on a pupil's wellbeing
- Understand the school's allergy safety policy
- Understand their responsibilities in reducing the risk of individuals with known allergy coming into contact with their known allergens
- Understand how to report an allergic reaction or case of anaphylaxis (whether an incident or a "near miss").

Information sharing

The school will maintain an up-to-date register of pupils' allergies and special dietary requirements, organised by class to ensure information can be accessed and shared efficiently on the school's shared drive.

A poster-style list of pupils, including photographs and details of their allergies, will be displayed in all school kitchen areas and offices as a key staff reference. A copy will also be available in the school dining hall, with a cover sheet in place to maintain confidentiality when not in use.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- There is a serious allergy incident.
- Legislation or statutory guidance changes.
- There are significant changes to the school's needs or pupil population.
- The allergy safety policy will be published on the school website.

Date agreed: 17th September 2026 at Full Governing Body Meeting

Signed:
Chair of Governors

Appendix 1

Stir.
let's eat, together

Benedict's Law – Our Approach to Allergy Safety

Following the introduction of Benedict's Law and the new statutory guidance around allergy safety in schools, we want to reassure you that we have reviewed the updates and ensured that our processes and policy are aligned with the new guidance and are ensuring our approach to allergy safety, risk management and emergency preparedness reflects them.

Part of the new legislation requires each school to have their own whole school policy and we are here to answer any questions you may have as you are establishing yours.

We also wanted to confirm to you the processes we have put in place so these can be referred to in your policy.

What We've Done on Our End

To ensure consistency of approach we have the below details to support how we handle allergens day-to-day:

- **Clear Text Menu Tags:** We've started using plain text tags (using letters instead of icons) to label allergens on menus, making things completely clear for pupils, parents, and staff. This will come into effect from our October menu change..
- **No Ingredient Swaps:** We've locked down supplier agreements so ingredients can't be swapped or substituted for brands that might introduce unexpected or additional allergens.
- **Live Wholesale Data:** Our central menus are mapped using live digital profiles that pull data straight from our cloud system.
- **Dedicated Prep Space:** We use a separate area of the kitchen specifically for preparing allergen meals, with clear signage displayed whenever it's in use so the rest of the team knows to take extra care.

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- **Matching Diets at Service:** Our kitchen teams work closely with your school admin to match visual ID badges to individual student diet profiles at the counter.
- **Allergens Pre loaded on our pre order system Swift Kitchen:** All Dish Allergens and Dietary information is preloaded onto our meal ordering system.
- **Allergen Triple-Verification**: The Allergen Safe Diet Triple Check Sheet to ensure safe meal delivery for pupils with dietary restrictions. Two employees must complete and sign off on verification steps during the cooking, plating to confirm ingredients and labels. Then to confirm the correct identification of a pupil at delivery to confirm the proper meal has been served. Completed sheets are retained as continuous, auditable safety logs to ensure strict safety compliance
- **Daily Allergy Briefings:** We run quick briefings with our team before every meal service to double-check student profiles, ingredients, and safety steps.
- **On-Site Safety Logs:** All of our checksheets, cleaning logs, and audit trails are kept right on-site, ready to help out if the EHO drops in unannounced.
- **Digital Near-Miss Reporting:** We've set up a quick digital sign-off so our team tracks every single near-miss, helping us catch potential issues early.
- **Additional Training:** we are providing a mandatory Take 10 session on the changes which will be held on training record cards. We have also added Epi pen use posters in every kitchen
- **Company Charter:** We have launched a Company Allergen Charter that outlines mandatory allergen safety standards and immediate incident escalation procedures for all catering management personnel. It enforces strict daily operational controls, zero-delay telephone escalation to senior directors for any allergen incident or near miss.

To ensure our Stir team is completely aligned with your emergency procedures, you are required to let us know how you plan to involve Stir staff in your upcoming training and briefings on the following?

- **School Allergy Policies:** How you'd like to share your site's updated allergy and anaphylaxis policies with our team.
- **AAI / EpiPen Locations and training:** How you'll brief our team on the exact, unlocked locations of all Adrenaline Auto-Injectors around the school.

- **Joint Training Sessions:** How we can include Stir staff in your upcoming site-wide allergy awareness training.

If you would like to discuss Benedict's Law or how it relates to the catering service at your school, please speak to your usual contact and we will be happy to work through this with you.

Kind regards,

David

DAVID GREEN

Operations Manager

Stir Food Ltd

Appendix 2

Airborne Allergen Risk

Most allergic reactions occur through **eating an allergen or cross-contamination**. However, some allergens can, in certain circumstances, cause reactions when particles become airborne during food preparation, cooking, or handling.

Higher Risk of Airborne Exposure

- **Peanuts**: Particularly when roasted, ground, crushed, or used in cooking.
- **Tree nuts** (e.g. almonds, walnuts, cashews, hazelnuts, pistachios): Especially when chopped, ground, or baked.
- **Sesame**: Seeds can spread easily during food preparation and handling.
- **Fish and Shellfish** (crustaceans and molluscs): Steam or cooking vapours may trigger reactions in highly sensitive individuals.
- **Milk**: Milk powder and powdered dairy products may create airborne particles during preparation.

Lower Risk of Airborne Exposure The following allergens generally present a risk through **consumption or direct contact rather than airborne exposure**:

- Celery
- Cereals containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley, oats)
- Eggs
- Lupin
- Mustard
- Soybeans
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites

Staff should be aware that while all allergens may cause serious allergic reactions if ingested, certain allergens, particularly peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, fish, shellfish, and powdered milk products, may also pose a risk through airborne exposure during food preparation or cooking.

anaphylaxis UK

Be Allergy Aware & Save a Life

Anaphylaxis is a serious and life-threatening reaction to allergens such as food, insect stings, medication & latex.

Recognise the ABC symptoms and act quickly - you could save a life.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

A Airway

- Persistent cough
- Vocal changes (hoarse voice)
- Difficulty swallowing
- Swollen tongue

B Breathing

- Difficult or noisy breathing
- Wheezing (like an asthma attack)

C Consciousness/Circulation

- Feeling lightheaded or faint
- Clammy skin
- Confusion
- Unresponsive/ unconscious (due to a drop in blood pressure)

WHAT TO DO

1. Lay the person flat - do NOT allow them to stand and walk
   A. If unconscious, place them in the recovery position
   B. If breathing is difficult, allow them to sit up
   C. If they feel dizzy or appear pale, their legs should be raised
2. Administer an adrenaline auto-injector (refer to device label for instructions)
3. Phone 999 and tell them the person is suffering from anaphylaxis (ana-fil-axis)
4. If there is no improvement of symptoms after 5 minutes, a second dose of adrenaline can be given

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