Southwark Schools

Allergy Safety Policy

Implementation, Management and Control

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1. Introduction

The **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** places a legal responsibility on employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. This includes providing a safe and supportive school environment for all pupils, including those with allergies and those at risk of severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis).

Allergies can have a significant impact on a pupil's health, wellbeing and ability to access education and participate fully in school life. Under **Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014**, **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 amendments**, and the **statutory DfE allergy guidance** schools must make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. Effective, proactive allergy management must be in place in schools to minimise the risk of allergen exposure, reduce the likelihood of allergic reactions, and ensure that appropriate measures are in place to respond quickly and effectively in an emergency.

This policy sets out the arrangements for identifying, assessing and controlling allergy-related risks within Southwark Community Schools. It outlines the responsibilities of designated persons within schools, employees, parents/carers and pupils, together with the procedures for developing individual healthcare plans, managing medication, responding to allergic reactions, providing staff training and maintaining appropriate records.

The **Food Information Regulations 2014** require the provision of accurate information regarding specified allergens in food, and the **Human Medicines (Amendment) Regulations 2017** permit schools to obtain, hold and administer emergency Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs) for use in cases of anaphylaxis where clinically appropriate.

All Southwark Community Schools are required to implement this policy and adopt a proactive approach to allergy management, ensuring compliance with relevant health and safety legislation, statutory requirements and recognised best practice. Through effective planning, communication and risk management, the Council aims to ensure the health and safety of pupils with allergies while supporting their full participation in all aspects of school life.

2. Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that Southwark Community Schools provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for pupils with allergies, enabling them to participate fully in educational and school-related activities while minimising the risk of exposure to allergens and severe allergic reactions.

This policy applies to the management of food allergies, insect sting allergies, medication allergies, latex allergies, environmental allergies where risk management is required, and pupils with diagnosed allergies or a history of anaphylaxis.

To achieve this, the policy aims to:

- Ensure the effective identification, assessment and management of allergy-related risks within the school environment.
- Protect the health, safety and welfare of pupils with food, insect sting, medication, latex and environmental allergies, and those at risk of anaphylaxis.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for school leaders, employees, parents/carers and pupils in the management of allergies.
- Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for pupils with diagnosed allergies or a history of anaphylaxis, including the development and implementation of individual healthcare plans where required.
- Support the safe storage, accessibility and administration of prescribed allergy medication, including Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs).
- Ensure that employees receive appropriate information, instruction and training to recognise, respond to and manage allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.
- Promote awareness and understanding of allergies throughout the school community and encourage a culture of inclusion and support.
- Ensure effective communication between schools, parents/carers, healthcare professionals and other relevant parties.
- Maintain compliance with relevant legislation, statutory guidance and recognised best practice relating to the management of allergies in schools.
- Reduce the risk of allergen exposure and ensure effective emergency response arrangements are in place to ensure the safety of pupils with allergies.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and the management of allergens within schools, the definitions set out below apply.

Terms	Definition

Allergy	An immune system reaction to a substance (allergen) that is normally harmless to others.
Anaphylaxis	A severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction requiring immediate treatment.
Adrenaline Auto-Injector (AAI)	Emergency medication prescribed for individuals at risk of anaphylaxis. Examples include EpiPen®, Jext® and Emerade®.
Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP)	A documented plan detailing a pupil's allergy, triggers, treatment requirements and emergency procedures.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff listed below have clearly defined roles and responsibilities that need to be actively enforced to ensure effective implementation of this policy.

4.1. Strategic Director Children's and Adults' Services.

Has overall governance accountability for ensuring this policy is fully implemented and statutory standards are maintained.

4.2. Director of Children's & Families, Children's and Adults' Services

The Director of Children's & Families, Children's and Adults' Services is responsible for ensuring that this Allergy Safety Policy is implemented effectively across community schools. The Director will receive, review and act upon reports relating to policy implementation, performance, compliance, and any identified gaps or areas for improvement.

The Director will:

- Ensure that strategic decision-making takes account of allergy-related risks and the safety of children and young people with food allergies and other allergen sensitivities in community schools.

- Ensure that significant issues, concerns, or incidents relating to the management of allergens in community schools are appropriately investigated, monitored and addressed.
- Provide oversight of arrangements for managing allergen risks and promoting a safe and inclusive environment for pupils with allergies.
- Review allergy-related incident data, trends and lessons learned, and ensure that appropriate actions are taken to reduce risks and improve practice across community schools.
- Ensure that any non-compliance with this policy is addressed through appropriate corrective actions and monitoring arrangements.

4.3. Headteachers

Headteachers will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented.
- Ensure suitable and sufficient risk assessments are completed.
- Ensure appropriate staff training is provided.
- Ensure Individual Healthcare Plans are maintained.
- Monitor allergy incidents and lessons learned.

4.4. School Allergy Lead

To support the effective implementation of this policy, each school should appoint an Allergy Lead as the responsible person for overseeing and coordinating the key elements of allergen management. Responsibilities should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Maintain the allergy register.
- Coordinate staff training.
- Review healthcare plans.
- Liaise with families and healthcare professionals.
- Monitor compliance with this policy.

4.5. Staff

Staff should Co-operate with the School SLT to adhere to this policy, procedures, and arrangements.

All staff must:

- Be aware of pupils with allergies.
- Follow Individual Healthcare Plans.
- Attend allergy awareness training.
- Know how to identify signs of an allergic reaction.
- Know how to access emergency medication.
- Report incidents and near misses to the responsible person(s) and on ASSURE.

4.6. Parents/Guardians and Carers

To support the effective implementation of this policy, parents, guardians and carers should play an active role in the management of their child's allergies within the school environment. A copy of this policy should be made available to them and its requirements communicated clearly. Their responsibilities should include the following:

- Inform the school of any allergies their child has, including details of diagnosed allergens and any known reactions.
- Providing up-to-date medical information.
- Supplying prescribed medication where required.
- Participating in healthcare plan reviews.
- Informing the school of any changes.

4.7. Pupils

Teachers and designated responsible persons within the school have a duty to educate pupils about their allergies and to encourage their understanding of, and adherence to, the management and control measures implemented for their safety.

Where age and ability permit, pupils should:

- Understand their allergy.
- Avoid known allergens.
- Carry prescribed medication if agreed.
- Inform staff if they feel unwell.
- Avoid sharing food.

4.8. The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring and ensuring adherence to the requirements of this policy.

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that effective arrangements for supporting pupils with allergies, as set out in this policy, are fully implemented and maintained by the school.
- Review this policy to ensure awareness and understanding of the responsibilities, procedures, and requirements it sets out.
- Monitor implementation and compliance.
- Ensure adequate resources are available for the implementation of this policy.

4.9. Schools Health and Safety

Lead on raising allergy awareness and promoting best practices to effectively manage and reduce the risk of allergic reactions within the community schools.

Act as the schools competent adviser on allergy management, attending and contributing to relevant meetings, reviews, and site visits concerning allergy safety and individual healthcare needs.

Monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy and associated procedures through inspections, audits, incident reviews, and relevant meetings.

Provide advice, guidance, and support to school staff on allergy management requirements, including risk assessments, reasonable adjustments, emergency response procedures, and staff awareness.

5. Arrangements

5.1. Identification of Pupils with Allergies

The headteacher and appointed allergy leads and responsible persons in schools should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for identification of pupils with allergies.

The school will:

- Obtain allergy information at admission.
- Update records annually and when circumstances change.
- Maintain an allergy register.
- Identify pupils requiring an Individual Healthcare Plan.
- Ensure relevant staff have access to appropriate information.

5.2. Individual Healthcare Plan (IHPs)

An Individual Healthcare Plan should be developed for pupils whose allergies require ongoing management.

Plans will include:

- Allergy details.
- Symptoms and warning signs.
- Known triggers.
- Medication requirements.
- Storage arrangements.
- Emergency response procedures.
- Contact details.
- Educational visits arrangements.
- Review date.

Plans will be reviewed:

- At least annually.
- Following any allergic reaction.
- Following medical advice or changes in condition.

5.3. Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities

Pupils with allergies must not be excluded from educational visits or off-site activities due to their medical condition. Instead, appropriate arrangements must be made to enable their safe participation. Allergy-related hazards and control measures must be included within the educational visit risk assessment and be proportionate to the nature of the activity and the severity of the pupil's allergy.

Where a pupil is at risk of severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis), an individual risk assessment may be required. This should identify the specific control measures necessary to ensure the safety of the pupil, including any reasonable adjustments, emergency procedures, and the allocation of suitably trained staff responsible for implementing and monitoring those controls during the visit.

Educational visit risk assessments must consider, as a minimum:

- The nature and severity of any known allergies.
- Potential exposure to allergens during travel, activities, meals, refreshments, and accommodation.
- Food provision arrangements, including communication with venues, caterers, and activity providers regarding dietary requirements.
- The availability, accessibility, and storage of prescribed medication, including adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs).
- The number of trained staff available to recognise and respond to allergic reactions and administer emergency medication where required.
- Clear emergency procedures, including communication arrangements, access to emergency services, and local medical facilities.
- The pupil's healthcare plan and any advice provided by parents/carers and healthcare professionals.
- Supervision arrangements to ensure agreed control measures are consistently implemented throughout the visit.
- The management of shared eating areas, packed lunches, and activities where allergens may be present.
- Contingency arrangements for managing accidental exposure to allergens or an allergic reaction.

All staff involved in the visit must be made aware of relevant allergy information, control measures, and emergency procedures prior to departure.

5.4. Risk Assessment

Headteachers and other responsible persons within schools should undertake suitable and sufficient allergy risk assessments on ASSURE, including both a whole-school allergy safety risk assessment and, where appropriate, an individual allergy safety risk assessment. These assessments should address the following:

- Classrooms.
- Dining facilities.
- Practical lessons.
- Educational visits.
- After-school activities.
- Sports events.
- Special events and celebrations organised by the school(on-site/off-site)

Control measures may include but not be limited to

- Enhanced supervision.
- Cleaning procedures.
- Hand washing arrangements.
- Safe food handling measures.
- Restrictions on specific activities were justified.
- Alternative classroom resources.

When undertaking the risk assessment, it is important that schools do not adopt a blanket food ban, as such measures are generally not considered a reliable control. Instead, schools should adopt a proportionate, risk-based approach that reflects the specific needs of individuals with allergies and the particular circumstances of the school environment.

5.5. School Meals and Catering

The Headteacher and other responsible persons within the school must ensure that catering staff and catering providers are provided with adequate information regarding pupils with food allergies, so that they can fully comply with this policy by taking the following actions:

Catering staff and Catering providers will:

- Maintain accurate ingredient information.
- Identify the 14 legally recognised allergens.
- Review product changes and substitutions.
- Ensure catering staff are appropriately trained.
- Support pupils with special dietary requirements.

Food allergen information must be available upon request and communicated appropriately to pupils and parents.

6. Implementation, Control and Management

6.1 Storage and Access to Medication

Responsible persons within schools should ensure that relevant and appropriate medication is available, stored securely in accordance with requirements, and readily accessible when needed.

Ensure:

- Prescribed Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs) are readily accessible.
- Medicines are not locked away if this delays emergency treatment.
- Appropriate staff know medication locations.
- Expiry dates are monitored.
- Medication is available during off-site activities.
- Emergency medication locations clearly documented.

6.2. Emergency Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs)

To comply with this policy, schools should maintain an appropriate supply of spare Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs), ensuring they are readily available, stored correctly in pairs, and accessible for use in an emergency.

Emergency AAIs must:

- Be securely stored.
- Be easily accessible.
- Be checked regularly.
- Be available for emergency use.

6.3. Emergency Response Procedure

Suitable and adequate emergency response procedures, including clearly defined staff responsibilities, must be in place to ensure an effective response to an emergency.

Where anaphylaxis is suspected, staff must:

- Administer the adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) immediately.
- Call 999 and request an ambulance, stating that the pupil is experiencing anaphylaxis.
- Inform the pupil's parent/carer as soon as practicable.

- Continuously monitor the pupil's condition until emergency medical assistance arrives.
- Administer a second AAI after five minutes if symptoms persist or worsen, in accordance with medical advice and the pupil's health care plan.
- Ensure the pupil is taken to hospital for further assessment, even if symptoms appear to have improved.

All incidents must be reported on ASSURE and be subject to appropriate investigation and review to identify any lessons learned and any required corrective actions.

7. Information, Instruction and Training

Headteachers and other responsible persons within schools must ensure that adequate allergy-related information is made available to all relevant individuals. This includes ensuring that this policy is communicated and accessible to those who may need to act upon it.

The school must communicate allergy information, as appropriate, to:

- Staff.
- Supply teachers.
- Volunteers.
- Catering providers.
- External activity providers.
- Relevant parents and carers, where necessary.

All personal and medical information relating to pupils with allergies must be managed and shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with applicable data protection requirements.

7.1. Recognising Allergens and Allergic Reactions

7.1.1. Allergens

In the UK there are 14 legally recognised allergens specified under UK food information legislation. Schools must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to identify and communicate this information to relevant staff.

1. **Celery** (including celeriac)
2. **Cereals containing gluten** (including wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt and khorasan wheat/kamut)
3. **Crustaceans** (e.g., crab, lobster, prawns, shrimp)
4. **Eggs**
5. **Fish**

6. **Lupin**
7. **Milk**
8. **Molluscs** (e.g., mussels, oysters, squid, scallops)
9. **Mustard**
10. **Peanuts**
11. **Sesame** (seeds and products containing sesame)
12. **Soya (Soybeans)**
13. **Sulphur dioxide and sulphites** (above prescribed levels)
14. **Tree nuts** (including almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecans, Brazil nuts, pistachios and macadamia nuts)

7.1.2. Common school allergens

While all 14 allergens must be managed, the allergens most commonly encountered in schools are:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Peanuts
- Tree nuts
- Sesame
- Wheat (gluten-containing cereals)
- Fish
- Soya

These are frequently associated with severe allergic reactions in children and are commonly referenced within school allergy management arrangements

7.1.3. Allergic Reactions

Effective allergy safety management depends on taking appropriate actions at the right time. It is therefore essential that staff are familiar with the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and are able to recognise and respond to them promptly and appropriately.

7.1.4. Mild to Moderate Reactions

Symptoms may include:

- Itching.
- Rash or hives.
- Swelling of lips, face or eyes.
- Stomach pain.
- Sickness.

7.1.5. Severe Reactions (Anaphylaxis)

- Difficulty breathing.
- Wheezing.
- Persistent cough.
- Difficulty swallowing.
- Sudden collapse.
- Loss of consciousness.

7.2. Bullying And Allergy-Related Behaviour

Schools must promote and communicate a zero-tolerance approach to the management of allergens and ensure that pupils understand the seriousness of allergy-related risks. Appropriate action must be taken where any individual engages in:

- Allergy-related bullying.
- Deliberate exposure of another person to a known allergen.
- Threatening, intimidating, or reckless behaviour involving allergens.

Any such incidents must be treated seriously and managed in accordance with the school's behaviour, safeguarding, and disciplinary procedures. Where necessary, incidents should be investigated, recorded, and appropriate measures implemented to prevent recurrence.

7.3. Inclusion and Wellbeing

Pupils with known allergies may, at times, feel excluded from certain activities, such as food preparation lessons or events involving their known allergens. This can have an impact on their participation, confidence, and overall wellbeing.

Headteachers and other responsible persons must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to:

- Promote inclusion and equal access to educational and extracurricular activities.
- Prevent discrimination and avoid unnecessary exclusion from school activities.
- Support pupils to participate safely and fully in all aspects of school life.
- Recognise and address any emotional wellbeing impacts associated with living with allergies.
- Encourage and support pupils, in accordance with their age and understanding, to develop the knowledge, confidence, and skills needed to manage their allergies effectively.

Schools should adopt a proportionate and inclusive approach to allergy management, ensuring that reasonable adjustments are considered to enable pupils with allergies to participate as fully as possible in school life.

7.4. Training

Headteachers and designated responsible persons must ensure that all staff receive training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities for implementing this Policy and maintaining effective allergy safety arrangements within the school.

All staff must complete mandatory allergy awareness training and undertake annual refresher training thereafter. Training must be delivered by a suitably qualified and accredited training provider and should cover, as a minimum:

- Understanding allergies and anaphylaxis.
- Understanding the 14 legally recognised allergens specified under UK food information legislation.
- Common allergens and routes of exposure.
- Recognising the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis.
- Emergency response procedures.
- The safe storage, handling, and administration of Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs).
- Roles and responsibilities of school staff.
- School-specific allergy management arrangements, policies, and procedures.
- Reporting and recording allergy-related incidents.

7.5. Additional Role- Specific Training

Role-specific training must be provided, where appropriate, for:

- First aiders and designated medical staff.
- Educational visit leaders and accompanying staff.
- Catering and food service personnel.
- Teaching assistants and other relevant support staff.
- Staff responsible for administering medication.
- Any staff member identified as having specific responsibilities for supporting pupils with severe allergies.

Training should be reviewed regularly and updated whenever there are changes to legislation, guidance, school procedures, or identified training needs following an incident or near miss.

Records of all allergy-related training, including attendance and completion dates, must be maintained within the ASSURE Document Management and retained in accordance with the health and safety records management procedures.

7.6. Training Records

Training records should be readily available for inspection, audit and monitoring purposes and should be used to ensure that sufficient numbers of appropriately trained staff are available at all times to support pupils with allergies and respond effectively to allergy-related emergencies.

The statutory/mandatory training required to fulfil the requirements of this policy includes –

Training	Who	Frequency
Allergy Management and Inclusion in Education	School Leadership Team	Yearly Refresher
Allergy & Anaphylaxis Training for Schools	All Responsible Staff	Yearly Refresher
Designated Allergy Lead training	Designated Lead	Yearly Refresher

8. Monitoring and Review

Schools must ensure that all allergy-related incidents are promptly reported, recorded, investigated, and reviewed. The purpose of incident reporting is to identify lessons learned and implement appropriate measures to prevent recurrence and improve allergy safety arrangements.

Records should be maintained for all allergy-related events, including:

- Allergic reactions.
- Anaphylaxis incidents.
- Near misses involving potential allergen exposure.
- Administration of allergy medication, including Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs), where required.
- Emergency responses relating to allergy incidents.

All allergy-related incidents must be reported within ASSURE in accordance with the Council's maintained community school accidents/incidents reporting procedures and retained to support monitoring, investigation, trend analysis, and continuous improvement.

8.1. Serious Incidents

Following any serious allergy-related incident, the school must report the incident through the ASSURE system and undertake a formal investigation. The investigation should:

- Establish the facts surrounding the incident.
- Conduct a thorough review of the circumstances and response.
- Identify immediate, underlying, and root causes.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing control measures.
- Determine any additional actions required to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.
- Implement corrective and preventive actions.
- Review and update relevant risk assessments, healthcare plans, policies, and procedures as necessary.
- Share lessons learned with relevant staff and stakeholders, where appropriate.

The outcomes of investigations should be monitored to ensure that corrective actions are implemented effectively and that continuous improvement is achieved in the schools management of allergy safety.

Effective monitoring and review arrangements must be established to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the school's allergy management arrangements. Monitoring should include, as a minimum:

- Compliance with mandatory allergy awareness and refresher training requirements.
- Regular review of Individual Healthcare Plans and associated risk assessments.
- Monitoring and analysis of allergy-related incidents, including near misses.
- Routine checks of allergy medication, including expiry dates, availability, and accessibility of Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs).
- Evaluation of compliance with, and implementation of, this Policy and associated procedures.

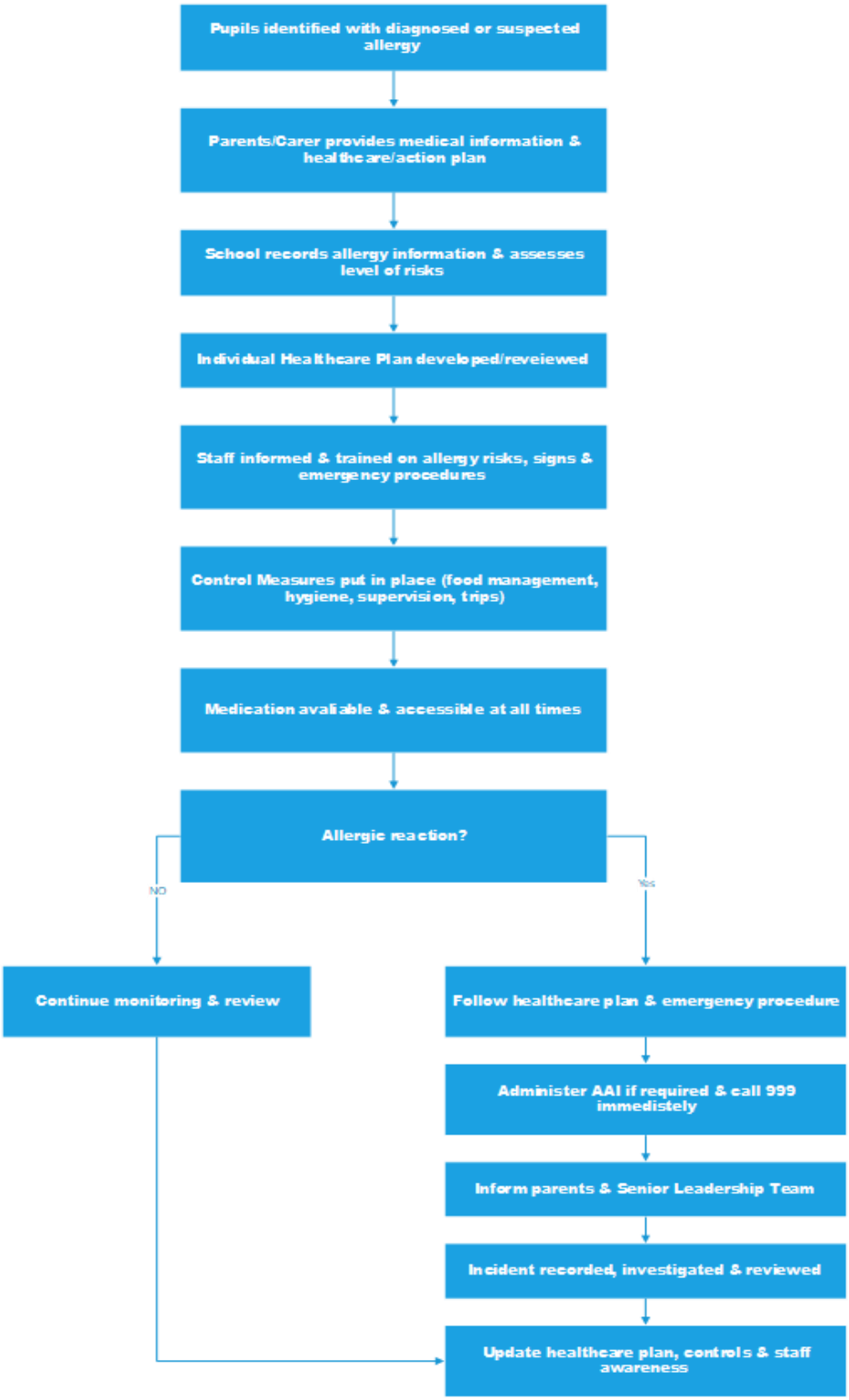
8.2. Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where necessary, including where:

- Changes to legislation occur.
- National or local guidance is updated.
- An allergy-related incident, investigation, or audit identifies the need for improvements.
- Significant changes are made to the school's allergy management arrangements.

The outcomes of monitoring, audits, and incident investigations will be used to identify opportunities for continuous improvement and to ensure that allergy safety arrangements remain effective and proportionate.

9. **Flowchart**


Pupils identified with diagnosed or suspected allergy
Parents/Carer provides medical information & healthcare/action plan
School records allergy information & assesses level of risks
Individual Healthcare Plan developed/reveiewed
Staff informed & trained on allergy risks, signs & emergency procedures
Control Measures put in place (food management, hygiene, supervision, trips)
Medication avaliable & accessible at all times
Allergic reaction?
NO
Yes
Continue monitoring & review
Follow healthcare plan & emergency procedure
Administer AAI if required & call 999 immedistely
Inform parents & Senior Leadership Team
Incident recorded, investigated & reviewed
Update healthcare plan, controls & staff awareness

11. Frequently Asked Questions – Managers(SLT) and Staff

1. What should I do if I am informed that a pupil has a severe allergy?

Ensure the pupil's allergy is recorded, familiarise yourself with their Individual Healthcare Plan, know the location of their medication, and understand the emergency response procedure.

2. What are the signs of a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis)?

Signs may include difficulty breathing, swelling of the lips, tongue or throat, persistent coughing, wheezing, dizziness, collapse, or loss of consciousness. Symptoms can develop rapidly.

3. What should I do if I suspect a pupil is experiencing anaphylaxis?

Administer the prescribed adrenaline auto-injector (if trained), call 999 immediately stating "anaphylaxis," inform the school office, and follow the pupil's healthcare plan.

4. Can I administer an adrenaline auto-injector (AAI)?

Trained staff may administer an AAI in an emergency in accordance with the pupil's healthcare plan and school procedures. If in doubt, follow emergency procedures and seek urgent medical assistance.

5. Where should allergy medication be stored?

Medication should be readily accessible, clearly identified, and stored in agreed locations known to relevant staff. It must not be locked away if this could delay emergency treatment.

6. How can staff reduce the risk of allergen exposure?

Follow school procedures, supervise food-related activities, encourage hand washing, prevent food sharing between pupils, and consider allergy risks when planning lessons, trips, and events.

7. What are managers responsible for?

Managers should ensure staff are aware of allergy risks, receive appropriate training, understand emergency procedures, and have access to relevant pupil healthcare information.

8. What should be considered when organising trips, visits, or special events?

A risk assessment should identify allergy hazards, ensure medication is available, confirm trained staff are present, and establish emergency arrangements before the activity takes place.

9. What should I do after an allergic reaction has occurred?

Ensure emergency procedures have been followed, complete accident/incident reporting requirements, inform parents or carers, and participate in any review of control measures.

10. What if I am unsure whether a reaction is serious?

Treat the situation as potentially serious, seek immediate assistance, follow the healthcare plan, and obtain medical help without delay. It is safer to act promptly than to wait for symptoms to worsen.

Key Reminder

Any suspected anaphylactic reaction is a medical emergency. Call 999 immediately and follow the pupil's Allergy Action Plan.