



Allergy Policy

**Garelochhead Primary School & Early Level and Childcare
Feorlin Way
Garelochhead
G84 0DG
enquiries-garelochhead@argyll-bute.gov.uk
01436 810 322**

This policy has been prepared for Garelochhead Primary School and Early Level Childcare with support from The Allergy Foundation in line with Argyll and Bute Council's Guidance on: Administration of Medicines in Education Establishments and Early Learning and Childcare Settings. At Garelochhead Primary School and ELC we strive to be an allergy aware school.

What is an allergy?

An allergy is the response of the body's immune system to normally harmless substances, such as pollens, foods, and house dust mite. Whilst in most people these substances (allergens) pose no problem, in allergic individuals their immune system identifies them as a 'threat' and produces an inappropriate response. This can be relatively minor, such as localised itching, but in more severe cases it cause anaphylaxis, a condition which can lead to upper respiratory obstruction and collapse and can be fatal.

Allergies are very common. They're thought to affect more than 1 in 4 people in the UK at some point in their lives. They're particularly common in children. Some allergies go away as a child gets older, although many are lifelong.

The most common causes of allergic reactions are:

- Pollen from trees and grasses
- Proteins secreted from house dust mites
- Moulds
- Foods such as peanuts, tree nuts, milk and eggs
- Pets such as cats and dogs, and other furry or hairy animals such as horses, rabbits and guinea pigs
- Insects such as wasps and bees
- Medicines (these may cause reactions by binding to proteins in the blood, which then trigger the reaction).

What happens when you have an allergic reaction?

When a person comes into contact with a particular allergen they are allergic to, a reaction occurs. This begins when the allergen (for example, pollen) enters the body, triggering an antibody response. When the allergen comes into contact with the antibodies, these cells respond by releasing certain substances, one of which is called histamine. These substances cause swelling, inflammation and itching of the surrounding tissues, which is extremely irritating and uncomfortable.

Allergic reactions usually happen quickly within a few minutes of exposure to an allergen.

Common symptoms of an allergic reaction include:

- Sneezing
- Wheezing / coughing / shortness of breath
- Sinus pain / runny nose
- Nettle rash / hives
- Swelling
- Itchy eyes, ears, lips throat and mouth
- Sickness, vomiting & diarrhoea

Role and responsibilities

Parent Responsibilities

- On entry to the school, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the Head Teacher/Clerical Assistant of any 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 Care Plans to the school. If they do not currently have a Care Plan this should be developed as soon as possible in collaboration with a healthcare professional.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring any required medication is supplied, in date and replaced as necessary.
- Parents are requested to keep the school up to date with any changes in allergy management. The Care Plan will be kept updated accordingly.

Staff responsibilities

- There are 3 trained First Aiders within the school and as part of this they have received anaphylaxis training. There are an additional 3 trained First Aiders in the ELC.
- Class Teachers must be aware of the pupils in their care (regular or cover classes) who have known allergies as an allergic reaction could occur at any time and not just at mealtimes. Any food-related activities must be supervised with due caution.
- Class Teachers leading school trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency medication and supplies. Class Teachers will check that all pupils with medical conditions, including allergies, have the appropriate medication on all trips out of school. Pupils unable to produce their required medication will not be able to attend the excursion.
- First Aiders will ensure that the up-to-date Care Plan is kept with the pupil's medication.

- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all medication is in date however the First Aider will check medication kept at school on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.
- First Aider keeps a register of pupils who have been prescribed an adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) and a record of use of any AAI(s) and emergency treatment given.
- Staff will not hand out food items to children that have come from other children's home e.g. birthday cake.
- Staff will only have hand soap available in their classrooms that is provided from the Local Authority or provided by a GP for individual children. This will be appropriately stored.
- Staff will not use hand creams in the school day that contain nut oils.

Pupil responsibilities

- Pupils are encouraged to have a good awareness of their symptoms and to let an adult know as soon as they suspect they are having an allergic reaction.
- Pupils who are trained and confident to administer their own AAIs will be encouraged to take responsibility for carrying them on their person at all times.

Plans and Procedures

Care plans will be completed by a child's medical team and should be provided to the school. In collaboration with parents/carers and the child's medical team the Head Teacher will complete an Allergic Reaction Emergency Procedure. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to update the Head Teacher of information that impacts the Care Plan or Allergic Reaction Emergency Procedure.

For children with allergies and intolerances, their individual medical care plans and Allergic Reaction Emergency Procedures will be displayed in the medical room.

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. The person 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 pupil has been exposed to something they are known to be allergic to, then it is more likely to be an anaphylactic reaction.

Anaphylaxis can develop very rapidly, so a treatment is needed that works rapidly. Adrenaline is the mainstay of treatment, and it starts to work within seconds.

What does adrenaline do?

- It opens up the airways
- It stops swelling
- It raises the 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. AAls 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 pupils must go to hospital for observation after anaphylaxis even if they appear to have recovered as a reaction can reoccur after treatment.

Supply, storage and care of medication

Depending on their level of understanding and competence, pupils will be encouraged to take responsibility for and to carry their own two AAls on them at all times (in a suitable bag/container).

For younger children or those not ready to take responsibility for their own medication, there should be an anaphylaxis kit which is kept safely, not locked away and accessible to all staff.

Medication should be stored in a suitable container and clearly labelled with the pupil's name. The pupil's medication storage container should contain:

- Two AAls i.e. EpiPen® or Jext® or Emerade®
- An up-to-date allergy action plan
- Antihistamine as tablets or syrup (if included on allergy action plan)
- Spoon if required
- Asthma inhaler (if included on allergy action plan).

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

Parents can subscribe to expiry alerts for the relevant AAls their child is prescribed, to make sure they can get replacement devices in good time.

Catering

The school kitchen must follow Argyll and Bute Council's Safe Food System Allergen Guidance which states that allergen information relating to the 'Top 14' allergens must be available for all food products.

The school menu is available for parents to view in advance with all ingredients listed and allergens highlighted on the school website at <https://www.garelochhead.argyll-bute.sch.uk/school-lunches/>

The Head Teacher will inform the Catering Manager of pupils with food allergies.

There is a photograph signage system in place to ensure catering staff can identify pupils with allergies.

Parents/carers are encouraged to meet with the Catering Manager to discuss their child's needs.

Allergy Awareness

Garelochhead Primary School and ELC supports the approach advocated by Anaphylaxis UK towards being an Allergy Aware school. They would not necessarily support a blanket ban on any particular allergen in any establishment, including in schools. This is because nuts are only one of many allergens that could affect pupils, and no school could guarantee a truly allergen free environment for a child living with food allergy. They advocate instead for schools to adopt a culture of allergy awareness and education.

A 'whole school awareness of allergies' is a much better approach, as it ensures teachers, pupils and all other staff are aware of what allergies are, the importance of avoiding the pupils' allergens, the signs & symptoms, how to deal with allergic reactions and to ensure policies and procedures are in place to minimise risk.

However, at Garelochhead Primary and ELC to reduce the risk to pupils who have nut allergies we support pupils and staff in not bringing items containing nuts onto the school premises. To support this Garelochhead Primary School and ELC

requests that parents and carers do not send their child to school with food items containing nuts or nut traces. Food packaging should be checked for statements such as -

- Not suitable for nut allergy sufferers
- This product contains nuts

If a child is found by a staff member to have a food item containing nuts the item will be sent home and an alternative food item will be provided.