



# RIDLEY HALL

## DINING & EVENTS

### **Food Allergens Policy**

Ridley Hall is committed to reducing the risk to members of the College community and visitors with regards to the provision of food and the consumption of allergens in food which could lead to an allergic reaction.

This policy will be placed on the College's website and will be annually reviewed.

#### **Statement:**

Ridley Hall is not able to guarantee a completely allergen free environment, rather to minimise the risk of exposure, encourage self-responsibility, and plan for effective response to possible emergencies.

#### **Objectives of this policy:**

To promote awareness of the nature of food allergens and bring these to the attention of College members.

To provide clear guidance to all catering staff on their responsibilities for the provision of food to members of

the College community and visitors with a confirmed food allergy.

To ensure that appropriate education/training is available and implemented for any catering staff involved in providing food to customers with food allergies.

To ensure appropriate information and support is available for staff.

### **Allergy Labelling Legislation:**

From 13 December 2014, new legislation (the EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation 1169/2011) requires food businesses to provide allergy information on food sold unpackaged. There are also changes to existing legislation on labelling allergenic ingredients in prepacked foods. More information about the new European legislation can be found on the European Commission website.

The new legislation only covers information about major allergens intentionally used as ingredients. They do not cover allergens present following accidental contact.

### **Background - What is a food allergy?**

Food allergies involve the body's immune system. The body reacts to certain allergens in food by producing antibodies, which can cause immediate and sometimes

severe symptoms such as: itching or strange metallic taste in the mouth; swelling of the throat and tongue; difficulty in swallowing or speaking; abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting; skin hives (nettle-rash) anywhere on the body; and in most extreme cases difficulties in breathing and a severe fall in blood pressure (anaphylactic shock). In extreme cases this can prove fatal.

### **What is food intolerance?**

This does not involve the immune system in the same way and is not usually as severe as a food allergy. Symptoms usually take longer and may include headaches, fatigue and digestive problems.

Food intolerance is harder to diagnose than a food allergy. The person with a known allergen trigger may know what food ingredient will provoke a reaction. However, they may well have eaten this food or a specific dish previously and had no adverse reaction.

### **Who is at risk?**

Anybody can develop a food allergen or intolerance at any time in their life irrespective of whether they have consumed the food previously. A person with an allergy is at risk even if they consume a small amount of the food allergen.

The proportion of the UK population with a true food allergy is approximately 1-2% of adults and 5-8% of children which equates to around 1.5 million in the UK. In addition, about 1:100 of the UK population has coeliac disease and needs to avoid gluten.

### **Common Food Allergens:**

- Cereals containing gluten, (i.e. wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, kamut or their hybridized strains) and products thereof
- Crustaceans and products thereof
- Eggs and products thereof
- Fish and products thereof
- Peanuts and products thereof
- Soybeans and products thereof
- Milk and products thereof (including lactose)
- Nuts i.e. almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecan nuts, Brazil nuts, pistachio nuts, macadamia nuts and Queensland nuts and products thereof, (but **does not** include chestnuts, water chestnuts, pine nuts, coconut or any products thereof)
- Celery and products thereof
- Mustard and products thereof

- Sesame seeds and products thereof
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites at concentrations of more than 10 mg/kg or 10 mg/litre expressed as SO<sub>2</sub>.
- Lupin and products thereof
- Molluscs and products thereof.

People may report allergies to other foods not on the above list. Most common in the UK are kiwi, peas, other legumes (beans etc), other seeds and other fruits and vegetables. In some cases, people only need to avoid these when raw and can have them cooked.

### **Responsibilities:**

The Executive Head Chef, or in his absence the Sous Chef, is responsible for ensuring that food containing allergens are clearly labelled and recorded.

The Executive Head Chef will attempt to ensure that the kitchen has stock or can access the necessary stock ingredients to offer suitable alternatives for people with allergies, intolerances and coeliac disease. This includes wheat/gluten free bread and pasta, and alternatives to cow's milk and butter/margarine spreads (e.g. milk free spread).

The Executive Head Chef will ensure that allergen information is provided on all food/listed in the list of 'Common Food Allergens'. This information will be supplied in Allergy Data Sheets ("food passports"), which are kept on file in the kitchen. This also applies to food pre-packed such as wraps and sandwiches.

**Staff Training:**

All chefs will also attend the following mandatory courses:

- Food Hygiene Certificate
- CIEH Level 2 Food Safety

All training records will be maintained in the HR Department. The records will also show annual refresher training.

Casual service staff will be trained on food allergy awareness and in-house procedures by the Executive Head Chef or the Sous Chef before commencing work.

All dishes, which are produced in house, will be from standard ingredients from our designated suppliers.

Where allergenic ingredients are packaged openly/loosely, they are stored separately, in sealed containers, to reduce the risk of contamination.

Equipment/utensils used in the preparation of food for people with a food allergy are cleaned according to standard procedures.

When cooking food for people with a dietary requirement, standard recipes can be adapted. Eg. substituting gluten free flour. However, all foods are prepared in kitchens where most known allergens are stored and so we cannot guarantee the food will be completely “free from”.

Where dishes contain common allergens, they are clearly labelled at the servery.

### **Food Service:**

Normal food handling procedures should apply (e.g. washing hands, wearing disposable gloves and aprons).

Staff are aware to keep serving utensils separate to avoid cross contamination.

All tables are cleaned with an appropriate solution.

### **Good communication:**

Staff are trained to escalate any concerns a College member or visitor may have regarding a food allergy or intolerance to a line manager if they are unsure.

## **What should College members do?**

1. As soon as you join the College, please pass any information regarding any known food allergies to the catering department, via the online form.

**Visiting the college:** All dietary requirements should have been passed to the catering team prior to your arrival, however, if this was not possible, you should make yourself known to a member of the service staff to clearly communicate your food allergy.

2. Please advise the Executive Head Chef & the Domestic Bursar if you have a life-threatening food allergy. A meeting will be set up where all concerned will attend, to put in place a protocol. If you carry lifesaving medication like an EpiPen, you should carry this medication with you at all times when you are in the College.

3. At meal times, you should check the Data Allergy Sheet on display. If you are allergic to a food that is not on the regulatory list, it will not be included on the Data Allergy Sheet provided.

4. You should make yourself known to a member of the service staff to communicate clearly your food allergy. Information regarding your food allergy will be known to the Kitchen if you have passed on this information and have signed in for the meal.

5. For student breakfast and lunch, you should only eat the food on offer if you are content that the person you have informed about your food allergy has clearly understood everything you have communicated.

### **What should guests attending conferences and events do?**

Advise the organiser about your food allergy as early as possible before you arrive at the College, using the form provided.

At food service, you should check the Data Allergy Sheet on display. If you are allergic to a food that is not on the regulatory list, it will not be included on the Data Allergy Sheet provided.

You should make yourself known to a member of the service staff to communicate clearly your food allergy. It is advisable to give the College staff a clearly written or typed card with the foods you need to avoid.

You should only eat the food on offer if you are content that the person you have informed about your food allergy has clearly understood everything you have communicated.

Last Reviewed: January 2026

Next Review: January 2027