ALLERGY SAFETY

Purpose and Scope

EDSTART will take reasonable steps to prevent allergic reactions, help children with allergies take part safely and respond promptly if a reaction occurs. This policy applies to staff, coaches, supply staff and volunteers delivering PE, sports coaching, school clubs, wraparound care (including breakfast clubs and after-school care), holiday clubs and other EDSTART activities.

Under the allergy safety duties commonly referred to as Benedict's Law, maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England within scope must publish an allergy safety policy and review it at least annually. When EDSTART delivers activities for a school, the Area Manager must agree with the school how its policy and each pupil's individual healthcare plan will be followed. For activities run directly by EDSTART the Area Manager must agree the arrangements with parents or carers and the venue.

Responsibilities

Policy owner. Keep the policy current, set training requirements and review incidents and near misses across EDSTART

Area Managers. Agree local arrangements and ensure staff, including cover staff, are trained and briefed before taking charge.

Session leads. Check arrangements before each session, ensure quick access to medication and brief everyone helping with the activity.

All staff and volunteers. Follow agreed precautions, act promptly if a reaction is suspected and report incidents and near misses.

Before a child takes part

For school sessions, obtain relevant information from the school's named contact. For EdStart-run activities, ask parents or carers about allergies and emergency medication at registration and confirm any changes at handover.

For each child with a known allergy, the session lead must know their triggers, precautions, signs of a reaction, their individual healthcare or allergy action plan, and how to contact their parent or carer. Share this information securely with those who need it to supervise the child or respond in an emergency.

Before each session, check that prescribed medication is present, in date and immediately accessible. Agree who will retrieve it and who will call 999. Recheck access when moving outdoors, to another building or off site. At school venues, agree how staff can access any school-held spare adrenaline auto-injector and when it may be used.

For wraparound care, the Area Manager must agree with the school and parents or carers how allergy information and medication are handed over between home, school and EDSTART At handover, the session lead must check for changes and confirm that emergency medication can be reached throughout the session, including when the school office is closed. If medication moves with the child, the receiving adult must confirm they have it.

If the plan, medication or staffing arrangements are unclear, escalate immediately to the Area Manager and the school or parent or carer. Agree a safe way for the child to take part before starting.

4 Preventing allergic reactions

Include allergy risks in activity and venue risk assessments. Consider food and drink, shared equipment, craft materials, latex and outdoor triggers such as insect stings. Adapt activities or use suitable alternatives as needed.

Check ingredients and allergen information every time, including substitutions. For wraparound care, this includes breakfast, snacks, packed food and food brought in for celebrations or activities. Ensure the person preparing or serving food knows which children need allergy precautions. Prevent cross-contact by cleaning surfaces and equipment, washing hands and supervising food as appropriate. Children must avoid sharing food or drinks. If staff cannot verify that a food is suitable, withhold it and offer a safe alternative where available.

5 Responding to a suspected reaction

For mild symptoms, follow the child's plan, stay with them, contact their parent or carer and watch closely for worsening symptoms. Use antihistamines only as directed in the plan.

Suspect anaphylaxis if there is sudden difficulty breathing, wheezing, persistent coughing, throat or tongue swelling, a hoarse voice, persistent dizziness or collapse. A rash may be absent.

Give adrenaline immediately. Use the child's auto-injector if available and follow the device instructions. Ask another adult, if present, to call 999 at the same time.

Call 999 immediately and say "anaphylaxis". Give the venue address and exact location. If adrenaline is unavailable, call 999 straight away and follow the call handler's instructions.

Keep the child lying flat with their legs raised. If breathing is difficult, let them sit with their legs outstretched. Keep them from standing or walking, even if they feel better.

Give a second dose after five minutes if symptoms have not improved and a second device is available. Record the time of each dose.

Stay with the child until the ambulance arrives. If they become unresponsive and are not breathing normally, start CPR and follow the 999 call handler's instructions. Ask another adult to meet the ambulance and notify the school and parent or carer as soon as possible.

Training reporting and review

Staff supervising children must receive allergy awareness and emergency response training before working independently. Training must cover recognising anaphylaxis, practising with trainer auto-injectors and following venue procedures. Area Managers must record training and arrange at least annual refreshers.

Once the child is safe, tell the Area Manager and the school or venue lead as applicable. Record symptoms, suspected triggers, actions taken, medication and timings, and who was informed. Record near misses too. The Area Manager must review what happened and follow up on any changes needed to activities, risk assessments, local arrangements or training. Store records securely and restrict access to those who need them.

The policy owner will review this policy at least annually and after a serious incident or significant change in guidance. Each Area Manager will record local venue contacts, ambulance access points, medication access arrangements and staff training.

References

Department for Education: Allergy safety in schools
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/allergy-safety-in-schools

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026: Section 34 commencement regulations
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2026/933/made

NHS: Anaphylaxis
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anaphylaxis/

Approved by and effective date: Adam Rowles & Tom Feighan - 1st September 2026

Next review: 31st August 2027