

Reviewed: December 2018
Review period: bi-annual

Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School



Severe Food Allergies

Students can be affected severely with allergic reactions to a range of food products. In some cases the reaction is due to ingesting a food product, in other cases the reaction is due to physical contact. Additionally, some students have an allergic reaction to the smell of a product via airborne dispersal.

Parents inform school of any allergies present in their children and, where possible, of the main usual trigger mechanism (ingestion, touch, smell). This is of particular importance where an allergy may lead to anaphylaxis and requires immediate treatment via an adrenaline auto-injector or anti-histamine. Parents are required to keep school updated on such allergies (and the individual's usual/commonly occurring trigger mechanisms) and ensure that adrenaline auto-injectors are provided to school for their child. School will store one auto-injector in the General Office; the student must also carry one with them at all times. All allergic reactions will be dealt with by school's normal medical protocols.

Students with allergies need to maintain an awareness such that they do not come into contact with any product that may cause their allergic reaction.

School asks that parents do not send students in to school with products that are nut butter based as severe allergic reactions to nut butter can be triggered by the smell of the product. School is aware that some products contain minimum nut traces and accept that students may bring these into school.

Staff are asked to avoid bringing into school any foodstuffs based on nut butter (see also the previous paragraph).

Students sometimes hold charity cake sales – these cakes may contain allergens (students must not bring in cakes based around nut butter). Students with allergies must remain aware and exercise caution if they choose to buy a cake. A reminder sign will be displayed whenever a cake sale is held.

School's catering department follows principles agreed with the Environmental Health Office concerning allergens. They do not produce any food with nuts in, but almonds are present in Granola Bars and peanuts in Crunchy Nut Cornflakes. Foodstuffs that are supplied are clearly labelled to indicate potential nut traces.

It is not possible to avoid the use of fish, eggs or milk – other products that can produce severe allergic reactions. School's catering department will ensure that they take all steps to avoid any cross-contamination of food products.

Students need to be proactive at the till points in terms of what foods they purchase. Signage is clear. Till points have access to the confidential allergy information regarding students and staff will ask if there is a warning flagged.

The food technology department addresses the dangers posed by allergens as a part of its risk assessment process. It must be recognised that many foodstuffs contain trace elements that cannot be avoided – for example a purchased cake may contain traces of nuts. Students with allergies must be proactive in managing their own safety when touching/ tasting any food products.

A recipe book that indicates the products that will be made during key stage 3 lessons is produced. Before any student is allowed to take part in practical lessons parents will have to return a signed letter indicating that they have reviewed the recipes, notifying the department of any allergens present in the recipes, suggesting viable alternatives that could be used. This information will be combined with the allergies guidance provided by parents via the school nurse

No recipes containing nut products will be used at Key Stage 3. However, “staples”, such as milk, eggs, fish etc. cannot be avoided.

Where a student has a severe allergy based on smell, attempts will be made to avoid using the relevant allergen containing food stuff (or a substitute ingredient sought). Where this is not possible and airborne transmission cannot be mitigated against then the department will seek to provide an alternative food technology room for the affected students.

If the allergic reaction is based on touch or ingestion affected students will work in a separate part of the classroom and care will be taken to avoid contact, with equipment cleaning protocols in place to avoid any contamination in the lesson (or following lessons).

Before students opt to study Food Preparation and Nutrition at key stage 4 they will be advised that it may not be possible to avoid allergen containing products due to the nature of the GCSE specification.

In Key Stage 4 Food Preparation and Nutrition, students will be encouraged to make products that do not contain nuts. Where this is not possible (due to the nature of products being produced) the following approaches will be followed:

- If a class member has a severe nut allergy that is triggered by smell then the protocols detailed at key stage 3, above, will be followed.
- Otherwise, nuts must be brought directly to the food technology department in an air-tight container at the start of the day. They will be stored there until the relevant lesson. Upon completion of the lesson all equipment etc. will be washed and any end products stored in an air-tight container until taken home. The student with the allergy will use alternative ingredients in a different section of the classroom.
- The above protocols will also be applied should a member of the class have a severe allergy to other ingredients such as eggs, milk, fish etc. which are substantially more difficult to avoid.