

Sperrinview School

Policy for Allergies and Anaphylaxis

Rationale

An allergic reaction, including the most extreme form, anaphylactic shock, is caused by the body's immune system reacting inappropriately to the presence of a substance that it wrongly perceives as a threat.

The most severe type of allergic reaction is called ANAPHYLAXIS which may be life threatening if not treated quickly with adrenaline. The whole body is affected, often within minutes of exposure to the allergen, although in some cases this can also take hours.

The most common allergy is to peanuts, tree nuts or both, but some children are often allergic to other foods and substances such as egg, kiwi fruit, fish, Soya, latex and insect stings.

The allergic reaction is caused by the sudden release of chemical substances including Histamine from cells in the body. The released chemicals act on blood vessels to cause swelling in the mouth and anywhere on the skin.

Symptoms

Allergic reactions vary. There can be minor reactions [needing oral antihistamine]

- ❖ Feeling hot/flushed
- ❖ Itching
- ❖ "Nettle sting-like" rash/welts/hives
- ❖ Red, itchy watery eyes
- ❖ Itchy, runny or congested nose or sneezing
- ❖ Swelling face, lips, eyes, hands
- ❖ Tummy pain
- ❖ Vomiting or diarrhoea
- ❖ Metallic [funny] taste in the mouth

The initial symptoms may not be serious in themselves but the pupil should be observed closely in case the situation deteriorates.

Severe reactions [needing EpiPen/Anapen]

- ❖ Difficult/noisy breathing, wheeze, breathlessness, chest tightness, persistent cough]
- ❖ Difficulty talking, change in voice, hoarseness
- ❖ Swollen tongue
- ❖ Swelling, tightness, itchiness of the throat [feeling of 'lump in throat']
- ❖ Impaired circulation - pale clammy skin, blue around lips and mouth, decreased level of consciousness

- ❖ Sense of impending doom ['I feel like I am going to die']
- ❖ Becoming pale/floppy
- ❖ Collapse
- ❖ Absent or very weak pulse

This is a medical emergency!

Treatment

For Minor Reactions such as a rash or slight swelling round the eyes, Oral Antihistamines prescribed by a GP can be given. A Salbutamol Inhaler can also be given for a slight wheeze. These medications will only be used according to the Administration of Drugs/Medication policy, when accompanied by a completed AM2

For Severe Reaction - Anaphylaxis, a drug called Adrenaline is the frontline treatment. Adrenaline acts quickly to constrict blood vessels, relax the smooth muscles in the lungs to improve breathing, stimulate the heart and help stop swelling in the face and throat.

If a child is having an anaphylactic reaction, an injection of Adrenaline could save their life.

Adrenaline injection is available on prescription in form of an easy to use device with a concealed needle called an EPIPEN.

Pupils in Sperrinview with severe allergies should have a Medical Care Plan, oral Antihistamines and EpiPens kept in school. If a reaction occurs on school premises the staff named on the Care Plan are responsible for assessing the child and treating accordingly.

If the EpiPen is used a Paramedic Ambulance will be called and the child will be taken to Hospital for assessment and further treatment.

If a child with a severe allergy is on a school trip the school staff will take the oral Antihistamines, Salbutamol Inhaler and EpiPen with them. The Community Disability Team is responsible for training school staff in recognition of symptoms of Anaphylaxis, treatment and administration of Medication and EpiPen.

Again, if the EpiPen is used or the staff are concerned the staff will contact the Paramedic Ambulance, who will assess and take the child to Hospital for further assessment and treatment.

This training is carried out annually, or as required.

Protocols

In the event of a child presenting in school with anaphylaxis the case will be considered on its own merits based on information from parents, medical personnel and other relevant agencies. A protocol will be drawn up and shared with all school staff including kitchen

staff, ancillary staff and transport personnel. The guidelines in DE document "Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs" must always be adhered to.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy on Administration of Drugs/Medication will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis through consultation with pupils, staff and parents using:

Home/School books, Phone Calls, Meetings, Recording procedures

Discussion etc

Review

A sub-committee of the Board of Governors will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy as part of a timetabled, on-going process.

Signed: _____ Date: _____