

Allergies Policy

1. Statement of Intent

Merry Poppets Nursery Ltd is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment across all four nursery sites. This standalone policy has been developed in line with Benedict's Law and outlines our procedures for managing medical food allergies, intolerances and asthma, alongside cultural, religious and lifestyle dietary requirements.

Our priority is to protect children from avoidable allergen exposure whilst ensuring every child receives safe, nutritious and inclusive meals.

2. Medical Allergy Management – The Red Crockery Protocol

As allergies present a significant risk across all our nursery sites, strict procedures are followed at all times.

Red Crockery Protocol

Every child with a diagnosed food allergy, intolerance or medically prescribed dietary requirement must receive all food on a **red plate** and all drinks in a **red cup**.

Red crockery is reserved **exclusively for children with medical allergies or intolerances** and must never be used for any other purpose.

Meal Preparation:

- Allergy meals are prepared separately using dedicated utensils and preparation areas.
- Meals are transferred directly onto the child's designated red plate before leaving the kitchen.
- Staff must never transfer food between plates once meals have been served.
- Allergy meals are checked by two members of staff before being served whenever possible.

Cross-Contamination

To minimise risk:

- Separate chopping boards, utensils and preparation areas are used.
- Staff wash hands before handling allergy meals.
- Work surfaces are thoroughly cleaned and sanitised.
- Allergy meals are prepared before other meals whenever practicable.
- Food labels are checked every time ingredients are received or recipes change.

Activities

Activities containing known allergens are avoided wherever possible.

The following are prohibited:

- Playdough containing milk powder.
- Food-based messy play using known allergens.

Alternative sensory resources will always be provided.

Milk Storage

Cow's milk and dairy-free alternatives are stored on separate, clearly labelled shelves within kitchen and room refrigerators to prevent cross-contamination.

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3. Cultural, Religious and Lifestyle Dietary Requirements

Merry Poppets Nursery Ltd respects and celebrates all cultural, religious and lifestyle dietary choices.

- Parents must declare dietary requirements during registration.
- The nursery chefs provide nutritionally balanced alternatives that meet these requirements.
- Separate preparation areas and dedicated utensils are used where required to maintain religious and cultural integrity.
- Meals prepared for cultural or religious reasons will be clearly labelled and served using a yellow plate. **These meals will not be served on red crockery unless the child also has a diagnosed medical allergy or intolerance.**

4. Registration and Admission Procedures

Parents and carers must complete a detailed healthcare and dietary declaration before admission.

No child may attend a settling-in session or begin their first day until:

- Registration documentation has been completed.
- Allergy and dietary information has been reviewed.
- The kitchen has confirmed safe meal arrangements.
- The Deputy Manager has been informed.
- Where required, an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) has been completed with parents.

Where a medical allergy is identified, the Deputy Manager will arrange an Individual Healthcare Plan meeting before the child's start date.

The nursery administration team will immediately update:

- The nursery management system (Connect)
- Room allergy displays
- Individual Healthcare Plans
- Allergy registers
- Kitchen records

5. Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs)

Every child with a diagnosed allergy, intolerance or medical condition will have an Individual Healthcare Plan.

Each nursery room must maintain:

- a confidential allergy display with the child's photograph, allergy or cultural preference.
- an accessible folder containing each child's Healthcare Plan which details triggers, signs and symptoms, emergency medication and emergency procedures.

Healthcare Plans will be reviewed:

- annually
- whenever medication changes
- following any allergic reaction
- whenever parents notify the nursery of changes.

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6. Emergency Medication

Emergency medication must be readily available at all times.

Each nursery room will have immediate access to:

- emergency salbutamol inhaler (where permitted under current legislation)
- spacer devices
- children's prescribed inhalers
- (for necessary children) their own prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs)

Medication will be stored:

- out of children's reach
- in an unlocked, clearly labelled emergency medication cabinet
- in a location that is immediately accessible to staff during an emergency.

Medication must accompany children on outings and during emergency evacuations.

7. Staff Training

All practitioners, bank staff, apprentices, students and nursery chefs must complete appropriate training covering:

- Paediatric First Aid which covers Anaphylaxis recognition, Administration of Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs), Asthma awareness, Use of emergency inhalers and spacer devices, Recognition of allergic reactions in babies, young children, Non-verbal children and adults.
- Food Safety Level 2
- Food Allergy Awareness Training

Training will be refreshed in accordance with statutory requirements or sooner where necessary.

8. Emergency Response Procedure

In the event of suspected anaphylaxis or a severe asthma attack:

1. Stay with the child and keep them calm.
2. Administer the child's prescribed medication immediately.
3. Dial **999** immediately and state clearly:
 - o "Child experiencing anaphylaxis", or
 - o "Child having a severe asthma attack."
4. If symptoms do not improve after five minutes, administer a second Adrenaline Auto-Injector (if available) or follow the child's asthma plan.
5. Inform the Deputy Manager immediately.
6. Contact the child's parents or carers.
7. Record the incident, complete all required documentation and review the Individual Healthcare Plan following the incident.

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9. Communication

All staff, including bank staff, students, volunteers and agency workers, must familiarise themselves with each room's allergy information and Individual Healthcare Plans before working with children or participating in mealtimes.

Kitchen staff and room staff must communicate daily regarding all allergy meals before food is served. As a fail-safe measure, every allergy meal must be checked by **two designated members of staff** allocated to each mealtime before it is given to the child. Both members of staff are responsible for confirming that the meal, the child and the dietary requirements match the child's Individual Healthcare Plan, allergy records and meal order before serving.

Any changes to a child's dietary or medical requirements must be communicated immediately to the Deputy Manager, kitchen team and relevant room staff, and updated without delay across all nursery records, including the nursery management system, Individual Healthcare Plan, allergy displays and kitchen documentation.

10. Monitoring and Review

Site Managers are responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required following changes in legislation, updated statutory guidance, serious incidents, allergy-related near misses, or changes to nursery procedures to ensure it remains current, effective and compliant with best practice.