

15.0 ALLERGEN POLICY

A food allergy is a quick response by a person's immune system to a specific food. The proteins in the food react with the body, triggering an adverse reaction which can prove very serious, and sometimes fatal.

A food intolerance is less threatening and more common. It occurs when the bodies' gastrointestinal system is unable to digest certain foods. Symptoms are less severe.

Legislation now says you must be able to provide information on **14 Allergens** for all food served, either on the menu or have them available upon request.

The 14 allergens are:

Nuts

Peanuts

Eggs

Milk

Fish

Crustaceans

Molluscs

Cereals contain gluten

Celery

Lupin

Mustard

Sesame

Soya

Sulphur dioxide

Symptoms to be aware of are

- Anaphylaxis – oxygen cannot reach the lungs, circulation falls and the heart can stop;
- Swelling of tissue in mouth and throat;
- Difficulty in swallowing and breathing;
- Rashes;
- Vomiting/nausea;
- Collapse.

Policy and Procedures

The following procedures are to be adopted by all catering staff within their kitchen/dining centre to ensure adherence to the Allergen Policy.

School Leadership Teams are responsible for ensuring all up to date allergen/intolerance information for pupils is provided to the Unit Catering Manager at the start of or prior to the school year in September. This also extends to throughout the school year in order to keep the kitchen updated of new starters or changes to a child's requirements.

The school is responsible for obtaining allergen/intolerance information from parents via a form sent out as part of a child's starter pack. **(Appendix 1 – Example of form sent to parents from schools).**

Unit Catering Managers must communicate with a member of the Schools SLT/responsible officer to obtain individual allergen information, at the start of and during the school year, if and when there are any new children starting, (it is the schools responsibility to notify the kitchen if there are any changes throughout the year). Where the Unit Catering Manager experiences difficulty obtaining this information, it must be escalated to the District Catering Manager.

Once the Unit Catering Manager is in receipt of allergen/intolerance information they are to ensure an Allergen File is kept with all relevant information alongside child's photograph (if school permits a photograph). It is advised that photographs are updated on an annual basis to ensure staff (particularly cover staff) are able to recognise children when they approach the servery.

Where possible, for children who have allergies outside of the main 14 allergens, arrangements to cater for this will be made using the same control measures detailed within this policy.

Unit Catering Managers are responsible for ensuring that all catering staff are made aware of the Allergen File and familiarise themselves with the information inside. This also extends to dining centre staff. Allergen Files are to be kept at the servery throughout the lunchtime service for reference.

Where possible, pre-ordering of allergen meals should be arranged by the UCM with parents, and the meal should be cooked separately and plated up in advance of service to avoid any possible cross-contamination during service.

Production kitchens packing out to Dining Centres: UCMs must ensure that allergen foods/meals are packed in a sealed container and clearly labelled when packing out to Dining Centres with allergen requirements.

Unit Catering Managers are responsible for ensuring the Allergen File is locked away in a lockable drawer after service has ended. Catering Staff at a Dining centre are to ensure the Allergen File is locked away.

If queries arise over a child's allergy/intolerance e.g. if a child says they are allergic but may eat certain foods containing those allergenic ingredients. The following must take place:

- Catering Staff must seek clarification from the school;
- An offer by the Unit Catering Manager to contact or meet and discuss with a child's parent/guardian. A record of any meeting **must** be documented (**Appendix 9 - Record of Meeting with Parent/Guardians**);
- Refusal to serve the food item if clarification cannot be given by the school/parent. Catering Staff are to ensure information provided by the school is followed at all times;
- Where there is uncertainty regarding whether a child be provided with a menu item, as an immediate response the child can be served with a **safe plate**, of a Jacket Potato, whilst clarification is sought.

Once catering staff serving at the servery have been made aware, either verbally by the child/customer or via the Allergen File to a child's/customers allergy or intolerance; they should refer to the Menu Allergen Matrix to check if menu options contain Allergens. (**Appendix 2 – Example of current menu Allergen Matrix**)

The Allergen Matrix is to be kept within the Allergen File alongside children's allergen/intolerance information. Alongside this, up to date recipes and labels from prepacked foods provided by the supplier are to be kept in the Allergen File.

This Allergen file will provide all staff with accurate information on the allergens within ingredients used in the food products produced. The provision of this allergen/intolerance information is mandatory. It must always be available and easily accessible.

Staff training or verbal communication is required and the information given must be verifiable. If a customer asks about a food they must be directed to the manager/nominated key personnel for confirmation of ingredients.

It is a breach of the law to provide inaccurate or incomplete information, and to refuse to provide correct information, or the wrong information on the menu/dishes ingredients.

Unit Catering Managers are responsible for ensuring Allergen Files are kept up to date at all times. This also extends to Allergen Files kept at Dining Centres.

Action to be taken by any member of Catering Staff should a child/customer consume food they are allergic to and have an Anaphylaxis reaction -

1. Do not move the customer;
2. Call 999 immediately – describe the symptom and state the person may be having an “anaphylaxis reaction”;
3. Ask the person if they carry an adrenaline pen. If a member of staff or first aider is trained in administering adrenaline, then offer to assist;
4. Stay with the customer until help arrives;
5. Another member of the Catering Team should alert a member of school staff immediately.

Allergen/Intolerance Incident Response & Reporting

Unit Catering Managers are responsible for notifying a District Catering Manager of an incident immediately after it has taken place. Dining Centre staff are to report an incident to their Unit Catering Manager immediately after it has taken place.

The District Catering Manager is responsible for conducting an investigation into the incident using the Corporate Landlord Services – Allergen Incident investigation form (**Appendix 3**)

Agreements are in place between CLS - Catering and our suppliers which require them to keep us informed of allergens within their products. Food substituted for delivery are substituted for items with identical allergens. Changes to a products allergenic/intolerance information provided by our suppliers is cascaded to Unit Catering Managers via email from head office, confirming the on line data manual has been updated with the information.

For units with no internet access and for dining centres a phone call from head office will be made in the first instance. An email from head office will also be sent to the schools 'info' email mailbox. A paper copy of the information will then be posted out to the unit.

Where kitchens are asked to provide a buffet, taster sessions and any other provision of catering, the Unit Catering Manager is responsible for ensuring a blank allergen matrix is completed for all foods used (Appendix 8). This should be displayed and accessible alongside the buffet/food for customers to refer to. As outlined above in the policy and procedures, packaging for products must be kept by Catering staff in the Allergen file in order to answer any queries.

Controls

- Relevant signage for allergens must be in a prominent place so customers are aware they must speak to a member of staff if they suffer from an allergy (**see Appendix 4 and 5**);
- Good communication on allergen control between staff and customers is essential;
- Use reputable suppliers and have good substitution controls;
- Ensure cross contamination is prevented by using segregated areas and dedicated equipment for allergen food during storage preparation, cooking and service (**refer to Appendix 6 - Allergen Risk Assessment**);
- Allergen foods should be well packaged and stored separately;
- Good personal hygiene must be adhered to; Hands need to be washed before and after handling allergen foods;
- Personal Hygiene - It is recommended that disposable aprons are used for Food Preparation to prevent cross contamination;
- All equipment and work surfaces all cleaned effectively (see cleaning process for allergens);
- Good waste management;
- Ensure cooking controls are adhered to as cooking will **NOT** kill allergens;
- Separate oils must be used to cook allergen foods. **Only fresh or frozen potatoes or chips to be cooked in deep fat fryer. Please ensure you check any other potato products for allergens;**
- Staff training is essential on the control of allergen food throughout the foods process, including induction training and food safety training;
- For packing out kitchens/dining centres, menu/substituted food information is to be filled out each day and sent to the dining centre within their communication log folder (**Appendix 7 – Dining Centre Communication Log**);
- **Only recipes compiled through Saffron and issued by head office are to be used.** In the event of having to use a product from a supermarket or any other method of cooking from scratch, meaning adding more ingredients, a blank Allergen Chart must be completed by the Unit Catering Manager and clearly displayed (**Appendix 8 – Blank Allergen Matrix**).

Cleaning Process for Allergen Foods

To minimise the risk of cross contamination thorough cleaning is essential.

Double wash method must be used as follows:

- a) Hot water and detergent to deactivate proteins;
- b) Rinse;
- c) Disinfect/Sanitise area – a separate clean cloth must be used to disinfect/sanitise area;
- d) Temperature probes must be washed with detergent and hot water to remove allergens, then sanitised with a probe wipe.

Disinfectants will **NOT** kill allergens.

A dishwasher will remove allergenic contamination from equipment and utensils if operating correctly.

| Appendices | |
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| Appendix 1 | Example of form sent to parents from schools |
| Appendix 2 | Example of current menu Allergen Matrix |
| Appendix 3 | CLS – Allergen Incident Investigation form |
| Appendix 4 & 5 | Allergen Signage |
| Appendix 6 | Allergen Risk Assessment |
| Appendix 7 | Communication log for Dining Centres |
| Appendix 8 | Blank Allergen Matrix |
| Appendix 9 | Record of Meeting with Parent/Guardians |