OCTAVIA HOUSE

Sector-Leading Therapeutic Schools

Allergy policy for all Octavia House Schools

Independent School Standards: paragraphs 7, 11, 13 and 16.

Policy content includes:

- Awareness, prevention and management of allergies, including emergency response
- administration and storage of medication
- the response to allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.

Last external review	-
Next external review	October 2026
Latest update	October 2026

INTRODUCTION

- Octavia House Schools are committed to promoting a whole school approach to the welfare and wellbeing of our pupils, colleagues and visitors and the safe management of those who live with specific allergies

- We understand our legal duty to support pupils with allergies and we believe that all allergies should be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional and appropriate way

- We are clear about the need to actively support pupils with allergies, which will include considering what reasonable adjustments need to be made to enable these pupils to participate fully and safely in all aspects of school life

- This policy pays regard to Allergy safety in schools (July 2026) and Benedict's Law and should be read in conjunction with our first aid policy.

Allergies and Anaphylaxis

- An allergy is a medical condition in which the body's immune system has an abnormal reaction to normally harmless substances such as food, insect stings, contact allergens and airborne allergens

- Anaphylaxis is an acute, life threatening, severe allergic reaction requiring immediate medical attention due to affecting the Airway/ Breathing/ Circulation ("ABC"). It usually occurs within seconds or minutes of exposure to certain foods or other substances, but may happen after a few hours

- Food allergies are increasing in both developed and developing countries, especially in children and the severity and complexity of food allergy is also increasing. Food allergies can be fatal and an appropriate diagnosis is essential in parallel with the need for clear food labelling worldwide

- Asthma is a lung disease caused by inflammation and tightening of the airways, it is frequently associated with allergies and anaphylaxis, because exposure to allergens can provoke an asthma attack, a potentially life-threatening condition.

- Intolerance to foods or an ingredient that the body is unable to digest is different to an allergy and does not cause a serious allergic reaction. It can cause long term health problems if not avoided. Common food intolerances include lactose and gluten. Coeliac disease is an autoimmune condition triggered by gluten. It is not an allergy.

- Around 5-8% of children in the UK live with a food allergy and most school classrooms will have at least one allergic pupil. These young people are at risk of anaphylaxis, a potentially life-threatening reaction which requires an immediate emergency response

- 20% of severe allergic reactions to food happen whilst a child is at school and these reactions can occur in children with no prior history of a food allergy. It is essential that our colleagues recognise the signs of an allergic reaction, symptoms and are able to manage it safely and effectively.

Whole school allergy risk reduction

- Octavia House Schools is committed to reducing the risk of exposure to known allergens through a proactive, whole-school approach while recognising that it is not possible to guarantee an allergen-free environment. We aim to minimise the risks by promoting awareness, effective communication and sensible risk management across all aspects of school life

- All colleagues are expected to consider allergy risks when planning lessons, activities and events. This includes the use of food brought from home, birthday celebrations, bake sales, catering and cooking activities, science experiments, art and craft materials, gardening, animal handling and any curriculum resources that may contain or involve allergens

- Where activities present a foreseeable risk to a pupil with a known allergy, reasonable adjustments and alternative arrangements will be made to enable their safe participation wherever possible

- Octavia House Schools works closely with catering providers (at sites where there is no internal chef) to ensure that allergen information is available, food is prepared and served in accordance with food safety legislation, and the risk of cross-contamination is minimised through appropriate food handling, preparation and cleaning procedures

- Dining arrangements will be planned to support pupils with allergies while promoting inclusion and avoiding unnecessary segregation

- We advise families, and all pupils, that those who bring in a packed lunch should not share their food with peers. Colleagues will actively supervise to the best of their ability

- Measures are in place to reduce the risk of insect stings and exposure to other environmental allergens where reasonably practicable, including the management of outdoor learning spaces and educational visits

- Cleaning products and other substances used within Octavia House Schools are selected and used with consideration for pupils and colleagues who have known allergies or sensitivities

- All colleagues are expected to remain vigilant for potential allergy hazards and to report concerns promptly so that appropriate action can be taken. Individual Healthcare Plans and risk assessments will be considered when planning activities, educational visits and school events to ensure that pupils with allergies can participate safely and fully in all aspects of school life.

Medication reporting, including to families

- We always seek the parent's/carer's written consent, agreeing for the schools to administer medication, including adrenaline auto-injectors during school hours
- In the event of a pupil having an allergic reaction at least one of the pupil's parents or carers will be informed as soon as possible
- An adrenaline auto- injector (e.g. EpiPen) is a pre-loaded pen device which contains a single measured dose of adrenalin (also known as epinephrine) for administration in cases of severe allergic reaction
- All administration of any medication, including adrenaline auto-injectors will be recorded on Medical Tracker, our online system accessed by all colleagues and communicated with families
- A notification will be sent home to families at the end of the school day via Medical Tracker. It may be followed up by a phone call home, if it is deemed appropriate and/or necessary.

Storage of medication

- Wherever possible, parents/carers are asked to provide the school with two adrenaline auto-injectors
- Octavia House Schools stock spare adrenaline auto-injectors, at least two per site, these are located in the medical room which all colleagues can access. They are replaced after use and the expiry dates are checked every term as part of the safeguarding audit.
- Colleagues are aware that the dosage that would be administered in an emergency would depend on the pupil's weight, however in an emergency situation this may not be able to be confirmed. Pupils under 25kg should be administered the 0.15mg adrenaline auto-injector and pupils over 25kg should be administered the 0.3mg adrenaline auto-injector
- We will not accept any adrenaline auto-injectors which are not in their original containers
- Adrenaline auto-injectors must be clearly marked with the pupil's name and date of birth
- All emergency medication, including adrenaline auto-injectors are stored in the medical room along with the pupil's individual healthcare plan
- During off-site activities, adrenaline auto-injectors which may be needed should be carried by the person in charge of the activity and/or colleague with first aid training. Pupils who may urgently require their medication should be in a group which is supervised by the adult carrying the medication

- If a pupil's adrenaline auto- injector runs out or expires, it is the responsibility of the parents/carers to replenish it. Expired medication must not be used or retained on school premises; leaders must ensure that any medication used or retained is in-date. Termly safeguarding audits will also check medication stores at all school sites. Please see the previous point re: disposal of medication.

Recording

- Records of medication, such as an adrenaline auto-injector, given to pupils will be logged on Medical Tracker

- Octavia House Schools will record any incident of allergic reactions or anaphylaxis, including near misses, medication errors and lessons learned. This data will be reviewed every term.

Confidentiality

- All medical information is treated confidentially and access to this information will be provided on a 'need-to-know' basis in consultation with the parent/carer and their child, without compromising the pupil's health, dignity and wellbeing.

SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS

- The Headteacher, Head of School and DSL are named people with overall responsibility for ensuring that effective support is provided for pupils in school who have a medical condition. This includes ensuring that: all relevant colleagues are aware of a pupil's medical condition; sufficient adults are suitably trained; risk assessments reflect the pupil's medical needs; and Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) are suitable and regularly reviewed

- We work in partnership with pupils, families, external agencies, healthcare professionals and local authorities in order to ensure that we provide effective support to all pupils with medical conditions

- It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to provide the schools with any relevant medical information, and to notify the school of any changes to their child's health

- Where possible, it is helpful to receive confirmation of allergies from a medical professional in order to help us establish the severity and adjustments that may be needed in school.

Procedure following notification that a pupil has a medical condition:

- The Headteacher and DSL will ensure that all relevant colleagues are made aware of the pupil's diagnosis; seek further information from the relevant medical professionals working with the pupil; ensure that an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) is written for the pupil and any necessary arrangements

are put in place by the start of the school term (for new pupils) or within two weeks (for existing pupils with a new diagnosis).

Individual Healthcare Plans

- Pupils with allergies have an Individual Risk Assessment (IRA) which will include information on allergies, this information has been provided by the family on the pupil form. Pupils with allergies will also have an Individual Healthcare Plan which is agreed with families and health professionals. These are shared with key colleagues working with the specific pupils to ensure they know what to do in the case of an emergency

- Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) will be put in place if the schools, healthcare professionals and families agree that it is necessary. IHPs provide clarity about what needs to be done, when and by whom

- IHPs capture key information about a pupil's medical condition, the healthcare professionals supporting them, and anything that needs to be put in place to support them during the school day. IHPs are developed in consultation with the family and are reviewed annually, or earlier if there is evidence that the pupil's needs have changed

- Pupils' individual healthcare plans are stored in the medical room and are available on Medical Tracker and are accessible to leaders on our shared drive

People training and support

- All of our colleagues have completed Anaphylaxis & Allergy Training, which includes how to recognise, respond and treat a pupil or colleague who has an anaphylactic episode, including how to use an adrenaline auto-injector.

- We have named first aiders on site at all times, who have been trained to administer adrenaline auto-injectors. However, it is not necessarily restricted to colleagues who have completed this specialist training. In an emergency, any colleague may administer an adrenaline auto-injector if they believe a pupil is experiencing anaphylaxis. Treatment should not be delayed while waiting for a specialist trained colleague to attend.

- All colleagues also complete a food hygiene course when they join Octavia House Schools.

- In addition to this, training needs may be identified by the relevant healthcare professional with the Headteacher, Head of School and DSL during the development of the Individual Healthcare Plan. They will identify which colleagues require training, and the type of training needed. This may be provided by an external training provider, depending on the medical condition. The Headteacher, Head of School and DSL will ensure that professional training remains up to date.

Emergency procedures

- If a pupil requires adrenaline this will be administered immediately, colleagues will call 999 and then will inform parent(s)/carer(s) as soon as possible, to ensure there is no delay in administering medication and getting medical support.

Catering

- Octavia House Schools is committed to providing a safe and inclusive dining experience for pupils, colleagues and visitors with food allergies. We work closely with our internal chefs and catering providers to ensure that allergen risks are managed effectively in accordance with food safety legislation and current Department for Education guidance

- Our chefs and the external catering provider(s) are responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date allergen information for all food and drink provided on site. Information about the 14 regulated allergens will be available to pupils, parent/carer(s) and colleagues on request, and catering colleagues will be able to provide advice about ingredients and food preparation where required

- Reasonable steps will be taken to minimise the risk of cross-contamination during the storage, preparation, handling and serving of food through appropriate food safety procedures, professional training and cleaning practices. Whilst every effort is made to reduce risk, Octavia House Schools cannot guarantee that all food provided is completely free from allergens

- Where a pupil has a diagnosed food allergy, Octavia House Schools will work in partnership with the pupil, their family, healthcare professionals and the chef/catering provider to identify appropriate meal options and any additional control measures required. These arrangements will be reflected within the pupil's Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) where appropriate

- Our chefs and colleagues will receive appropriate allergy awareness and food safety training and will understand the importance of following agreed procedures, checking ingredients, preventing cross-contamination and responding appropriately to allergy-related concerns. Any changes to recipes, ingredients or suppliers that may affect allergen content will be communicated promptly to relevant colleagues

- Food provided for school events, educational visits and celebrations will be planned with consideration for pupils with allergies. Colleagues organising such events must ensure that allergen risks are assessed in advance and that suitable arrangements are in place to enable pupils with allergies to participate safely wherever reasonably practicable

- If a pupil has an intolerance or sensitivity to a particular food group or ingredient, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to review the weekly menu and decide whether a packed lunch would be more suitable for that day.

Transition arrangements

- Octavia House Schools recognise that periods of transition may present an increased risk for pupils with allergies and are committed to ensuring that appropriate planning and communication takes place to support their health, safety and wellbeing

- For pupils joining Octavia House Schools, parents or carers will be asked to provide relevant medical information, prescribed medication and supporting healthcare documentation before the pupil's first day wherever possible. An Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) and any necessary risk assessments will be completed in partnership with the pupil, their parents or carers and relevant healthcare professionals, with appropriate arrangements in place before the pupil begins attending, or as soon as possible afterwards

- When pupils move between year groups, classes or school sites, relevant allergy information, Individual Healthcare Plans and risk assessments will be reviewed and shared with the colleagues who will be responsible for supporting the pupil. Where appropriate, meetings will be held with families and key colleagues to ensure that support arrangements remain effective and reflect any changes in the pupil's needs

- Octavia House Schools will ensure that colleagues who are new to supporting a pupil with allergies are made aware of the pupil's allergy, the location of emergency medication, the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and the action to take in an emergency

- Transition arrangements will also be considered when planning educational visits, work experience placements and other activities that take place away from the usual school environment, ensuring that appropriate risk assessments, medication and trained colleagues are in place to support the pupil safely

- Individual Healthcare Plans and associated risk assessments will be reviewed whenever there is a significant change to a pupil's medical needs or following any allergy-related incident, ensuring that support arrangements remain current and effective.

Home to school transport

- Home to school transport is the responsibility of local authorities. The Headteacher, Head of School and DSL will ensure that Individual Healthcare Plans are shared with transport providers.