Allergy & Anaphylaxis Policy

Implemented: 18th June 2026

To be reviewed June 2027

Contents

Introduction:

An allergy is a reaction of the body's immune system to substances that are usually harmless. The reaction can cause minor symptoms such as itching, sneezing or rashes but sometimes causes a much more severe reaction called anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is a serious, life-threatening allergic reaction. The whole body is affected often within minutes of exposure to the allergen, but sometimes it can be hours later. Causes can include foods, insect stings, and drugs.

Most healthcare professionals consider an allergic reaction to be anaphylaxis when it involves difficulty breathing or affects the heart rhythm or blood pressure. Anaphylaxis symptoms are often referred to as the ABC symptoms (Airway, Breathing, Circulation).

It is possible to be allergic to anything which contains a protein; however, most people will react to a fairly small group of potent allergens.

Common UK Allergens include (but are not limited to): -

Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Sesame, Milk, Egg, Fish, Latex, Insect venom, Pollen and Animal Dander.

This policy sets out how **Thornton College** will support students with allergies, to ensure they are safe and are not disadvantaged in any way whilst taking part in school life.

2. Role and responsibilities

Parent Responsibilities

- Upon registration, parents are responsible for informing the Student Medical & Wellbeing Officer of any allergies, either by completing the medical booklet as part of the admissions process or, if already registered, by providing the information to the school verbally and in writing. This must include details of any previous serious allergic reactions, any history of anaphylaxis, and all prescribed medication.
- Parents are to supply a copy of their child's Allergy Action Plan (BSACI plans preferred) to school. If they do not currently have an Allergy Action Plan this should be developed as soon as possible in collaboration with a healthcare professional e.g. Registered Nurse/GP/allergy specialist.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring any required medication is supplied, in date and replaced as necessary.
- Parents are requested to keep the school up to date with any changes in allergy management. The Allergy Action Plan will be kept updated accordingly.

Staff Responsibilities

- All staff will complete anaphylaxis training. Training is provided for all staff on a yearly basis and on an ad-hoc basis for any new members of staff.
- Staff (regular or cover classes) must be aware of the students in their care who have known allergies as an allergic reaction could occur at any time and not just at mealtimes. Any food-related activities must be supervised with due caution.
- Staff leading school trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies. Trip leaders will check that all students with medical conditions, including allergies, carry their medication. Students unable to produce their required medication will not be able to attend the excursion.

- Student Medical & Wellbeing Officer will ensure that the up-to-date Allergy Action Plan is kept with the Student's medication.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all medication in in date however the School Medical & Wellbeing Officer will check medication kept at school on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.
- School Medical & Wellbeing Officer keeps a register of students who have been prescribed an adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) and a record of use of any AAI(s) and emergency treatment given.
- School Medical & Wellbeing Officer ensures that any reaction or near misses is recorded and reported internally or in accordance with RIDDOR.

Anaphylaxis Drills

- To maintain staff competence and confidence in responding to allergic reactions and anaphylaxis, all staff will participate in an allergy drill at least once each school term. The drill will assess staff members' ability to:

  i. Recognise the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis.
  ii. Identify the location of the nearest adrenaline auto-injector (e.g., EpiPen).
  iii. Demonstrate the correct administration of an adrenaline auto-injector.

Allergy drills will be conducted during non-teaching periods to minimise disruption to learning and ensure staff availability

Student Responsibilities

- Students are encouraged to have a good awareness of their symptoms and to let an adult know as soon as they suspect they are having an allergic reaction.
- Students who are trained and confident to administer their own AAIs will be encouraged to take responsibility for carrying them on their person at all times.

3. Allergy Action Plans

Allergy action plans are designed to function as individual healthcare plans for children with food allergies, providing medical and parental consent for schools to administer medicines in the event of an allergic reaction, including consent to administer a spare adrenaline auto- injector.

British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI) Allergy Action Plans are produced by a medical professional and should not be created by school. These are a national plan that has been agreed by the BSACI, Anaphylaxis UK and Allergy UK. The allergy action plans are designed to function as an individual healthcare plan.

4. Emergency Treatment and Management of Anaphylaxis

What to look for:

Symptoms usually come on quickly, within minutes of exposure to the allergen.

- Mild to moderate allergic reaction symptoms may include:

- a red raised rash (known as hives or urticaria) anywhere on the body
- a tingling or itchy feeling in the mouth
- swelling of lips, face or eyes
- stomach pain or vomiting.

More serious symptoms are often referred to as the ABC symptoms and can include:

AIRWAY - swelling in the throat, tongue or upper airways (tightening of the throat, hoarse voice, difficulty swallowing).

- **BREATHING -** sudden onset wheezing, breathing difficulty, noisy breathing.
- **CIRCULATION -** dizziness, feeling faint, sudden sleepiness, tiredness, confusion, pale clammy skin, loss of consciousness.

The term for this more severe reaction is anaphylaxis. In extreme cases there could be a dramatic fall in blood pressure. The person may become weak and floppy and may have a sense of something terrible happening. This may lead to collapse and unconsciousness and, on rare occasions, can be fatal.

If the Student has been exposed to something they are known to be allergic to, then it is more likely to be an anaphylactic reaction.

Anaphylaxis can develop very rapidly, so a treatment is needed that works rapidly. Adrenaline is the mainstay of treatment, and it starts to work within seconds.

What does adrenaline do?

- It opens up the airways
- It stops swelling
- It raises the blood pressure

As soon as anaphylaxis is suspected, adrenaline must be administered without delay.

Action:

- Keep the child where they are, call for help and do not leave them unattended.
- **LIE CHILD FLAT WITH LEGS RAISED –** they can be propped up if struggling to breathe but this should be for as short a time as possible.
- **USE ADRENALINE AUTO-INJECTOR WITHOUT DELAY** and note the time given. AAIs should be given into the muscle in the outer thigh. Specific instructions vary by brand – always follow the instructions on the device.
- **CALL 999** and state **ANAPHYLAXIS** (ana-fil-axis).
- If no improvement after 5 minutes, administer second AAI.
- If no signs of life commence CPR.
- Call parent/carer as soon as possible.

Whilst you are waiting for the ambulance, keep the child where they are. Do not stand them up, or sit them in a chair, even if they are feeling better. This could lower their blood pressure drastically, causing their heart to stop.

All students must go to hospital for observation after anaphylaxis even if they appear to have recovered as a reaction can reoccur after treatment.

5. Supply, storage and care of medication

Depending on their level of understanding and competence, students will be encouraged to take responsibility for and to carry their own two AAIs on them at all times in a suitable bag/container.

For younger children or those not ready to take responsibility for their own medication, there should be an anaphylaxis kit which is kept within 5 minutes of them, not locked away and accessible to all staff.

Parents/carers are required to provide two in-date prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs) for storage in the Health Centre. These are held as spare devices and may be used during school trips or in the unlikely event that a student's own adrenaline auto-injector is unavailable, misplaced, expired, or not immediately accessible. Students must continue to carry their prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors on their person at all times, in accordance with their Individual Healthcare Plan.

Medication should be stored in a suitable container and clearly labelled with the student's name. The student's medication storage container should contain:

- Two AAIs i.e. EpiPen® or Jext®
- An up-to-date allergy action plan
- Antihistamine as tablets or syrup (if included on allergy action plan)
- Spoon if required
- Asthma inhaler (if included on allergy action plan).

It is the responsibility of the child's parents to ensure that the anaphylaxis kit is up-to-date and clearly labelled, however the Student Medical & Wellbeing Officer will check medication kept at school on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.

Parents can subscribe to expiry alerts for the relevant AAIs their child is prescribed, to make sure they can get replacement devices in good time.

Older children and medication

Older children and teenagers should, whenever possible, assume responsibility for their emergency kit under the guidance of their parents. However, symptoms of anaphylaxis can come on very suddenly, so school staff need to be prepared to administer medication if the young person cannot.

Storage

AAIs should be stored at room temperature, protected from direct sunlight and temperature extremes.

Disposal

AAIs are single use only and must be disposed of as sharps. Used AAIs can be given to ambulance paramedics on arrival or can be disposed of in a sharps bin. Sharps bins to be obtained from and disposed of by *Pink Hygiene*, a clinical waste contractor. The sharps bin is kept in the Health Centre.

6. 'Spare' adrenaline auto-injectors in school

Thornton College has 14 spare AAIs for emergency use in children who are at risk of anaphylaxis, but their own devices are not available or not working (e.g. because they are out of date) or are experiencing anaphylaxis for the first time.

These are stored in a green, sealable wall box, clearly labelled 'Emergency Adrenaline Pen', kept safely, not locked away and accessible and known to all staff.

Thornton College's spare AAI pens are kept in the following location/s:-

- Sports Hall – x2 Epi-Pen >30kg+
- Health Centre – x4 (x2 EpiPen Jnr and Epi-Pen >30kg+)
- Reception – x2 Epi-Pen >30kg+
- Boarding – x2 Epi-Pen >30kg+
- EYFS – x2 EpiPen Jnr
- Staff Room – x2E pi-Pen >30kg+

The Student Medical & Wellbeing Officer is responsible for checking the spare medication is in date on a monthly basis and to replace as needed.

7. Staff Training

The named staff members (at least 2) responsible for coordinating staff anaphylaxis training and the upkeep of the school's anaphylaxis policy are:-

- Named senior leader: Jane Sanders / Emma Noel
- Named senior governor: Jon White

Thomas Franks Catering also has assigned allergy champions in Thornton, who are Jane Parslow and Nora Nicklen.

All staff will complete Allergy & Anaphylaxis Awareness training on National College, and on an ad-hoc basis during induction of new staff. Staff will also receive yearly in-house Allergy & Anaphylaxis and Auto-Defibrillator training, showing a practical demonstration of how to administer an AAI.

Thomas Franks catering staff will complete their training on iHasco. The iHasco 'food allergy awareness' course is CPD, IOSH, Institute of Hospitality, and International Institute of risk and safety management (IIRSM) certified, the follow on course 'anaphylaxis and allergy training for schools and carers' is CPD and IIRSM certified.

Training includes:

- Knowing the common allergens and triggers of allergy
- Spotting the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and anaphylaxis. Early recognition of symptoms is key, including knowing when to call for emergency services
- Administering emergency treatment (including AAIs) in the event of anaphylaxis – knowing how and when to administer the medication/device
- Measures to reduce the risk of a child having an allergic reaction e.g. allergen avoidance, knowing who is responsible for what
- Managing allergy action plans and ensuring these are up to date
- School ensures that staff undertake a practical session using trainer devices. This can be completed with the Student Medical & Wellbeing Officer, and can also be obtained from the manufacturers' websites: www.epipen.co.uk and www.jext.co.uk

Catering staff are required to complete training provided by Thomas Franks via iHasco. This training is internally reviewed by Thornton College to ensure it meets all relevant and current guidance. It covers key areas including food allergy awareness, the recognition and management of anaphylaxis, and the safe location and administration of adrenaline in an emergency.

8. Inclusion and safeguarding

Thornton College is committed to ensuring that all children with medical conditions, including allergies, in terms of both physical and mental health, are properly supported in school so that they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential.

If there are any concerns regarding a student's medical needs or wellbeing, parents and staff are advised to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Team.

9. Allergy awareness and nut bans

Thornton College is a nut-aware school and follows the approach advocated by Anaphylaxis UK in relation to nut bans and allergen management. While every reasonable measure is taken to minimise the risk of exposure to nuts on site, Thornton College recognises that nuts are only one of many allergens that may affect students and that no school can guarantee a completely allergen-free environment.

For this reason, Thornton College promotes a whole-school culture of allergy awareness, prevention, and education. This approach ensures that all staff, students, and visitors understand the importance of avoiding known allergens, recognising the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction, and responding appropriately in the event of an emergency.

Thornton College is committed to ensuring that robust policies and procedures are in place to minimise risk, including staff training, clear communication of students' medical needs, and age-appropriate education to support awareness and understanding across the school community.

10. Thomas Franks Catering Provision

All catering and food operations are managed by **Thomas Franks;** this includes the core food service for Breakfast, Lunch, Supper & events. Any food provided by Thomas Franks catering operations in schools are always nut free. This means that no food item / ingredient which contains / may contain any regulated nut may be ordered from their suppliers.

All food businesses (including school caterers) must follow the Food Information Regulations 2014 which states that allergen information relating to the 'Top 14' allergens must be available for all food products.

From September 2026, all parents will complete a separate allergy questionnaire as part of their child's admission. This questionnaire will highlight whether their child has a mild/moderate food allergy (Amber Category) or severe/life threatening allergy (Red Category). For students who have dietary requirements through religious beliefs or food preferences, such as vegan/vegetarian, this would be placed in the Green Category.

RED: Students with a severe life threating allergy who are at risk of suffering from anaphylaxis. This category also includes students with type 1 Diabetes and Coeliac disease.

AMBER: Students with a food allergy or intolerance but not to the extent where a reaction would be life threatening.

GREEN: Students with dietary requirements through religious beliefs or food preferences including vegan and vegetarian.

The Student Medical & Wellbeing Officer will provide the Catering Manager with a shared document detailing students with food allergies, including a photo of the student, their full name, their year group, dietary requirements, known allergies, if an epi-pen or medication is required, and if their meals should be plated separately. This will ensure that any updates or changes are accurately recorded and communicated in a timely manner.

For day visiting students, the catering manager will be informed electronically and in person of any students with allergies prior to the student starting.

Parents/carers are encouraged to meet with the Catering Manager to discuss their child's needs.

Management Controls for 'Red Category' Students

- Menus MUST be planned in advance and a separate meal prepared if the food on the main menu is not suitable.
- Meals MUST be carefully prepared in the kitchen in order to minimise the risk of cross contamination. Meals MUST be pre-plated in the kitchen, covered, and labelled with the student's name and dietary requirement.
- A pre-plated meal record MUST be signed off by the person preparing the meal, checked and signed by the team member passing the plated meal over and by any school staff member (if required) accepting the meal. Cutlery should also be provided from the kitchen to reduce contamination risks.
- Red category students MUST NEVER be served foods from the main counter during normal service as the risk of cross contamination is too high. Handing controlled meals (i.e., previously prepared and protected meals) to red category students at the pass can be acceptable if suitable controls are in place to ensure the right meal is provided to the right student and allergen controls are secure.
- Even where the general food offer does not contain an allergen of concern red category students MUST ALWAYS be served plated, covered and named meals.

Thomas Franks 'Red Category' protocol requires that meals for students with severe food allergies/anaphylaxis are plated separately to minimise the risk of cross-contamination. If parents/carers wish to opt out of this arrangement, they must complete an 'Opt out' form. Parents/Carers must acknowledge and accept that this may increase the risk of accidental allergen exposure or cross-contamination, despite the school and catering team continuing to take reasonable precautions to maintain student safety.

Identification of students with allergen, intolerance or dietary preferences

To ensure allergy awareness among staff:

- EYFS and Prep students with allergies wear red wristbands as a visual identifier for all staff. These wrist bands are distributed on entry to the school and checked at the start of each academic year.
- Students are taught to check with catering staff before selecting food or purchasing items.
- When visiting the café with their children, Parents are advised to check suitability of school café items directly with the Catering Manager.
- Bottles, lunch boxes, and any food items provided in unusual situations from home for school trips/events should be clearly labelled with the child's name.

The school adheres to Department of Health guidance, which includes:

- Staff training on reading food labels and preventing cross-contamination (e.g. preparing allergen-free meals first and thoroughly cleaning preparation areas with warm soapy water).
- Risk-assessing the use of food in learning activities (e.g. crafts, cooking, science experiments, or school events) based on children's allergies and age. Parents and carers are welcome to liaise directly with the Catering Manager for further advice or clarification regarding food safety and allergy management.

The school's menu is available for parents to view in advance with all ingredients listed and allergens highlighted on the organisation website at https://www.thorntoncollege.com/college-life/catering/

11. School trips

Staff leading school trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies, including the student's back up anaphylaxis kit. Trip leaders will check that all students with medical conditions, including allergies, carry their medication. Students unable to produce their required medication will not be able to attend the excursion.

All the activities on the school trip will be risk assessed to see if they pose a threat to allergic students and alternative activities planned to ensure inclusion.

Overnight school trips should be possible with careful planning and a meeting for parents with the lead member of staff planning the trip should be arranged. Staff at the venue for an overnight school trip should be briefed early on that an allergic child is attending and will need appropriate food (if provided by the venue).

Sporting Excursions

Allergic children should have every opportunity to attend sports trips to other schools. The school will ensure that the P.E. teacher/s are fully aware of the situation. The school being visited will be notified that a member of the team has an allergy when arranging the fixture. A member of staff trained in administering adrenaline will accompany the team and will ensure the student has their personal anaphylaxis kit, as well as their back up anaphylaxis kit from school. If another school feels that they are not equipped to cater for any food-allergic child, the school will arrange for the child to take alternative/their own food.

12. Risk Assessment

Thornton College will conduct a detailed individual risk assessment for all new joining students with allergies and any students newly diagnosed, to help identify any gaps in our systems and processes for keeping allergic children safe.

13. Useful Links

- Anaphylaxis UK - https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/
- Safer Schools Programme - https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/education/safer- schools-programme/
- AllergyWise for Schools online training - https://www.allergywise.org.uk/p/allergywise-for-schools1
- Allergy UK - https://www.allergyuk.org

- Whole school allergy and awareness management - https://www.allergyuk.org/schools/whole-school-allergy-awareness- and management
- BSACI Allergy Action Plans - https://www.bsaci.org/professional-resources/resources/paediatric-allergy-action-plans/
- Spare Pens in Schools - http://www.sparepensinschools.uk
- Department for Education Supporting students at school with medical conditions - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803956/supporting-students-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf
- Department of Health Guidance on the use of adrenaline auto-injectors in schools - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/645476/Adrenaline_auto_injectors_in_schools.pdf
- Food allergy quality standards (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, March 2016) https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs118
- Anaphylaxis: assessment and referral after emergency treatment (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2020) https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg134?unlid=22904150420167115834