St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy

St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

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Statement of Intent

The St Thomas Aquinas CMAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of all pupils, staff, volunteers and visitors across its schools. The Trust recognises that allergies are common in childhood and that, for some pupils, exposure to allergens can result in serious and potentially life-threatening reactions, including anaphylaxis. For this reason, allergies are treated across the Trust as a health, safeguarding and inclusion issue.

This policy sets out a clear Trust-wide framework for how schools manage allergies and respond to allergic reactions. It aims to ensure that pupils with allergies are supported to attend school safely, feel confident and are able to participate fully in all aspects of school life, including teaching and learning, extracurricular activities, trips and visits.

The Trust recognises that it is not possible to guarantee allergen-free environments. Instead, schools adopt an allergy-aware approach that focuses on reducing risk where reasonably possible, increasing staff awareness and ensuring that robust, well-understood emergency procedures are always in place.

Through this policy, the Trust sets out a clear framework to ensure that all schools:

- take allergies seriously as a safeguarding and inclusion issue;
- work in close partnership with parents and carers;
- put proportionate and practical control measures in place;
- ensure staff are trained, confident and prepared to act;
- respond swiftly and effectively in the event of an emergency.

The Trust and St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy will maintain this as a dedicated allergy policy, separate from the broader policy on supporting pupils with medical conditions, due to the specific and potentially life-threatening risks associated with anaphylaxis.

1 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all schools within the Trust and relates to all pupils on roll. It also applies to all staff, including supply, agency and peripatetic staff, as well as volunteers, governors, contractors and visitors. Parents and carers are expected to engage with this policy when interacting with the school community, particularly in relation to information sharing and food brought onto school premises.

Each school is responsible for customising this Trust template to reflect:

- the age and stage of pupils;
- the physical layout and organisation of the school site;
- catering arrangements;
- local staffing structures and named roles.

2 Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy supports schools in meeting their statutory duties under, but not limited to:

- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Medicines (Amendment) Regulations 2017;
- Food Information Regulations 2019 (Natasha's Law);
- DfE guidance on Supporting pupils with medical conditions and allergy;
- DfE guidance on the use of adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs) in schools.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy;
- Administering Medication Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Educational Visits Policy;
- Whole school Food Policy

3 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

Adrenaline Auto-Injector (AAI) – a medical devices (EpiPen/Jext) used to inject a measured dose of adrenaline to treat severe, life-threatening allergic reactions (anaphylaxis).

Allergy – is a condition in which the body has an exaggerated response to a substance. This is also known as hypersensitivity.

Allergen – is a normally harmless substance that triggers an allergic reaction for a susceptible person.

Allergic reaction – is the body's reaction to an allergen and can be identified by, but not limited to, the following symptoms:

- Hives
- Generalised flushing of the skin
- Itching and tingling of the skin
- Tingling in and around the mouth
- Burning sensation in the mouth
- Swelling of the throat, mouth or face
- Feeling wheezy
- Abdominal pain
- Rising anxiety
- Nausea and vomiting
- Alterations in heart rate
- Feeling of weakness

Anaphylaxis – is also referred to as anaphylactic shock, which is a sudden, severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. This kind of reaction may include the following symptoms:

- Persistent cough
- Throat tightness
- Change in voice, e.g. hoarse and croaky sounds
- Wheeze (whistling noise due to a narrowed airway)
- Difficulty swallowing/speaking
- Swollen tongue
- Difficult or noisy breathing
- Chest tightness
- Feeling dizzy or feint
- Suddenly becoming sleepy, unconscious or collapsing
- Becoming pale of floppy

4 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies

The Trust Board approves this policy and ensures that appropriate oversight and assurance arrangements are in place across the Trust. Local Governing Bodies are responsible for adopting the policy at school level, ensuring it is implemented effectively and reviewing its impact at least annually and following any serious allergic incident.

4.2 Headteacher – Bernadette Dabbs

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy within their school. This includes ensuring that appropriate systems are in place to identify pupils with allergies, that staff receive suitable training, and that emergency medication is accessible at all times.

The Headteacher must ensure that a named senior leader is assigned responsibility for allergy management and that a governor is identified to oversee arrangements.

4.3 Named Senior Leader – Katrina Gamage

The named senior leader is responsible for the day-to-day coordination of allergy arrangements. This includes overseeing Individual Healthcare Plans, ensuring relevant information is shared appropriately with staff, monitoring risk assessments and reviewing incidents or near-misses so that learning can be applied to future practice.

The named senior leader in our school is: Katrina Gamage

4.4 Staff

All staff share responsibility for supporting pupils with allergies. This includes being familiar with pupils who have known allergies, following Individual Healthcare Plans, reinforcing hygiene and food-sharing rules, and acting immediately if an allergic reaction is suspected. Staff are expected to complete allergy and anaphylaxis training annually and to seek guidance if they are unsure about procedures.

4.5 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting safe allergy management.

They are responsible for:

- Notifying the school of their child's allergens, the nature of the allergic reaction, what medication to administer, specified control measures and what can be done to prevent the occurrence of an allergic reaction.
- Keeping the school up to date with their child's medical information.
- Providing written consent for the use of a spare AAI.
- Providing the school with written medical documentation, including instructions for administering medication as directed by the child's doctor.
- Raising any concerns they may have about the management of their child's allergies with the classroom teacher.

4.6 Pupils

Pupils are encouraged, in an age-appropriate way, to understand their own allergies where relevant, follow school safety rules, avoid food sharing and tell a member of staff immediately if they feel unwell. Older pupils may be supported to take increasing responsibility for carrying and using medication where this is agreed as appropriate.

5 Identifying Pupils with Allergies

St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy maintains a record of pupils with known allergies. Pupils with allergies have an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) that sets out key information, including allergens, symptoms, emergency actions and medication. Information is reviewed at least annually and more frequently where medical needs change. The Named Senior Leader Katrina Gamage will ensure that relevant staff have access to this information while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

7 Managing Risk and Reducing Exposure

St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy will take reasonable and proportionate steps to reduce the risk of exposure to allergens across the school day, including consideration of:

- food preparation, service and consumption;
- classroom and curriculum activities;
- trips, visits and residential experiences;
- the presence of animals;
- special events, celebrations and visitors.

Risk assessments will be used to support safe inclusion, not to exclude pupils with allergies.

8 Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs)

Pupils who have been prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors must have access to them at all times while in school and on educational visits. AAIs are stored safely, clearly labelled and never locked away.

Our school holds spare AAIs in line with legislation, and arrangements are in place to ensure that locations are known to staff and that expiry dates are checked regularly. Spare AAIs are readily accessible and not locked away and are held by the school as spare devices and not a replacement for a pupil's own device. They are located less than five minutes away from where they may be needed.

The emergency AAIs can be found at the following locations:

-School Hall

-Medical Room

In line with manufacturer's guidelines, all AAI devices are stored at room temperature in line with manufacturer's guidelines, protected from direct sunlight and extreme temperature.

The following member of staff is responsible for maintaining the spare AAIs.

Katrina Gamage

They will conduct termly checks to ensure that the AAIs have not expired and that any used or expired AAI will be disposed of in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Where any AAIs are used, the following information will be recorded on the AAI record.

- Where and when the reaction took place
- What medication was given
- Who administered it
- Whether a second dose was required

9 Emergency Response and Anaphylaxis

All staff are expected to understand that anaphylaxis can occur without warning and can escalate rapidly. If anaphylaxis is suspected, adrenaline must be administered immediately, and emergency services contacted without delay. A second dose may be required after five minutes if symptoms do not improve. Pupils must not be left alone while awaiting medical assistance, and a member of staff will accompany them to hospital if parents are not present.

All staff will be aware of the 'ABC' (Airway, Breathing, Circulation) principle when recognising anaphylaxis. If one or more signs are present, the nearest trained staff member will follow the below procedure:

1. Lay the pupil flat with their legs raised. If breathing is difficult. Allow them to sit upright
2. Administer an AAI without delay, using the pupil's prescribed device or a space device if necessary
3. Call 999 immediately and request an ambulance, stating anaphylaxis
4. Stay with the pupil until the ambulance arrives
5. If there is no improvement after five minutes, an additional dose of adrenaline will be administered using a second device

10 Training

Mandatory online Trust Allergy Awareness & Emergency Response Training can be found on SharePoint here. This training must be completed annually.

St Joseph's Catholic Academy will organise on-site adrenaline pen training using a trainer pen, a needle-free practice device which functions exactly like the real AAI.

New staff receive training as part of induction, and catering staff receive additional allergen-specific training organised by the Trust Catering Manager.

The Trust monitors the online training completion and addresses any gaps promptly through risk assessment and additional support.

11 Wellbeing, Inclusion and Equalities

The Trust recognises that allergies can have an impact on pupils' emotional wellbeing, confidence and sense of safety. St Joseph's Catholic Academy actively promotes awareness and understanding, challenge allergy-related bullying or teasing, and provide reassurance to pupils and families. No pupil should be excluded from school activities solely because of their allergy.

12 Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Trust and St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy It is also reviewed following any serious allergic reaction or incident. Lessons learned are used to strengthen practice, improve training and enhance pupil safety across the Trust.