Medical News – Statutory Guidance Update

Benedict's Law – Allergy Awareness Training for All Staff

Keeping our children, young people and colleagues safe is everyone's responsibility. As part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding, all staff will be required to complete allergy awareness training in line with the principles of Benedict's Law.

Benedict Blythe was a young primary school pupil who lived with several allergies, some of them life-threatening. On the day of the incident, Benedict had returned to school after being absent the previous day, feeling unwell the day before that. During the school day, the children were having milk. Benedict's own milk was stored separately in the staff room along with his own cup. Tragically, it appears he may have been given lactose-free milk instead of his own usual milk – this only occurred because the milk was poured in the staff room and not the classroom. Although lactose-free milk contains less lactose, it still contains cow's milk protein, making it unsafe for someone with a cow's milk protein allergy.

Shortly afterwards, Benedict became increasingly unwell. Sadly, staff believed his symptoms were related to his illness from earlier in the week rather than recognising the possibility of an allergic reaction. His father was called to collect him because he was not improving. By the time he arrived, vital minutes had been lost, and it was Benedict's father who had to begin CPR.

Benedict's tragic death has led his mother to campaign tirelessly for greater allergy awareness and stronger safeguards in schools. Her work has helped to raise awareness of the importance of recognising allergic reactions quickly and responding without delay, helping to shape improved guidance and practice across education settings.

We do not share Benedict's story to frighten anyone. We share it because awareness saves lives. Allergies are becoming increasingly common, meaning that many of us will work with children who have potentially life-threatening allergies during our careers. This makes it more important than ever that all staff understand how to recognise the signs of an allergic reaction and know how to respond quickly and appropriately.

Every member of staff should know which children in their setting have allergies and understand that any sudden or unexplained deterioration in a child's condition should always be considered

as potentially allergy-related until proven otherwise. Prompt recognition and action can make all the difference.

To support this, all staff will be required to complete allergy awareness training. A range of training options will be available, and your school will let you know how and when to access the appropriate session. As Director of Human Resources, I will be monitoring and recording completion to ensure everyone has received the required training.

The purpose of this training is not just to meet a requirement. It is to ensure every member of staff has the confidence to recognise the signs of an allergic reaction and knows exactly what to do in those critical moments. Whether the person experiencing the reaction is a child or an adult, a prompt response could save a life.

We are not insisting that staff administer medications or EpiPens, although you may, if required, and please be assured that mistakes, hesitation, or imperfect technique do not amount to any misconduct.

We aim to ensure that every member of staff feels informed, aware and confident to respond appropriately if they are ever faced with a suspected allergic reaction. We want to create an environment where every child, young person, visitor and colleague with allergies feels safe and supported. By increasing awareness across all roles—not just those with direct responsibility — we can ensure that allergies are understood, risks are recognised early, and staff have the confidence to act quickly and appropriately when it matters most.

Thank you in advance for your support and commitment to making our schools as safe as possible for everyone.

What is changing in September 2026?

The Department for Education (DfE) has issued new guidance on Allergy Safety in Schools.

Overview of requirements

Two separate published policies should be in place: a **Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy** and a dedicated **Allergy Policy**. A template of both policies will be provided to you at the beginning of the Autumn term.

- **A named member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** should have responsibility for overseeing the implementation, monitoring and review of medical conditions and allergy procedures.
- **Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) should be used more consistently:** where a pupil requires any form of school-based support, monitoring, medication or risk management relating to a medical condition or allergy, an IHP should be in place and regularly reviewed. A template Individual Healthcare Plan will be provided to you at the beginning of the Autumn term. (as an appendix to the Allergy Policy)
- **Training must include all staff:** this should extend to teaching staff, support staff, lunchtime supervisors, supply staff, volunteers and wraparound/extended-services providers. Allergy awareness training should be refreshed at least annually, with additional role-specific training provided where required.
- **Stock spare adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs)** should be available on site, clearly identified and accessible within five minutes from all areas of the school. They should not be stored in locked locations that could delay access in an emergency. They should not be refrigerated or stored in direct sunlight.

Since AAIs can normally only be ordered on prescription, a letter from the Head is required when placing the order.

Initially, schools are expected to need to order emergency anaphylaxis kits, then re-fills as AAIs expire. It is advisable to order in September due to Summer closures to extend the time until expiry. Expiry dates vary by brand (typical range 9 – 18 months).

The table below shows how many AAIs are required:

School type	AAIs for children under age 6 years (150 micrograms) e.g. EpiPen Junior, Jext 150	AAIs for individuals over 6 years of age (300 micrograms) e.g. EpiPen, Jext 300
State-funded nursery school	One pair of "spare" AAIs	n/a
Primary school	One pair of "spare" AAIs	One pair of "spare" AAIs
Secondary school	n/a	One or two pairs of "spare" AAIs *
Special school	One pair of "spare" AAIs	One pair of "spare" AAIs

* Secondary schools with large sites should consider having two pairs of "spare" AAIs, so that a pair of "spare" AAIs are available within five minutes of wherever they may be needed.

Where schools operate across more than one site, they should ensure there are spare AAIs of the appropriate dosage on each site as required.

Schools should also consider ordering additional emergency kits to take on trips.

Kits can be purchased (with a 10% bulk discount) from Eureka:

Eureka Direct - AAI kits

Individual AAIs can be purchased economically from Pharmacy Planet:

Pharmacy Planet - AAI

- **Asthma** is also covered by the guidance and schools are required to hold spare inhalers for those children affected
- **Near misses should be recorded and reviewed:** allergy-related near misses, as well as incidents and reactions, should be recorded on Every (incident reporting).

Trends and significant incidents are reported to Trustees to support oversight and continuous improvement.

What do schools need to do now?

- **Book training** for allergy awareness
- **Order spare AAIs**
- **Order spare asthma inhalers** (as required)

Who's who to get in touch with?

If you have any questions around **allergy training**, please contact: lkaisy@magnalearningpartnership.org.uk

If you have any questions around **ordering epipens/medication supplies**, please contact the central finance team: invoices@magnalearningpartnership.org.uk

If you have any questions around **Individual Healthcare Plans**, please contact your School Medical Lead or Danielle Lloyd: dlloyd@magnalearningpartnership.org.uk

If you have any questions around **policy information, near misses, or protocols**, please contact Louise Wood: lwood@magnalearningpartnership.org.uk