



# COVID-19 at school:

## Keeping children with allergy safe

**Schools have a big task planning for the return to school this year and whilst it is important that measures are in place to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, it is also important that pupils living with allergy are also kept safe.**

We understand that all schools will be carrying out their own risk assessments and therefore your school will be planning to implement changes and introduce procedures to suit your own environment.

It could be worrying for a parent of an allergic child, and for the child themselves, to not know what their schools 'new normal' will look like in September. To them, this new school environment could carry many new risks, such as accidental exposure to allergens and fewer staff to spot an allergic reaction and administer medication.

In response to queries from concerned parents, we wrote a joint letter with the BSACI and Anaphylaxis Campaign to the Department for Education in England and Scotland about school staff obligations should a pupil require anaphylaxis treatment. Read this letter and the responses here: [bit.ly/3iCW2dd](https://bit.ly/3iCW2dd)

**Here are some consideration for changes that your school may be planning:**

### Mealtimes

If pupils will be eating in classrooms instead of lunch areas, take steps to reduce cross-contamination to prevent accidental exposure to a food allergen on surfaces, including:

- Not sharing food
- Encouraging hand washing with soap and water before and after eating

### Reduced staff

If pupils and staff are split into cohorts to maintain social distancing, there may be fewer allergy-trained staff on hand to act in an allergic reaction. Therefore all staff must be trained and able to identify pupils with allergy.

### Access to medication

The school layout may change to maintain social distancing. Make sure that pupils have access to emergency medication and Adrenaline Auto-Injectors.

If the location where medication is stored will change, make sure that staff and pupils

Hand sanitiser is not effective at removing allergy proteins – all pupils should wash their hands with soap and water before and after eating

Going back to school can be an anxious time for pupils with allergy and COVID-19 adds to this stress

Communication with pupils and their parents is key. Our [Understanding Anxiety Factsheet](#) may also help identify a pupil who needs some extra support.

## Allergy UK Helpline

Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm:

Call: 01322 619 898

Email: [info@allergyuk.org](mailto:info@allergyuk.org)

Visit us at:

[Allergyuk.org](https://www.allergyuk.org)

## Key actions to help keep children with allergy safe at school during COVID-19

### 1. Review all children's allergy management plans with their parents

New measures within the school may mean that a child's plan needs to be adapted.

### 2. Identify parents of children with allergy and make sure you speak to them before the start of term.

Every school is set up differently, so it's impossible for a parent to know exactly what you are planning without being told. This could cause a great deal of anxiety for the parent and child. Schedule a call and using the information above, reassure the family that you have considered their child's need and have procedure in place to keep them safe.

### 3. Review and renew allergy training where necessary

All staff must be able to identify which pupils have allergies. If you are a secondary school, the [Whole School Allergy Awareness and Management self-audit](#) or our [SAAG programme](#) could help with this training.

Visit our Back to School page for more advice and resources to help with the return to school: [www.allergyuk.org/back-to-school-campaign](https://www.allergyuk.org/back-to-school-campaign)