Fairchildes Academy Community Trust (FACT)

Safer Eating and Food Handling and Allergy Policy

September 2026

Date	September 2026
Edited by:	New Policy
Sections edited:	
Review date:	September 2027

DRAFT

Introduction

At Fairchildes Academy Community Trust (FACT), we believe that every child should be able to access food, learning and school experiences safely and with confidence. We recognise that food allergies can be life-threatening and that food intolerances and other dietary needs can also significantly affect children's wellbeing and participation.

This policy applies across the school day and to breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, school meals, snacks, curriculum activities, celebrations, trips, visits and events organised by the Trust. It should be read alongside the Trust's Safeguarding, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions, Allergy and Anaphylaxis, First Aid, EYFS, Health and Safety policies.

It reflects the Department for Education's Allergy Safety in Schools statutory guidance (2026), DfE School Food Standards: Allergy Guide (2026), Food Standards Agency (FSA) Allergen Guidance for Food Businesses (Natasha's Law), and the EYFS Statutory Framework (2026)

Aims and Objectives

- To reduce the risk of exposure to known allergens, manage choking risks, and prevent avoidable allergic reactions
- To ensure children with allergies, intolerances or other dietary requirements are included in school life through appropriate planning and reasonable adjustments
- To establish clear operational food handling, preparation, and mealtime supervisory standards across all Trust settings
- To ensure staff recognise symptoms of food-related distress, know daily safety controls, and seamlessly defer clinical/emergency procedures to the Trust's Allergy and Anaphylaxis Safety Policy

Identifying and Managing Individual Needs

Parents/carers will be asked to provide details of allergies, intolerances and medically required diets on admission and to notify the school promptly of changes. The school will seek appropriate medical information and develop an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) and allergy action plan where required. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis with relevant teaching, catering, lunchtime and club staff.

An up-to-date allergy register will be maintained, identifying pupils with known allergies and the arrangements required to keep them safe. Where a new allergy or change to a pupil's dietary requirements is reported, this information must be communicated immediately to all relevant staff, including kitchen staff, class teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors, as appropriate.

The school will ensure that information is shared promptly and effectively, with clear communication between the school office, catering team and relevant staff to minimise the risk of information being missed or delayed. Allergy records and individual healthcare plans will be updated accordingly.

DRAFT

Before food is served, the responsible adult must check the pupil's identity and dietary requirements against the agreed allergy information. Where there is any uncertainty about the suitability of food, it must not be served until the ingredients and potential allergens have been checked and confirmed as safe.

Staff Training and Responsibilities

All staff will receive allergy awareness training in accordance with statutory guidance, including recognising symptoms of anaphylaxis, emergency response and the use of adrenaline devices. FACT will require annual refresher training for all staff who prepare, handle, distribute, supervise or serve food, including kitchen and catering staff, midday supervisors, class teachers, teaching assistants, breakfast club and after-school club staff. This annual frequency is a Trust requirement; additional role-specific training will be provided where necessary.

New staff, temporary staff, agency staff and volunteers involved in food provision or supervision must receive relevant information and induction before undertaking those duties. Training attendance, competence and refresher dates will be recorded centrally. Catering staff must additionally receive suitable food hygiene and allergen management training appropriate to their duties.

Food Preparation, Handling and Service

- Caterers and staff handling food must check ingredient lists, allergen declarations, supplier changes and substitutions before preparation or service.
- Food preparation surfaces, hands and utensils must be cleaned appropriately to prevent allergen cross-contact; ingredients and prepared meals must be clearly labelled and stored separately where necessary. Any food pre-packaged on site must display clear allergen declarations in compliance with Natasha's Law
- Meals for pupils with specific dietary requirements must be clearly identified, prepared and served using agreed controls.
- Staff must not assume that food described as “free from” or “may contain” is safe for an individual child without checking their documented arrangements.
- Food brought from home, donations and food provided for classroom activities or school events must be checked against the known allergies and dietary requirements of children before being shared or served. Wherever possible, families will be asked to provide food items that are free from known allergens within the class or group, helping to ensure that all children can participate safely and are not excluded from activities or celebrations due to their allergies or intolerances.
- Staff will continue to maintain appropriate supervision and checks of food donations, recognising that food provided by families may still contain allergens or present a risk of cross-contamination. All food must be checked for suitability before being offered to children, and where there is any uncertainty, it must not be served until its safety has been confirmed.

DRAFT

Eating and Supervision Arrangements

Across FACT, the safety and wellbeing of children during mealtimes, snack times and food-related activities remains a priority. Appropriate supervision will be maintained at all times, with staff remaining vigilant to the risks of choking, allergic reactions and food sharing.

For children within the Early Years Foundation Stage:

Children will be seated safely in appropriately sized chairs whilst eating and must remain within sight and hearing of a member of staff at all times. Wherever possible, staff will position themselves facing children to ensure that they can closely observe eating, identify potential choking hazards, prevent food sharing and recognise any signs of an allergic reaction.

In accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework (2026), at least one member of staff holding a current, full paediatric first aid certificate must be present in the room whenever Early Years children are eating. This requirement applies to all eating opportunities, including breakfast club, snack times, lunch and after-school provision where EYFS children are present.

Food will be prepared and served in a manner appropriate to children's ages and developmental stages, with particular attention given to reducing choking risks (e.g., cutting round foods such as grapes and sausages lengthways into quarters). Staff will encourage children to remain seated whilst eating and ensure that food is cut, prepared and presented safely.

For children across the wider school:

Children will be appropriately supervised during all meals, snacks and food-related activities. Staff responsible for supervising children must be aware of any known allergies, intolerances or individual dietary requirements and understand the precautions required to keep children safe.

Staff will remain vigilant throughout mealtimes, recognising that allergic reactions may occur unexpectedly, including in children without a previously identified allergy. Where individual healthcare plans identify additional supervision or monitoring requirements, these must be followed consistently.

All staff supervising food consumption must know how to recognise the signs of an allergic reaction or choking incident, how to summon immediate assistance and where emergency medication, including adrenaline auto-injectors, is located.

Children must not share food where this could introduce an allergen risk. These arrangements will be explained sensitively and without stigmatising individual pupils. Children with allergies or intolerances will be supported to participate safely in mealtimes and activities alongside their peers.

Age-appropriate handwashing will be promoted before and after eating, and tables and eating areas will be cleaned appropriately to minimise contamination and allergen transfer.

The Trust promotes an allergy-aware environment rather than claiming that school premises can be completely allergen-free. Any restrictions on particular foods will be based on assessed risks and communicated clearly to families.

Inclusion in Events, Celebrations and Curriculum Activities

DRAFT

Children must not be excluded from school celebrations, curriculum cooking, birthdays, fundraising events, breakfast or after-school clubs, trips or other activities solely because of an allergy, intolerance or medically required diet. Staff organising an activity must identify food-related risks in advance, consult parents/carers and catering staff as appropriate, and arrange a safe and meaningful alternative or adjustment where necessary.

Event organisers must consider ingredient information, cross-contact, outside caterers, donated food, shared utensils and the location of emergency medication. Where the safety of a proposed activity cannot be assured, the activity or food provision must be adapted rather than excluding the child.

Emergency Medical Protocols and Cross-Reference

For detailed medical procedures, individual healthcare plans, prescribed/spare Adrenaline Auto-Injector (AAI) storage, dosage protocols, and emergency anaphylaxis responses, refer directly to the FACT Allergy and Anaphylaxis Safety Policy.

In summary during mealtimes or food activities:

Prescribed and spare unassigned AAIs are kept in central, un-locked, accessible locations known to all staff.

Where anaphylaxis is suspected, staff must immediately execute emergency protocols: Administer AAI without delay → Call 999 declaring suspected anaphylaxis → Position child flat (or seated if breathing difficult) → Administer second dose after 5 minutes if required → Contact parents/carers

Emergency medical care must never be delayed to seek prior parental permission. Spent AAIs must be retained for ambulance crews.

Incidents, Near Misses and Communication

All allergic reactions, medication administration, serious incidents and near misses will be recorded promptly and reported in line with the Trust's procedures. The DSL, school leadership, catering provider and parents/carers will be informed as appropriate. Significant incidents and near misses will be reviewed to identify learning, update risk assessments and prevent recurrence. Relevant statutory notifications will be made where required.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Implementation will be monitored by school leadership, the designated allergy lead and relevant catering and club managers. Monitoring will include training records, individual plans, allergen information, food handling practices, emergency medication accessibility and expiry checks, and the inclusion of children in events. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following statutory changes, a significant incident or changes to Trust provision.

Reference Guidance

- DfE, Allergy Safety in Schools: statutory guidance (6 July 2026).

DRAFT

- DfE, School Food Standards: Allergy Guide (14 September 2026).
- Food Standards Agency, Allergen Guidance for Food Businesses (updated July 2026).
- DfE, Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions; DHSC guidance on emergency adrenaline auto-injectors in schools.
- DfE, Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2026)
- FACT, Allergy and Anaphylaxis Safety Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance or Trust priorities require revision.

DRAFT