



FOOD ALLERGIES & INTOLERANCE POLICY

2025 – 2026

Updated: September 2025

1 Introduction

Food allergies and food intolerance are difficult areas to manage and of course are of great concern to South Hampstead High School and Chartwells Independent. We want all children to be able to be served with food which is enjoyable and safe to eat and for them to be able to make an informed choice based on the information given to them.

When preparing food Chartwells Independent take all reasonable care and precautions to identify and control the ingredients being used but there can be no absolute guarantee that the food will not contain any allergen. This can occur as a trace from an ingredient, or as a result of the list of ingredients not declaring its presence or be due to accidental cross contamination in the kitchen or from something as simple as serving spoons being accidentally used by customers for more than one item on the server. Whilst food that is expected to be free of known allergens can be prepared, there is always the risk of cross contamination and mistakes occurring due to the inescapable human fallibility factor in a busy kitchen preparing and serving a large range of

different foods using a multiplicity of normal ingredients to which the vast majority of the population are not allergic or intolerant.

However, to minimise the risk, we would like to draw your attention to the following responsibilities we all have in relation to the health and safety of your daughter.

2 Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- You have the ultimate responsibility for your daughter and accept that, whilst all reasonable precautions will be taken to make sure the food is safe for her to eat, there can be no absolute guarantee that the food will not contain anything to which she is allergic or intolerant.
- You should be satisfied that the school has been fully informed about the foods known to trigger an allergic reaction or intolerance.
- You should be satisfied that your daughter can ask for information and advice when necessary about the contents or ingredients of the food from the staff on duty, who will contact catering staff as and when necessary, before being served with food or taking food from a self-service area and will follow that advice.
- You should be satisfied that your daughter understands what to look for on packaging where products sold by us are not made on site, that may trigger an allergic reaction.
- You should be satisfied that emergency procedures are understood and are in place should an allergic reaction occur. This includes that:
 - Parents are required to provide 2 Epipens to be held on site. One is kept within a bumbag in the pupil's classroom (Juniors). Senior school pupils are encouraged to carry one of the pens on their person. If parents/students prefer not to do this, a pen is also kept in their emergency medications box in the front office. The school also holds spare epi pens. Parents have the right to opt their daughter out from wearing an emergency medication bumbag during breaktimes in the Junior School: parents need to provide this preference in writing and be aware of their accountability in making this decision.
 - The school holds spare Epipens, including at the Sports Ground, that are in date and which are kept with the student's emergency medications (as described above) in an easily accessible position that is known to school staff.
 - All members of school staff are trained and willing to administer the Epipen (where applicable).

3 Student Responsibilities

- Understands that the caterer does not label individual items of food as to whether they do or do not contain any known food allergens, with the exception of any item that is pre-packed and sealed. This includes pre-packed sandwiches, fruit / jelly / dessert pots with lids, salad boxes and salad shaker pots with lids. This list is not exhaustive and the student should always ask for information and advice when necessary about the contents or ingredients of the food from the Catering Manager or Head Chef before being served with food or taking food from a self-service area if the food item does not have a label. Labels will detail all the ingredients with allergens clearly shown in bold
- Reads the warning notice in the servery area reminding customers about food allergy and intolerance.

- Asks for information and advice when necessary about the contents or ingredients of the food from the Catering Manager or Head Chef before being served with food or taking food from a self-service area.
- Carefully reads the labels of any products on shelves to ensure they do not contain ingredients they are allergic to, and if they are unsure, to ask staff.
- Follows the advice given by staff when she is told that a particular food or dish may not be suitable.
- Carries the prescribed medication (e.g. EpiPen) at all times.

4 School Responsibilities

- Keeps an up to date list of all children known to suffer from food related allergies or intolerance and provides updates to the Catering department when there are changes to this list.
- Establishes emergency procedures as follows:
 - Nominates and trains staff who are willing to administer the Epi-pen (where applicable) should the need arise.
 - Ensures that the location of the EpiPen (where applicable) held on site is known to the staff who are trained to administer it.
 - On school trips or lessons off site, Junior school pupils who may need an EpiPen will wear a bumbag containing one. Senior school pupils will carry one on their person. All emergency boxes are taken with pupils for school trips/sports day
 - How to contact the emergency services and instruct them of the severity of the situation.
 - Ensures that the emergency services would know exactly where to come to on site if the worst scenario occurred.

In the Junior School, younger pupils cannot be expected to check the ingredients list. School staff will present pupils with allergies and dietary preferences to the service counter at the front of each class's queue.

Because we aim to be a 'no nut' school (see section 6 below), the school kitchens do not use nuts in cooking. Items which display the descriptors "may contain traces of nuts" or "made in factories that use nuts" present a low risk and may, on occasion, when there is not an alternative, be used in the school kitchens. When these products are used, it will be flagged in the ingredients list provided by the caterer. When this happens, pupils in the Junior School with a nut allergy will be brought forward to the counter at the head of their class.

5 Caterer's Responsibilities

- Does not deliberately add nuts or nut oils to food being prepared and served.
- Examines ingredient lists and labels on any composite products used as ingredients to establish the declared presence or absence of nuts or other known allergens.
- Maintains up to date ingredient lists in the Food Allergy Folder for all dishes produced in the kitchen to identify if any of the common food allergens are used as an ingredient of the dish.
- Takes all reasonable care when producing food to avoid cross contamination of ingredients.

- Ensures that staff who serve food understand they must refer any question from a customer about the ingredients of a dish to the Catering Manager or Head Chef so that the Food Allergy Folder can be checked to determine if the dish contains the allergen about which the customer is making the enquiry.
- Takes all reasonable care when serving food to avoid cross contamination between different foods and ensure that serving utensils are only used on one type of food.
- Does not label individual items of food as to whether they do or do not contain any known food allergens, with the exception of any item that is pre-packed and sealed. This includes pre-packed sandwiches, fruit / jelly / dessert pots with lids, salad boxes and salad shaker pots with lids. This list is not exhaustive and any food item that is pre-packed and sealed should have a label, detailing all the ingredients with allergens clearly shown in bold.
- Displays a warning notice in the servery area reminding customers about food allergy and intolerance and the need to ask about the ingredients in the food being served before making their choice.
- If there is any doubt about the ingredients of a particular food, the advice from the Catering Manager or member of staff on duty will be that it should not be consumed by a girl who suffers from an allergy or intolerance.

6 Nuts

South Hampstead aims to be a nut free school, but cannot guarantee to be nut free.

A significant number of our staff, students and visitors have an allergic reaction to nuts and peanuts. Severe allergic reactions result in anaphylaxis and can be fatal.

Nuts and Peanuts can cause severe allergic reactions in a wide range of ways. A person with an allergy does not have to eat nuts or peanuts to have a severe reaction, this can be caused by surface contact and airborne particles. This allergy affects approximately 1/50 children and adults. In recent years we have seen a sharp increase in snacks containing peanuts and a rise in the use of peanut butter in sandwiches.

As a school we have a responsibility to keep our students, staff and visitors safe and to reduce risk of harm. In a busy school environment this can be a challenge and following consideration, we feel the only way to protect those students is by removing the allergens from the school.

- Peanut and nut based products are not sold or served in the dining room and canteen.
- Students, staff and visitors will not be able to bring products containing nuts or peanuts into school.
- Items that are found to break this rule will be confiscated and disposed of safely.

What products should not be brought into school?

- Peanuts and nuts and products containing peanuts or nuts.
- Peanut butter or peanut based chocolate snacks (Snickers/ Reece's pieces etc).
- Items where peanuts or nuts are listed as main ingredients.
- Nut or peanut based oils or products.

Items which display the descriptors "may contain traces of nuts" or "made in factories that use nuts" present a low risk and may, on occasion, when there is not an alternative, be used in the

school kitchens. When these products are used, it will be flagged in the ingredients list provided by the caterer.

All pre-packaged food sold within the UK, must declare and highlight the presence in the ingredient list of 14 major allergens even if they appear in small quantities. These 14 allergens include peanuts and common tree nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashew nuts, pecan nuts, Brazil nuts, pistachio nuts, macadamia nuts and Queensland nuts).

Director of Finance & Operations, September 2024

Update due August 2025