

Westminster Tutors



Allergy Safety Policy
2026-2027

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Westminster Tutors is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for students, staff, teachers, and visitors with allergies.
- 1.2 This policy explains how the college identifies and manages allergy-related risks, supports individuals with known allergies, provides staff training, and responds to allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.
- 1.3 Westminster Tutors is a private further education college whose students are normally aged 16 or over. The college is not subject to the statutory allergy safety requirements applying to maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units. However, it treats the Department for Education's current allergy safety guidance as relevant good practice for post 16 education.
- 1.4 This policy should be read alongside the college's:
 - First Aid Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Administration of Medicines Policy
 - Educational Visits Policy
 - Student Behaviour Policy
 - Medical Emergency Procedure

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to:
 - Students
 - Employees
 - Independent teachers
 - Temporary staff
 - Volunteers
 - Visitors
 - College activities on and off the premises
- 2.2 The arrangements made for an individual will reflect their age, capacity, medical advice, level of risk, and ability to manage their allergy independently.

3. Definitions

Allergy

- 3.1 An allergy is a reaction by the body's immune system to a substance that is usually harmless. Allergies can cause symptoms ranging from mild itching, swelling, or rashes to serious, potentially life-threatening reactions.
- 3.2 Allergens may include food, medicines, insect venom, latex, animals, pollen, mould, and other airborne or contact substances.

Anaphylaxis

- 3.3 Anaphylaxis is a serious and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. It can develop rapidly and requires immediate treatment.
- 3.4 Anaphylaxis commonly affects one or more of the following:
- Airway, including swelling of the tongue or throat, difficulty swallowing, throat tightness, or a hoarse voice
 - Breathing, including difficult or noisy breathing, wheezing, chest tightness, or a persistent cough
 - Circulation, including dizziness, faintness, confusion, collapse, pallor, or loss of consciousness
- 3.5 Anaphylaxis can occur without a rash or other visible skin symptoms.

Adrenaline devices

- 3.6 An adrenaline device delivers a measured dose of adrenaline for the emergency treatment of anaphylaxis. This may include an adrenaline auto-injector or a prescribed nasal adrenaline device.
- 3.7 People at risk of anaphylaxis are normally prescribed two adrenaline devices because a second dose may be required or the first device may fail.

Allergy Action Plan

- 3.8 An Allergy Action Plan is a medical document prepared or authorised by an appropriate healthcare professional. It describes the individual's allergy, symptoms, medication, and emergency treatment.

Individual Healthcare Plan

- 3.9 An Individual Healthcare Plan records the arrangements Westminster Tutors will put in place to support an individual student. It is not a clinical document and must reflect any relevant instructions or plans provided by healthcare professionals.

Coeliac disease and food intolerance

- 3.10 Coeliac disease is an autoimmune condition triggered by gluten. It is not an allergy or food intolerance, but exposure can cause significant illness and may require adjustments.
- 3.11 A food intolerance does not involve the immune system and does not cause anaphylaxis. It can nevertheless cause significant symptoms and may require appropriate arrangements.

4. Responsibilities

Governance Advisory Board

- 4.1 The Governance Advisory Board is responsible for reviewing and approving this policy and providing appropriate oversight of the college's allergy safety arrangements.

Principal

- 4.2 The Principal is the college's Allergy Safety Lead and is responsible for:
- Implementing and reviewing this policy
 - Ensuring that allergy risks are appropriately managed
 - Coordinating Individual Healthcare Plans
 - Ensuring that relevant information is communicated to staff and teachers
 - Ensuring that appropriate training is provided
 - Reviewing allergy-related incidents and near misses
 - Determining whether policies, risk assessments, or individual arrangements require amendment

Administrative Manager

- 4.3 The Administrative Manager is responsible for:
- Maintaining operational records relating to medication held by the college
 - Ensuring that medication is labelled and stored appropriately
 - Checking medication when it is received and at least termly
 - Monitoring expiry dates and requesting replacement medication where necessary
 - Undertaking additional checks before relevant visits or off-site activities

Staff and teachers

- 4.4 Staff and teachers are responsible for:
- Completing required allergy awareness training
 - Familiarising themselves with this policy
 - Reading information shared about individuals under their supervision
 - Taking reasonable steps to minimise exposure to known allergens
 - Following Individual Healthcare Plans and Allergy Action Plans
 - Responding promptly to suspected allergic reactions
 - Reporting incidents and significant near misses

Students

- 4.5 Students are expected, according to their capacity and individual circumstances, to:
- Provide accurate and current information about their allergies
 - Inform the college promptly of any change in their condition, treatment, or medication
 - Carry their prescribed emergency medication
 - Ensure that their medication is available and within its expiry date
 - Follow relevant medical advice
 - Check ingredients and allergen information where necessary
 - Respect the allergy arrangements made for other members of the college community
- 4.6 Students must not knowingly or recklessly expose another person to a known allergen.

Staff and teachers with allergies

- 4.7 Staff and teachers must disclose relevant allergies through the college's medical declaration process. This declaration is updated annually, but individuals must notify the Principal sooner if their circumstances change.
- 4.8 Staff and teachers remain responsible for carrying their prescribed medication and managing their condition, unless alternative workplace arrangements have been agreed.

Visitors

- 4.9 Visitors with a serious allergy are encouraged to notify their college contact in advance where particular arrangements may be required.
- 4.10 The college cannot proactively identify every visitor's allergies or guarantee that all allergens will be absent from the premises.

5. Identifying and Recording Allergies

- 5.1 Information about students' allergies, asthma, medical conditions, and prescribed emergency medication is collected through the college's registration process.
- 5.2 Relevant information is recorded on the student's registration form and student learning record.
- 5.3 Teachers and other staff working with the student will have access to relevant information. A clear alert will be provided where an allergy is significant or requires particular arrangements.
- 5.4 Medical information will be shared only with those who reasonably need it to protect the individual and provide appropriate support.
- 5.5 Students must inform the college promptly if:
 - They develop a new or suspected allergy
 - Their symptoms or level of risk change
 - Their prescribed medication changes
 - Their Allergy Action Plan is updated
 - Their ability to manage their allergy independently changes
- 5.6 The college will not dismiss a reported or suspected allergy solely because a formal diagnosis has not yet been obtained. Interim arrangements will be based on the information available and the reasonably foreseeable risk.

6. Individual Healthcare Plans

- 6.1 An Individual Healthcare Plan will be prepared where a student's allergy requires arrangements additional to the college's general precautions.

- 6.2 This may include circumstances where:
- The student is at risk of anaphylaxis
 - The student has been prescribed an adrenaline device
 - Emergency medication is held by the college
 - Particular controls are needed to minimise exposure
 - Specific arrangements are required for practical work, visits, or off-site activities
 - The allergy has a significant effect on the student's education, attendance, or wellbeing
- 6.3 The student will be at the centre of developing and agreeing the plan. From the age of 16, a student is presumed capable of making informed decisions about their medical arrangements.
- 6.4 Parents or carers may be involved with the student's agreement, or where capacity, safeguarding, or another legal consideration makes their involvement necessary.
- 6.5 The plan will identify:
- The allergy and known triggers
 - Usual symptoms and signs of an allergic reaction
 - The student's prescribed medication
 - Where the medication will be kept
 - The student's ability to self-manage
 - Measures required to reduce the risk of exposure
 - Actions to take during an allergic reaction
 - Arrangements for practical activities and off-site visits
 - Relevant responsibilities
 - Emergency contact information
 - Any training required for staff or teachers
- 6.6 Where a student has been prescribed adrenaline or requires emergency allergy arrangements, the student should provide a current Allergy Action Plan completed or authorised by an appropriate healthcare professional. This will be attached to the Individual Healthcare Plan.
- 6.7 Individual Healthcare Plans will be reviewed at least annually and whenever:
- The student's needs or circumstances change
 - Medication or medical advice changes
 - A serious incident or significant near miss occurs
 - Existing arrangements are found to be ineffective

7. Medication and Adrenaline Devices

- 7.1 Students who have been prescribed adrenaline should normally carry both prescribed devices with them at all times, including while travelling to and from college and participating in off-site activities.
- 7.2 A student must not knowingly attend college without access to their prescribed emergency medication.
- 7.3 Where a student cannot safely or reliably carry their medication, alternative arrangements will be agreed and recorded in their Individual Healthcare Plan.

- 7.4 Named adrenaline devices held by the college will be:
- Stored in the recovery room
 - Kept in a clearly labelled container bearing the student's name
 - Stored with the student's Allergy Action Plan
 - Kept at room temperature
 - Protected from direct sunlight and extremes of temperature
 - Immediately accessible to staff and teachers
 - Capable of being brought to the individual within five minutes
 - Checked when received, termly, and before relevant off-site activities
- 7.5 Emergency medication must not be locked away or stored where access depends upon the presence of a particular person.
- 7.6 The student is responsible for supplying replacement medication before its expiry date. The Administrative Manager will alert the student when college-held medication is approaching its expiry date.
- 7.7 Westminster Tutors does not hold unallocated spare adrenaline devices. The legal arrangements allowing schools to purchase spare adrenaline auto-injectors without a prescription do not currently extend to further education colleges.
- 7.8 Any antihistamine required by a student must be supplied for that named student and used according to their medical instructions or Allergy Action Plan. Antihistamines must never be used instead of adrenaline or delay the administration of adrenaline where anaphylaxis is suspected.
- 7.9 Students prescribed asthma inhalers should carry their inhalers with them. Westminster Tutors does not hold an unallocated emergency salbutamol inhaler.

8. Staff Training

- 8.1 From September 2026, all staff and teachers will complete the EduCare Understanding Anaphylaxis course as part of their induction.
- 8.2 The full course will be repeated at least every three years.
- 8.3 All staff and teachers will receive a recorded allergy awareness and emergency response refresher during the September INSET each year. The annual refresher will cover:
- Common allergies and triggers
 - The difference between allergy, coeliac disease, and food intolerance
 - Recognition of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis
 - The importance of immediate action
 - How to summon emergency assistance
 - The safe positioning of someone experiencing anaphylaxis
 - How to locate and administer prescribed adrenaline
 - The location and use of Individual Healthcare Plans and Allergy Action Plans
 - Staff responsibilities for reducing exposure to known allergens
 - Reporting incidents and significant near misses
 - Relevant changes to college arrangements or official guidance

- 8.4 The Principal and administrative team will maintain appropriate first aid training, including recognition of anaphylaxis and the use of adrenaline auto-injectors.
- 8.5 Where a student joins with a prescribed adrenaline device, appropriate staff and teachers will receive additional instruction specific to that device and the student's emergency arrangements.
- 8.6 Temporary or cover staff supervising students will be provided with relevant allergy information and emergency instructions.

9. Allergy-Aware Environment

- 9.1 Westminster Tutors is an allergy-aware and nut-aware college. It does not describe or guarantee the premises as completely allergen-free or nut-free.
- 9.2 Students, staff, teachers, and visitors must not knowingly bring nuts or products listing peanuts or tree nuts as an ingredient onto the premises.
- 9.3 The college recognises that:
- Nuts are only one group of allergens capable of causing serious reactions
 - Any food can potentially cause an allergic reaction
 - Products may contain traces of allergens through manufacturing or cross-contact
 - "May contain" labelling makes it impossible to guarantee a completely nut-free environment
 - Individual risk management and effective emergency arrangements remain essential
- 9.4 Other allergens will be managed according to the needs of identified individuals and the risks associated with particular activities.
- 9.5 Deliberately or recklessly exposing another person to a known allergen will be treated as a serious safety and disciplinary matter.

10. Food and Drink

- 10.1 Westminster Tutors does not routinely prepare, sell, or serve meals to students.
- 10.2 The college may provide packaged food and drink during meetings, celebrations or other occasional events.
- 10.3 Before food or drink is purchased or served, the Principal or Administrative Manager will check available ingredient and allergen information against the known allergies of those attending, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 10.4 Packaging and allergen information will be retained or made available while the food or drink is being served.
- 10.5 Unlabelled food will not be provided to a person with a known food allergy unless reliable allergen information has been obtained and the individual is satisfied that it is suitable.
- 10.6 The college cannot guarantee that externally manufactured food is free from cross-contact with allergens. Precautionary statements, including "may contain", will be taken into account alongside the individual's medical advice and own judgement.

- 10.7 Students aged 16 and over are expected to take appropriate responsibility for checking food and drink and deciding whether it is safe for them to consume.
- 10.8 Shared surfaces and eating areas will be cleaned routinely after food is consumed. Soap and water will be available for handwashing.

11. Lessons and Practical Activities

- 11.1 Staff and teachers planning activities must consider whether materials, equipment, food, chemicals, biological materials, animals, or other substances could expose an individual to a known allergen.
- 11.2 Known allergies will be considered through the relevant lesson or activity risk assessment.
- 11.3 Potential sources of exposure may include:
- Food used in lessons or demonstrations
 - Latex gloves, balloons, or other latex products
 - Chemicals and cleaning products
 - Biological materials
 - Plants, pollen, or seeds
 - Animals or animal-derived materials
 - Insect stings
 - Shared equipment or instruments
 - Art materials, adhesives, and paints
- 11.4 Westminster Tutors does not routinely purchase latex gloves, but latex products, including balloons, may be used in science activities. The college is therefore not a latex-free environment.
- 11.5 Where a known latex or other contact allergy exists, staff will use suitable alternatives where reasonably practicable and record any necessary controls in the individual's plan and the relevant risk assessment.
- 11.6 A student will not be excluded unnecessarily from a lesson or activity because of an allergy. Reasonable alternative materials or arrangements will be used wherever practicable.

12. Off-Site Visits and Activities

- 12.1 Known allergies and medical needs will be considered when planning and risk assessing off-site visits, sports, practical work, social events, and other college activities.
- 12.2 Arrangements will be proportionate to the individual's needs and recorded in the visit risk assessment or Individual Healthcare Plan.
- 12.3 Before departure, the trip leader must confirm that a student at risk of anaphylaxis has both prescribed adrenaline devices with them.

- 12.4 The trip leader must also confirm that:
- Relevant staff know about the student's allergy
 - The student's Allergy Action Plan is accessible
 - Emergency contact information is available
 - Any food arrangements have been checked
 - Staff know how to contact local emergency services
 - The student's medication will remain readily accessible throughout the activity
- 12.5 A student must not be separated from their emergency medication or required to store it where it cannot be accessed promptly.
- 12.6 Allergy risks will be managed in a way that enables the student to participate as fully as reasonably possible.

13. Responding to an Allergic Reaction

Mild or moderate allergic reaction

- 13.1 Symptoms may include:
- Swelling of the lips, face, or eyes
 - Itching or tingling in the mouth
 - Hives or an itchy rash
 - Abdominal pain, nausea, or vomiting
 - Sneezing or nasal symptoms
 - A sudden change in behaviour or level of distress
- 13.2 Staff must:
- Stay with the person
 - Follow their Allergy Action Plan, where available
 - Locate their emergency medication
 - Help them take their prescribed antihistamine where directed
 - Monitor them closely for signs of deterioration
 - Contact their emergency contact where appropriate
 - Seek medical advice where necessary
- 13.3 The person must not be left alone or sent unaccompanied to the recovery room.

Suspected anaphylaxis

- 13.4 Anaphylaxis should be suspected where an allergic reaction affects the airway, breathing, or circulation.
- 13.5 If in doubt, staff should treat the reaction as anaphylaxis.

- 13.6 Staff must:
- Administer the person's prescribed adrenaline immediately, if available.
 - Call 999 immediately and state clearly that the person is experiencing anaphylaxis.
 - Bring the medication and assistance to the person. Do not make them walk to the recovery room or another location.
 - Lie the person flat with their legs raised. If breathing is difficult, allow them to sit with their legs extended. Do not allow them to stand or walk, even if they appear to improve.
 - Stay with the person and monitor their breathing and responsiveness.
 - Administer the second prescribed adrenaline device if symptoms have not improved after five minutes.
 - Begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation if the person becomes unresponsive and is not breathing normally.
 - Arrange for someone to meet and direct the ambulance.
 - Contact the person's emergency contact without delaying treatment.
 - Give the used adrenaline device to the ambulance crew for safe disposal.
- 13.7 Emergency services must always be called following suspected anaphylaxis or the administration of adrenaline.
- 13.8 A person who has received adrenaline must be assessed in hospital, even if their symptoms appear to have resolved.

14. Incidents and Near Misses

- 14.1 An allergy-related serious incident includes an event in which a student, member of staff, teacher, or visitor is harmed or placed at immediate and significant risk of harm.
- 14.2 A significant near miss is an event that does not result in harm but could reasonably have resulted in a serious allergic reaction.
- 14.3 All allergic reactions, suspected anaphylaxis incidents, medication errors, and significant near misses must be recorded using the college's incident form.
- 14.4 The record should include:
- The date, time, and location
 - The circumstances and suspected allergen
 - The symptoms observed
 - The action taken
 - Any medication administered, including the time and person administering it
 - Whether emergency services attended
 - Who was notified
 - Any immediate action taken to prevent recurrence

- 14.5 The Principal will review the incident and determine whether changes are required to:
- The individual's risk assessment
 - The Individual Healthcare Plan
 - The Allergy Action Plan
 - Staff training
 - Working practices
 - This policy
 - Other relevant college procedures
- 14.6 The review will focus on identifying lessons and improving safety, while addressing any negligent, reckless, or deliberate conduct separately where appropriate.

15. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

- 15.1 Information about an individual's allergy is health information and will be handled appropriately and confidentially.
- 15.2 Relevant information may be shared with staff, teachers, trip leaders, first aiders, emergency services, and others who reasonably need it to protect the individual.
- 15.3 The college will balance confidentiality with the need to ensure that those responsible for an individual understand the risks and emergency arrangements.
- 15.4 Information will not be displayed or shared more widely than is reasonably necessary.

16. Wellbeing, Inclusion, and Conduct

- 16.1 The college recognises that living with an allergy can cause anxiety and affect an individual's confidence, participation, and wellbeing.
- 16.2 Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that individuals with allergies can participate fully in college life without unnecessary exclusion or embarrassment.
- 16.3 The college will listen to the individual's views and avoid assuming that all people with the same allergy require identical arrangements.
- 16.4 No person will be penalised, mocked, threatened, excluded, or placed at unnecessary risk because of an allergy.

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Audience	
Audience	Principal, college staff and teachers, students, visitors, and parents

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