

Stronger protections for children with allergies in school

4.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Life-saving allergy pens must be stocked by schools for the first time under new plans announced today.

The move will also see compulsory training for teachers and a requirement for each school to have a dedicated allergy policy.

As well as saving lives, the new measures will help children stay in school, with 500,000 days of learning lost due to allergy-related illness or medical appointments in the last year alone.

The plans come after the government listened to families and campaigners who have fought for change — including Helen Blythe, mother of Benedict Blythe, who tragically lost his life to an allergic reaction at school, and the National Allergy Strategy Group.

Replacing previous non-statutory advice, the new guidance on supporting children and young people with medical conditions and allergies is now open for consultation, ahead of coming into force in September 2026.

The new statutory requirements mean for the first time schools must:

- Stock “spare” adrenaline auto-injectors for use in emergency situations
- Provide allergy awareness training for all staff — covering recognition of symptoms, emergency response and the use of adrenaline devices — alongside improved incident recording and lessons learnt processes
- Have a comprehensive policy for supporting children with medical conditions, including Individual Healthcare Plans to record specific arrangements for individuals like an allergy management plan

Schools up and down the country are already undertaking the necessary training to keep children safe. This guidance will standardise practise, pointing to a collection of reliable resources for teachers to use, and work in parallel to the government’s open call to businesses to support with costs such as adrenaline auto-injectors.

Olivia Bailey, Minister for Early Education said:

No parent should have to send their child to school worried that a life-threatening allergic reaction won’t be handled swiftly.

We have listened to the families and organisations who have campaigned tirelessly on this issue, and we are acting.

These new requirements will give parents the confidence that every school has the training, the plans and the equipment in place to keep their child safe.

This works hand in hand with wider work to reform the school food system, such as revising the

school food standards and expanding free school meals to an additional 500,000 children this September.

Danielle Thackray, School Business Manager at Walbottle Village Primary School in Newcastle said:

Investing in allergy training has been absolutely necessary for our school. We have eight children with allergies, including one severe case, and while we always had healthcare plans in place, the structured training, emergency drills and support with policies have taken our procedures to the next level.

For an annual cost, every member of staff is trained as soon as they join, we run scenario drills, and we've strengthened everything from lunchtime checks to school trip risk assessments — it gives our teachers real confidence in keeping children safe.

The AAIs and training are an expense, but they are worth every penny for the peace of mind they give parents and staff, knowing we are fully prepared should the worst happen.

Wider changes to the guidance include new condition-specific content covering a range of common and significant conditions. As epilepsy is one of the most common long-term conditions for children, Individual Healthcare Plans should cover seizure types and what to do in an emergency. And as type 1 and 2 diabetes cases in children are rising, schools must support children and young people to use continuous glucose monitors and insulin pumps — including via mobile phone apps.

Dr Zubir Ahmed, Health Innovation and Safety Minister, said:

Every child deserves to feel safe and supported at school, regardless of their medical needs.

Allergies and other conditions affect hundreds of thousands of children across England, and it is right that we give schools the tools, training and clear guidance they need to respond confidently in an emergency.

When health and education work together like this, it can make a real, lasting difference for children and their families.

Helen Blythe and Peter Blythe, parents of Benedict Blythe and founders of the Benedict Blythe Foundation, said:

For four years, we have campaigned for Benedict's Law so that no child faces the preventable gaps in allergy safety that cost our five-year-old son his life.

We are grateful the Government has listened, and that from September schools will be required to have allergy pens, training and policies in place — protections that were not there when Benedict joined his school.

Knowing that future children will enter a system far safer than the one he did is a powerful and lasting legacy for our son Benedict.

Tanya Ednan-Laperouse OBE, founder of The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation, the UK's food allergy charity, whose daughter Natasha died aged 15 from a food allergic reaction, said:

I am deeply grateful that the Government is taking positive action to keep children with food allergies safe at school. Ensuring Natasha's wellbeing was always our top priority as parents, and it is what motivated us to set up Allergy School, allergy awareness resources and training for schools.

Allergy School has already trained more than 20,000 educators, and we are ready to work with the Government and schools to create safer, more inclusive environments for children with food allergies through the implementation of Benedict's Law.

We welcome this statutory guidance, and the confidence it can bring to schools, teachers, pupils, and parents to ensure that children with food allergies are safe and included at school.

Anthony Walker, Chair of Health Conditions in Schools Alliance said:

This draft guidance presents a much-needed opportunity to guarantee the support that pupils with health conditions should receive through strengthened use of medical conditions policies and Individual Healthcare Plans.

All too often, our members hear of how inconsistent implementation of the existing duties results in a lack of clarity for families and education staff about how to identify and manage medical needs effectively, unfairly preventing many children and young people from flourishing in education and accessing opportunities like school trips and events.

These resources are key to understanding the impact of conditions and providing the right personalised support so children and young people with health conditions are kept safe and fully included in education, with the same opportunities for learning, socialising, future aspirations, and personal development as their peers.

Catherine Hodder, Head of Voice, Policy and Influencing at Young Epilepsy said:

Updated and practical guidance is a welcome step towards making sure children with epilepsy are safe and included in education. Because epilepsy affects every young person differently, we know Individual Healthcare Plans are vital in helping staff understand their needs and respond appropriately.

We're pleased to see more clarity in the statutory guidance around which children should have Individual Healthcare Plans, recognising how essential they are.

We welcome the opportunity we've had to feed into the draft guidance, and we're pleased to see it broadened to include early years settings and colleges.

We hope this review continues to move us closer to a future where all education settings consistently recognise and support long-term health conditions, so no young person's epilepsy is misunderstood or overlooked. We urge young people and families to share

their views in the consultation.

Notes to Editors

- The previous non-statutory advice on allergy management in schools can be viewed [HERE](#).
- Data referenced from Benedict Blythe Foundation – 2024.
- The Supporting children and young people with Medical Conditions and Allergy guidance is open for consultation for 8 weeks.
- The condoc can be found [HERE](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/stronger-protections-for-children-with-allergies-in-school>