**Allergy Policy**

What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction- the extreme end of the allergic reaction. The whole body is affected, often within minutes of exposure to the allergen but sometimes occurs after several hours. Peanut and nut allergies are frequently severe and for that reason have received widespread publicity. Common causes of anaphylaxis may also include other foods, insect stings, latex, and drugs, but on rare occasions there may be no obvious trigger.

What are the symptoms?

* Generalised flushing of the skin
* Nettle rash (hives) anywhere on the body
* Sense of impending doom
* Difficulty in swallowing or speaking
* Alterations in heartbeat
* Severe asthma
* Abdominal pains, nausea, and vomiting
* Sudden feeling of weakness (drop in blood pressure)
* Collapse and unconsciousness.

Nobody would necessarily experience all these symptoms.

It is important for staff and parents/carers to draw up a Health Care Plan before the child starts nursery. This will ensure that the child receives proper care and support and will help allay any concerns. It is also important to fill in this form if you are a member of staff to enable other staff members to be aware of your needs.

A Health care plan will consist of the following:

1. Child’s details/staff member details
2. Contact details
3. Medication
4. Staff training
5. Precautionary measures
6. Consent and agreement.

Childs Details

* These would include name, address, date of birth and a brief account of allergy and symptoms and who to contact in an emergency.

Contact details

* These would include a parent’s name and telephone and a second contact name and telephone number.

Medication

* The medication often prescribed for a child at risk of anaphylaxis is injected adrenaline (administered by use of the EpiPen or AnaPen); oral antihistamines may also be prescribed.
* It is important that parents/carers explain what medication their child has been prescribed, what symptoms may occur and when and how to use the injection.
* All staff will know where the medication is stored, and this will be out of the reach of the other children but readily accessible
* All medication will need to be clearly labelled with the child’s name and instructions for use.
* Responsibility for ensuring the medication is “in date” rests with parent/carer.

Staff Training

* At least one member of staff on duty will be trained to administer medication for the treatment of anaphylaxis, which will be arranged either through the health visitor, local GP or the child’s consultant

Precautionary measures

This note applies to children who attend nursery for lunch.

* We feel that young children are less able to avoid foods that may harm them, we urge all parents to take extra steps to protect young allergic children. If a severe allergic reaction is likely, and it is possible, the product would be banned from nursery. Everyone would be made aware that the product is not to be brought into nursery premises. This may include limiting major allergens at lunch time e.g., peanut and nut products.
* All staff members will be alerted to all symptoms and take them seriously.
* Staff are aware of the common allergens and fact files on each are held at nursery e.g., egg, fish, milk/diary, peanuts, sesame, shellfish, and tree nuts. Non-food causes include wasp or bee stings, natural latex (rubber).
* Baby Bears Day Care will provide snacks that are suitable for children with food allergies.
* Diligence would be ongoing by staff members. For example, it would include the avoidance of nut cereal packets for junk modelling, reading labels carefully on all food packaging looking for hidden allergens, labelling cups and containers carefully and checking cooking ingredients.
* Extra care would be taken to ensure that other members of staff (Volunteers) are briefed about the child’s allergy and precautionary measures required. This would also apply to new members of staff joining the team.

Consent and agreement

Parents/carers must give written consent for staff to take responsibility for administering medication in the unlikely event of an allergic reaction occurring.

Emergency procedure

* This should be drawn up by the parents, with input from medical professionals such as an allergy consultant and with the nursery’s approval.
* The written procedure should be kept with the records on the premises and a copy attached to the medication pack, so it is readily accessible
* All staff will be familiar with the procedure, which would include assessment of symptoms, administration of medication as appropriate and contact numbers.

For more information log onto www.anaphylaxis.org.uk