

ALLERGY POLICY

Reviewed: September 2026
Next Review Date: September 2027

1. Policy Statement

Simply Sensory Training and Support is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment for all pupils and staff affected by allergies.

As an alternative provision provider, Simply Sensory Training and Support recognises that support may take place across a range of environments, including:

- alternative provision premises;
- a pupil's family home;
- community venues;
- public spaces;
- educational and recreational settings;
- during travel and transitions between locations; and
- during educational, sensory, therapeutic and enrichment activities.

This creates particular responsibilities for staff, as the organisation may not have direct control over the environment in which support is delivered.

The organisation will take reasonable and proportionate steps to identify and reduce allergy-related risks, ensure staff are appropriately informed and prepared, and respond promptly and appropriately to suspected allergic reactions.

The safety of pupils and staff will be considered alongside the need to provide accessible, individualised and meaningful alternative provision.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Protect pupils, staff and other individuals from avoidable exposure to known allergens.
2. Ensure known allergies are identified, recorded and appropriately communicated.
3. Ensure allergy-related risks are considered as part of individual risk assessments and support planning.
4. Provide clear procedures for responding to allergic reactions and suspected anaphylaxis.
5. Ensure emergency medication is appropriately managed where prescribed.
6. Support pupils and staff with allergies to participate safely in education and community activities.
7. Provide clear expectations for staff working in pupils' homes and community environments.
8. Ensure parents/carers, schools, commissioners and other relevant professionals are appropriately involved.
9. Ensure allergy arrangements are reviewed following incidents, changes in circumstances or new information.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Simply Sensory Training and Support staff, including:

- tutors;
- associates;
- volunteers;
- contractors;
- any other person working on behalf of the organisation.

It applies whenever staff are providing education, training, sensory support, care or other services commissioned or delivered by Simply Sensory Training and Support.

This includes provision delivered:

- at organisation premises;
- in a pupil's home;
- in public buildings;
- in schools or other educational settings;
- in community venues;
- outdoors;
- on educational visits and activities;
- during travel;
- in any other location where the organisation is responsible for the pupil.

4. Definition of Allergy and Anaphylaxis

An allergy occurs when the body's immune system reacts to a substance that is normally harmless.

The signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction can vary from child to child. However,there are common signs that you should look out for.

Signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction

A mild reaction can result in signs and symptoms such as:

● An itchy, tingling mouth.

● A mild tightness of the throat.

● A red, itchy rash (hives).

● Swelling of the lips, eyes or other parts of the face.

● Abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting.

Signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis include:

● Breathing difficulties.

● Difficulty swallowing, a swollen tongue

and/or a hoarse voice.

● A persistent cough and/or wheezing.

● Feeling persistently dizzy.

● Becoming pale, floppy or suddenly sleepy.

● Becoming unconscious and/or collapsing.

Staff must understand that anaphylaxis can develop rapidly and that a pupil may experience a severe reaction even if previous reactions have been mild or they have never had a reaction before.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Management

Management is responsible for ensuring that:

- this policy is implemented and reviewed;
- Complete yearly allergy questionnaires/consent forms with all parents/carers at the start of each academic year or as and when needed;
- allergy information is appropriately recorded;
- relevant risk assessments are completed;
- staff receive appropriate allergy awareness training;
- individual healthcare and allergy action plan completed and are available for staff working with the individual learner when required;
- emergency arrangements are established;
- staff understand their responsibilities when working with learners in their home or in the community and other settings;
- Incidents and any near misses and are recorded, investigated and reviewed;
- appropriate communication takes place with parents/carers, schools and other relevant professionals;
- appropriate action is taken where environmental risks cannot be adequately controlled.

Management will ensure that allergy considerations form part of the organisation's wider safeguarding, health and safety and individual risk-assessment arrangements.

5.2 Staff

Staff must:

- familiarise themselves with relevant allergy information before working with a pupil;
- follow individual allergy, healthcare plan and risk assessments;
- understand the location and use of prescribed emergency medication;
- take reasonable precautions to prevent allergen exposure;
- consider allergies before introducing food, sensory resources, cleaning products or other substances. Consider cross contamination risks;
- report changes in allergy information;
- report incidents and near misses;
- seek emergency assistance immediately where anaphylaxis is suspected;
- never knowingly expose a pupil or colleague to a known allergen;
- please note when prescribed, if AAI’s are not available the session can not take place and staff must cancel the session and inform parents/carers/management

Staff must not assume that a home or community environment is safe simply because it is familiar.

5.3 Parents and Carers

Parents/carers should provide complete and accurate information regarding a pupil's allergies, including:

- known allergens;
- previous reactions;
- known symptoms;
- prescribed medication;
- emergency procedures;
- relevant medical advice;
- changes in allergy status;
- emergency contact information;
- allergy action plan from a medical professional.

Parents/carers should ensure that prescribed emergency medication provided for use by their child is available, in date and appropriately stored. Parents will be informed that if AAI's are prescribed but not available then the session can not take place

Parents/carers must inform Simply Sensory promptly of any significant change.

5.4 Pupils

Where appropriate to their age, understanding and individual needs, pupils will be supported to:

- understand their allergy;
- recognise their own symptoms;
- avoid known allergens;
- communicate concerns to staff;
- understand when and how to seek help;
- participate in the development of their individual support arrangements.

Staff must not rely solely on a pupil recognising or reporting their own symptoms.

6. Allergy Information and Individual Planning

Before a pupil begins alternative provision, relevant allergy information should be obtained through parents/carers by completing allergy questionnaires/consent form.

Where a known allergy presents, an Individual Allergy Action Plan /Healthcare Plan should be completed

The plan should include, where applicable:

- the allergen;
- known triggers;
- previous reaction history;
- symptoms;
- emergency medication;
- medication storage arrangements;
- instructions for emergency treatment;
- emergency contact details;
- arrangements for activities outside the home;
- arrangements for travel;
- specific sensory or food-related restrictions;
- relevant professional advice;
- any additional reasonable adjustments.

Allergy information must be handled sensitively and confidentially and shared only with those who need the information to safeguard the pupil.

7. Individual Risk Assessment

Allergy-related risks should be incorporated into the pupil's individual risk assessment where appropriate.

The assessment should consider:

- the nature and severity of the allergy;
- the likelihood of exposure;
- the environments in which support takes place;
- the pupil's age, communication and independence;
- sensory activities;
- food and drink;
- personal care requirements where applicable;
- travel arrangements;
- community activities;
- access to emergency medical assistance;
- availability and accessibility of emergency medication;
- the knowledge and training of accompanying staff;
- any risks associated with the pupil's home environment.

Risk assessments must be proportionate and should be reviewed when circumstances change.

8. Working in the Pupil's Home

Simply Sensory recognises that staff working in a pupil's home may have limited control over the environment.

Before or during home-based provision, staff should consider:

- known allergens within the home;
- food preparation and eating areas;
- pets and animal allergens;
- cleaning products;
- fragrances and personal care products;
- sensory materials;
- cross contamination
- food stored or prepared in the home;
- other family members' activities;
- ventilation;
- smoking or vaping where relevant to health and safety;
- emergency access to the property; and
- the accessibility of the pupil's emergency medication.

Parents/carers remain responsible for the general home environment. However, staff have a responsibility to identify and report any significant allergy-related risk that may affect the safe delivery of provision.

Where a significant risk cannot be adequately controlled, staff should contact management before continuing the activity.

Please note when prescribed, if AAI’s are not available the session can not take place.

Staff should not undertake activities involving known allergens in the home simply because the allergen is routinely present there.

For example, where a pupil has a known food allergy, staff should not introduce or handle that food as part of an activity unless its use has been specifically assessed as safe.

10. Community-Based Provision

Alternative provision may involve supporting pupils in locations where Simply Sensory has limited or no control over the environment.

Examples include:

- parks;
- leisure centres;

- libraries;
- museums;
- cafés and restaurants;
- shops;
- community centres;
- farms and animal settings;
- sports facilities;
- public transport;
- outdoor spaces;
- other educational or recreational venues.

Before a community activity, staff should consider:

- known allergens likely to be encountered;
- the suitability of the venue;
- food and drink arrangements;
- animal exposure;
- environmental allergens;
- access to emergency medical assistance;
- mobile telephone access;
- emergency medication;
- staff-to-pupil arrangements;
- transport arrangements;
- whether the pupil's individual risk assessment requires additional controls;
- transporting and location of AAI's
- Inform community venues of allergies if appropriate. For example a cafe;
- When out in the community or on an educational visit, consider where the nearest A&E is located and how long it would take an ambulance to come if emergency help was needed;
- Consider if there is adequate phone signal so that emergency services can be contacted.

Where a venue presents an unacceptable or inadequately controlled allergy risk, an alternative venue or activity should be considered. Discuss these options with the young person and parents/carers to adapt the plan accordingly.

11. Sensory Activities

Because Simply Sensory specialises in delivering a multi-sensory education and activities, particular care must be taken when selecting sensory resources.

Before an activity, staff should consider whether resources may contain or have been exposed to:

- food allergens;
- nuts or nut-derived ingredients;
- dairy;

- egg;
- gluten-containing ingredients;
- soya;
- sesame;
- animal-derived materials;
- latex;
- fragrances or essential oils;
- cleaning chemicals;
- cosmetics;
- other substances known to cause a reaction for the individual pupil.

Where a product contains an allergen or its ingredients cannot be established, staff should use an alternative resource where appropriate.

Staff should also consider whether a resource could result in:

- skin contact;
- inhalation;
- accidental ingestion;
- transfer to the mouth or eyes; or
- contamination of another pupil's equipment.

Sensory activities must be planned in accordance with the pupil's individual needs and risk assessment.

12. Food-Based Activities

Food should only be used as part of an educational or sensory activity where its use has been appropriately risk assessed.

Staff must:

- check relevant allergy information;
- check ingredients and allergen information;
- consider cross-contamination;
- follow the pupil's individual action and healthcare plan;
- ensure appropriate hygiene;
- prevent pupils from sharing food where this presents a risk;
- use alternatives where necessary.

Where there is uncertainty about whether a food product is safe, it must not be used.

Staff should not rely solely on a product being labelled "may contain" or "free from" without considering the specific requirements of the pupil and available medical advice. Labels should be checked every time, even if the product has been used before in case the recipe or manufacturing process has changed.

13. Allergens in Community Venues

Where a community venue provides food, activities involving animals, sensory experiences or other potential allergens, staff should consider contacting the venue in advance where appropriate.

However, staff must recognise that information provided by a third party cannot completely eliminate the risk of accidental exposure.

The final decision to participate should take account of the pupil's individual risk assessment, the severity of their allergy and a discussion with parents/carers and the young person.

14. Emergency Medication

Where a pupil or staff member has prescribed emergency medication, including an adrenaline auto-injector (AAI), staff must know:

- what medication has been prescribed;
- where it is stored;
- how it can be accessed;
- the circumstances in which it should be administered;
- who is trained or authorised to administer it;
- what emergency procedure must be followed.

Emergency medication must accompany the pupil or member of staff during relevant community activities and should remain readily accessible.

It must not be left in an inaccessible location, such as a locked vehicle or unattended bag.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that medication supplied for their child is available and within its expiry date, while staff should raise concerns where medication is missing or appears unsuitable for use.

Please note when prescribed, if AAI’s are not available the session can not take place.

15. Suspected Anaphylaxis – Emergency Procedure

If a pupil or member of staff is suspected of experiencing anaphylaxis:

1. Administer adrenaline without delay

Where an adrenaline auto-injector has been prescribed and the individual is experiencing symptoms consistent with anaphylaxis, staff should follow the individual's emergency action plan and administer the AAI in accordance with their training and current clinical guidance.

2. Call 999/112

Request an ambulance and clearly state:

"Suspected anaphylaxis."

Provide the location and any access information required, particularly when working in a private home or unfamiliar community venue.

3. Stay with the individual

The individual should not be left alone.

Staff should follow emergency operator instructions.

4. Use a second AAI where required

Where symptoms have not improved within 5 minutes or return in the form of a Biphasic Anaphylaxis a second AAI should be administered in accordance with the Emergency Action plan.

5. Position appropriately

The individual should be kept in an appropriate position in accordance with emergency medical advice and their symptoms. They should not be allowed to stand or walk unnecessarily.

6. CPR if necessary

If the individual becomes unresponsive and is not breathing normally, staff should begin CPR and follow the emergency operator's instructions.

7. Notify relevant people

Parents/carers and management should be informed as soon as practicable, without delaying emergency treatment.

16. Emergency Response When Working in the Home

When working in a pupil's home, staff should ensure that they know:

- the full address;
- how emergency services can access the property;
- where the pupil's emergency medication is located;
- which parent/carer or adult is present;
- how to summon assistance;
- where appropriate, any specific access arrangements.

In an emergency, staff must prioritise the pupil's immediate safety and contact emergency services without waiting for parental permission.

17. Emergency Response in the Community

When working away from the pupil's home, staff should ensure that:

- a charged mobile telephone is available;
- emergency medication is immediately accessible;
- staff know the exact location or address of the venue;
- staff can provide clear directions to emergency services;
- emergency contact information is available; and
- the pupil is not left unsupervised.

Where appropriate, staff should identify the nearest suitable emergency medical facility before undertaking higher-risk activities.

18. Travel and Transport

Allergy arrangements must be considered when pupils travel as part of alternative provision:

- emergency medication must travel with the pupil;
- staff must know where medication is stored;
- food and drink arrangements must be considered;
- vehicles should be kept appropriately clean;
- staff should consider potential allergen exposure within shared transport;

- emergency contact details should be available;
- the staff should know what to do in an emergency.

Staff must not leave a pupil unattended in a vehicle during an emergency.

19. Communication With Schools and Other Professionals

Where Simply Sensory is providing alternative provision commissioned or arranged by another school or organisation, appropriate allergy information should be shared in accordance with safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection requirements.

This may include information received from:

- the referring school;
- parents/carers;
- healthcare professionals;
- local authorities;
- other education providers; or
- relevant external professionals.

Any uncertainty about allergy information should be escalated rather than assumed.

20. Staff Allergies

Staff members are encouraged to inform management of allergies that may affect their ability to work safely.

Where necessary, an individual workplace risk assessment will be undertaken.

The organisation will consider reasonable measures to support staff with allergies, including risks arising from:

- sensory resources;
- food;
- cleaning products;
- fragrances;
- animals;
- community environments;
- working in private homes.

Staff allergy information will be handled confidentially.

21. Training and Competence

All staff will receive relevant allergy and anaphylaxis training annually. However, where a learner has a known allergy, the member of staff supporting them on a one-to-one basis will receive specific training in the administration of adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs). They will also be fully familiar with the learner's Allergy Action Plan and Healthcare Plan, ensuring they understand the learner's individual needs and know exactly what action to take in the event of an allergic reaction or anaphylactic emergency.

Training will cover:

- allergy awareness;
- recognising allergic reactions;
- recognising anaphylaxis;
- emergency procedures;
- use of adrenaline auto-injectors where relevant;
- individual pupil allergy action plans;
- individual health care plans
- safe use of sensory resources;
- community-based risk assessment;
- procedures for working safely in pupils' homes.

Staff must not undertake activities for which they have not received appropriate information, instruction or training where training is necessary for safe practice.

22. Incidents, Near Misses and Reporting

Any of the following must be reported to management:

- an allergic reaction;
- suspected anaphylaxis;
- administration of emergency medication;
- accidental exposure to a known allergen;
- failure to have required emergency medication available and a session has had to be cancelled;
- a significant allergy-related near miss;
- any situation in which staff believe allergy controls were inadequate.

Following an incident, management will review:

- the circumstances;
- the response;
- the effectiveness of existing controls;
- the individual risk assessment;
- the allergy action & healthcare plan;
- staff training;

- communication arrangements;
- whether changes are required to future provision.

23. Safeguarding Considerations

Allergy management forms part of the organisation's wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Staff must raise concerns where:

- essential medical information has not been provided;
- prescribed emergency medication is repeatedly unavailable;
- a significant allergy-related risk is not being appropriately managed;
- a pupil is knowingly exposed to a serious allergen;
- staff are prevented from taking reasonable emergency action;
- the home or community environment presents a serious and unmanaged risk to the pupil.

Any safeguarding concern must be managed in accordance with the organisation's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

24. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information about a person's health and allergies is confidential.

Information will be:

- recorded accurately;
- stored securely;
- shared with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis;
- handled in accordance with applicable data protection requirements; and
- reviewed to ensure it remains accurate and necessary.

Confidentiality must not prevent staff from sharing essential information where this is necessary to protect a pupil or staff member from serious harm.

25. Equality and Inclusion

Simply Sensory Training and Support is committed to ensuring that allergies do not unnecessarily prevent pupils from accessing education, sensory support or community experiences.

The organisation will consider reasonable adjustments and alternative activities where necessary.

The aim is to manage risk proportionately while enabling pupils to participate fully in their education and development.

Pupils should not be unnecessarily excluded from activities solely because they have an allergy where the risk can be appropriately managed.

26. Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where necessary.

The policy will be reviewed following:

- a serious allergic reaction;
- an anaphylaxis incident;
- a significant near miss;
- changes to relevant legislation or government guidance;
- changes to clinical guidance;
- changes to the organisation's provision;
- introduction of new sensory activities or resources; or
- concerns raised by pupils, parents/carers, staff or commissioning organisations.

27. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- First Aid Policy;
- Individual Risk Assessment procedures;
- Educational Visits and Community Activities procedures;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Equality and Diversity Policy;
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy;
- Lone Working Policy.

Policy effective from: September 2026

Review date: September 2027