Food Allergen Management Policy

Telford & Wrekin Council – Education and Commercial Catering

1. Policy Statement

Telford & Wrekin Education and Commercial Catering recognises that food allergies are a serious food safety hazard. Allergic reactions can cause severe illness or death. There is no cure for food allergies; the only prevention is strict avoidance of the allergen.

We are committed to complying with The Food Information Regulations and Natasha's Law, ensuring that accurate allergen information is available for all food served or sold.

2. Objectives

- Enable customers to make informed food choices.
- Identify and communicate the presence of the 14 major allergens.
- Manage and reduce the risk of cross-contamination.
- Maintain a robust allergen control process within our Food Safety Management System (FSMS).

3. Allergen Identification and Labelling

- All ingredients, including compound ingredients and processing aids, will be reviewed to identify allergens.
- For Pre-packed for Direct Sale (PPDS) items, full ingredient lists will be provided with allergens clearly highlighted.
- Allergen charts will be used and regularly updated to reflect any changes in ingredients or suppliers.
- Substituted brands must be checked for allergen content by the Catering Supervisor, and allergen charts updated accordingly.

4. The 14 Major Allergens

- Celery
- Cereals containing gluten (e.g., wheat, rye, barley, oats)
- Crustaceans
- Eggs
- Fish
- Lupin
- Milk
- Molluscs
- Mustard
- Nuts
- Peanuts
- Sesame seeds

- Soya
- Sulphur dioxide and Sulphites (above 10mg/kg or 10mg/L)

5. Standard Recipes and Menu Changes

- Standard recipes using ingredients from nominated suppliers will be used wherever possible.
- All standard recipes have undergone allergen analysis and are documented.
- If a Catering Supervisor alters a recipe, they must:
• Complete a new allergen matrix.
• Maintain a written record of the change on site.
• Notify Education Catering of the change.
• Ensure serving staff are informed of the updated allergen information.

6. Special Menu Items

- For centrally developed “Special” menu items, Education Catering will conduct the allergen analysis.
- All sites serving these items will be provided with the relevant allergen information.

7. Allergen Control Measures

As part of our FSMS, the following controls are in place to manage allergen risks:

Procurement and Delivery:
• Only accept deliveries with full ingredient labelling.
• Inspect goods on delivery and verify they match the order.
• Retain allergen labelling with each product (no decanting).
• Keep ingredient labels for all pre-packed foods.
• Check labels for any ingredient changes.

Storage and Preparation:

• Store allergen-containing products separately where possible.

- Ensure a full 2 Stage clean has taken Place and staff Have washed hands
• Use dedicated utensils and preparation areas to prevent cross-contamination.
• Clearly label all containers and storage areas.

Service:

• Ensure all staff can access and understand allergen charts.
• Label all PPDS food with full ingredients and highlighted allergens for non pre ordered food
• Respond accurately to customer allergen queries using verified allergen charts.

• All special diets should be checked against the pre agreed parent menu

•All special diets to be labelled correctly for that individual child

• The cashless till or Photos of the children will identify any child with a special dietary requirement

Some schools do use lanyards to identify those with a special diet

8. Training

- All Catering Supervisors and Assistants will receive in-house allergy control briefings.
- Staff must complete the online allergy training course: http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/english/register.aspx
- Supervisors and Team Leaders are responsible for cascading training to their teams.
- Training must be documented in staff records, with certificates held on site and in the central database.
- Level 3 Food Safety training includes allergen awareness.

9. Communication of Allergy Information

- All allergen information provided to customers must be:
  • Checked
  • Confirmed to be accurate
- Staff must never say “I don’t know” or suggest that “all food may contain allergens.”
- Providing inaccurate or incomplete allergen information is a legal offence.

10. Production Kitchens

- Each kitchen must have access to:
  • Allergen matrix charts
  • Recipe cards with declared products and allergens
- Any changes to recipes or ingredients must be documented and communicated to all relevant staff and sites.

11. Food Supplied to Other TWC Premises

- A clear notice (see Appendix A) will direct customers to speak to a member of staff regarding allergen information.

12. Preventing Cross-Contamination of Allergens

Cross-contamination occurs when allergens are unintentionally transferred from one food or surface to another. This can happen at any stage of food handling and poses a serious risk to individuals with food allergies. Education and Commercial Catering will implement the following measures to minimise this risk:

A. Delivery and Storage

- Inspect all deliveries to ensure packaging is intact and labelled with full ingredient and allergen information.
- Store allergen-containing products separately from allergen-free items, ideally in clearly labelled, sealed containers.
- Use dedicated shelving or segregated areas for high-risk allergens.
- Avoid decanting products from original packaging unless absolutely necessary, and retain original labels for reference.

B. Food Preparation

- Use separate equipment (e.g., chopping boards, knives, utensils) for allergen and non-allergen foods.
- Clean and Sanitise all surfaces and equipment thoroughly between tasks.
- Prepare allergen-free meals first, or in a separate area.
- Use dedicated fryers or cooking equipment for allergen-free items.
- Avoid using the same cloths or gloves for different food types without cleaning.

C. Staff Practices

- Wash hands thoroughly before and after handling allergenic ingredients.
- Change gloves and aprons when switching between allergen and non-allergen tasks.
- Avoid touching allergen-containing foods and then handling other items without proper hygiene steps.
- Train all staff to understand the importance of allergen control and the procedures in place.

D. Service and Display

- Clearly label all food items with allergen information.

- Clearly label all special diet foods with child's names.
- Use separate serving utensils for each dish.
- Supervise self-service areas to prevent mixing foods or utensils.
- Ensure staff are confident in answering allergen-related queries using up-to-date allergen charts.

E Communication and Documentation

- Document all allergen control procedures in the FSMS.
- Record any recipe or ingredient changes and update allergen charts immediately.
- Communicate changes to all relevant staff.
- Display notices encouraging customers to speak to staff about their dietary needs.

13. Parent Communication and Allergy Disclosure

- At the start of each academic year, **all schools are provided with standardised letters** to send to new parents and guardians.
  These letters request **full disclosure of any known food allergies or dietary requirements** for their children.
- **Upon receiving allergy information, Education Catering will arrange meetings with parents or guardians to:**
  - Discuss the child's specific dietary needs.
  - Agree on a **bespoke menu** that ensures safety and nutritional adequacy.
  - Confirm any necessary precautions or service adjustments.
- **The agreed menu and allergy details will be**:
  - Documented and stored securely.
  - Shared with relevant catering staff and supervisors.
  - Reflected in updated allergen charts and food preparation protocols.