Thallo
ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy

Thallo Education Ltd.

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Allergy Lead	May MacKay-Morris Provision Lead / Director
Deputy/Alternative contact	Relevant trained staff member on duty; named cover arrangements will be confirmed before service delivery.
Approved By	May MacKay-Morris - Director
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1. Aims

Thallo Alternative Provision is committed to reducing the risk of harm to young people and adults with allergies, food hypersensitivities and coeliac disease, and to ensuring that allergic reactions and anaphylaxis are recognised and responded to promptly.

This policy sets out how Thallo will identify individual needs, reduce avoidable exposure to allergens, manage food and practical activities safely, store and access prescribed emergency medication, prepare for off-site activities, train staff and respond to an allergic emergency.

Thallo aims to include young people with allergies safely in learning and everyday provision. Risk management will be individualised and proportionate rather than relying on blanket exclusions wherever a safe alternative is reasonably available.

2. Scope and guidance

This policy applies to staff, sessional practitioners, volunteers, contractors and young people participating in Thallo activities, including cooking, food preparation, growing, gardening, outdoor learning, creative activities and off-site visits.

Thallo is a non-school alternative provision. The Department for Education's 2026 statutory "Allergy Safety in Schools" guidance applies to maintained schools, pupil referral units and academies, including alternative provision academies. It is not presented in this policy as a statutory duty applying to Thallo's current non-school AP model. Thallo nevertheless uses the guidance as an important benchmark for safe practice, alongside applicable food-safety, medicines, health and safety and safeguarding requirements.

3. Understanding allergies and food hypersensitivity

An allergy is an immune-system reaction to an allergen. Reactions can range from mild symptoms to anaphylaxis, which is a medical emergency. Allergens may include foods, medicines, insect stings, latex, animals, pollen, plants and other environmental substances.

Food intolerance does not involve the same immune mechanism as food allergy, but can still cause significant symptoms and requires appropriate management. Coeliac disease is an autoimmune condition in which gluten causes damage to the small intestine; strict avoidance of gluten is required.

Food allergies and other hypersensitivities can vary considerably between individuals. Thallo will therefore rely on the young person's current individual information and healthcare plan rather than making assumptions based only on the name of an allergy.

4. The 14 regulated food allergens

Where food-allergen information requirements apply, the 14 regulated allergens are: celery; cereals containing gluten; crustaceans; eggs; fish; lupin; milk; molluscs; mustard; peanuts; sesame; soya; sulphur dioxide and sulphites above the regulatory threshold; and tree nuts specified in the relevant food-information rules.

Other foods can also cause serious allergic reactions. Thallo will record and manage all known individual allergens, not only the 14 allergens for which specific food-information rules apply.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Allergy Lead

- coordinate Thallo's allergy-safety arrangements and keep this policy under review;
- ensure relevant individual allergy information and emergency plans are available to staff who need them;
- coordinate appropriate staff information, training and emergency practice;
- support risk assessment for food activities, practical learning and off-site visits;
- ensure allergy incidents and near misses are recorded, reviewed and used to improve practice.

Staff and other adults

- know which young people they are responsible for who have allergies and understand the controls and emergency plan relevant to them;
- know how to summon emergency help and where the young person's emergency medication is kept;
- follow food, hygiene, cross-contact and activity controls;
- check allergy information before providing food or introducing ingredients, plants, animals, chemicals or other foreseeable allergens into an activity;
- report allergic reactions, near misses, medication problems and changes in a young person's needs promptly.

Parents and carers

- provide accurate, current information about known allergies, reactions, prescribed medication and healthcare advice;
- provide an up-to-date allergy action plan or other relevant healthcare plan where one is available;
- provide prescribed medication in its original labelled packaging and replace it before expiry;
- inform Thallo promptly of changes to diagnosis, treatment, medication or risk.

Young people

Young people will be supported, according to age, understanding and confidence, to understand their own allergy, communicate concerns, avoid known allergens and carry or use their own prescribed medication where this has been agreed as safe and appropriate. They will never be expected to carry sole responsibility for emergency management.

6. Identification and individual planning

Allergy and food-hypersensitivity information will be requested as part of referral and placement planning. Where a young person has a diagnosed or suspected allergy requiring active management, Thallo will obtain sufficient information before relevant activities begin.

An individual healthcare plan, allergy action plan and/or individual risk assessment will be used where appropriate. Planning will identify the allergen, known symptoms, avoidance measures, prescribed medication, where medication is kept, whether the young person self-carries, emergency actions, parent/carer contacts and any adjustments required for food, practical activities or trips.

Plans will be reviewed when information changes, following a reaction or significant near miss, and at appropriate placement-review points. Thallo will not wait for an annual review where a change affects safety.

7. Medication and adrenaline devices

Prescribed emergency medication must be readily accessible in an emergency, secure from inappropriate use, and stored in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the young person's healthcare plan. It must not be placed somewhere that makes emergency access unreasonably difficult.

Where a young person is assessed as able to carry their own adrenaline device or other emergency medication, this will be agreed and recorded. Staff must still know where the medication is and how to respond if the young person cannot self-administer.

Thallo will maintain an appropriate process for checking medication supplied to the provision, including identity, labelling, expiry and storage requirements. Parents/carers remain responsible for supplying replacement prescribed medication unless another arrangement has been formally agreed.

8. Spare adrenaline devices

Thallo does not currently hold stock or spare adrenaline auto-injectors. Young people who have been prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors must have their own prescribed devices available while attending Thallo, in accordance with their individual healthcare or allergy action plan.

Where a young person's prescribed adrenaline devices are held by Thallo rather than carried by the young person, they will be stored in a clearly identified and readily accessible location known to relevant staff, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the individual's plan. Emergency adrenaline will not be stored in a way that could delay access in an emergency.

9. Recognising and responding to anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis may involve airway, breathing or circulation problems and can progress rapidly. Warning signs can include swelling of the tongue or throat, difficulty swallowing or speaking, wheeze or persistent cough, breathing difficulty, dizziness, collapse, pallor, clamminess, confusion or loss of consciousness. A severe reaction may occur without a skin rash.

If anaphylaxis is suspected, staff must treat the situation as a medical emergency and follow the young person's current allergy action plan and the instructions for the prescribed adrenaline device.

- Administer the prescribed adrenaline promptly in accordance with the person's plan and device instructions. Do not delay adrenaline while waiting to see whether symptoms improve.
- Call 999 and state "anaphylaxis".
- Position the person safely. They should generally lie flat with legs raised. If breathing is difficult they may be supported to sit with legs outstretched. A person who is unconscious or pregnant should be positioned in accordance with current emergency guidance. Do not allow the person to stand or walk.
- If symptoms do not improve, follow the current action plan and emergency guidance regarding a second dose of adrenaline, using a second device where available.
- Do not leave the person alone. Monitor breathing and consciousness and be prepared to commence CPR if required.

- Contact the parent/carer as soon as practicable after emergency help has been summoned.
- Ensure the person is assessed by emergency medical services even if they appear to recover.

10. Food, cooking and practical learning

Because cooking and food preparation form part of Thallo's planned curriculum, allergen management will be built into activity planning rather than treated only as a mealtime issue.

- ingredient labels and recipes will be checked before use and substitutions will be re-checked;
- known individual allergens and the risk of cross-contact will be considered when planning activities;
- work surfaces, equipment and hands will be cleaned appropriately and separate utensils or preparation arrangements used where the risk assessment requires them;
- young people will not be asked to handle, taste or consume an ingredient that conflicts with their individual plan;
- food brought from home or obtained off site will be managed with the same attention to individual allergy information;
- where safe participation cannot be achieved with the planned ingredients, an appropriate alternative activity or ingredient will be provided wherever reasonably practicable.

Thallo will provide legally required allergen information where it operates as a food business or otherwise falls within food-information requirements. If Thallo produces prepacked-for-direct-sale food, the applicable PPDS labelling rules will be followed, including a full ingredients list with regulated allergens emphasised.

11. Cross-contact and environmental allergens

Risk assessment will consider cross-contact as well as deliberate consumption. Controls may include handwashing, cleaning, separation of equipment or ingredients, safe storage and management of shared surfaces.

Outdoor learning, gardening and growing activities may introduce risks from insect stings, pollen, plants, latex or other environmental allergens. These will be considered in individual and activity risk assessments where relevant.

Thallo will not rely on a blanket "allergen-free" or "nut-free" claim unless it can genuinely guarantee that standard. Where a restriction is needed for an individual young person, it will be communicated clearly and supported by proportionate controls.

12. Off-site visits and community activities

Allergy needs will be considered when planning trips, outdoor learning and community activities. Relevant staff will know the young person's plan, medication must be immediately accessible, and food or catering arrangements will be checked in advance where relevant.

A young person will not automatically be excluded from a trip because of an allergy. Thallo will first consider reasonable adjustments, additional controls and alternative food arrangements. If essential emergency medication is unavailable, the activity will be reconsidered on safety grounds and the parent/carer and commissioner informed as appropriate.

13. Inclusion, safeguarding and bullying

Allergies can create vulnerability to bullying, deliberate exposure, exclusion or anxiety. Threatening a young person with an allergen, deliberately exposing them to one, tampering with medication or mocking their medical needs will be treated seriously and may constitute a safeguarding concern.

Information about a young person's allergy will be shared with those who need it for safety, while respecting confidentiality and data-protection requirements.

14. Training and emergency preparedness

Staff and other adults will receive allergy awareness and emergency-response information appropriate to their responsibilities. Training will cover recognition of allergic reactions and anaphylaxis, emergency action, use of the types of adrenaline device relevant to young people attending Thallo, medication access, cross-contact and activity-specific controls.

Training will be refreshed at appropriate intervals and when a young person's needs, devices or Thallo's arrangements materially change. New staff and sessional practitioners will receive necessary information before taking responsibility for a young person with a significant allergy.

Thallo will periodically rehearse emergency arrangements in a proportionate way so staff understand their roles without causing unnecessary distress to young people.

15. Incidents and near misses

All allergic reactions requiring intervention, medication errors, significant exposures and relevant near misses will be recorded and reported to the Allergy Lead. Parents/carers and commissioners will be informed where appropriate.

Following a serious reaction or significant near miss, Thallo will review what happened, whether the individual plan and risk controls remain adequate, whether staff need further information or training, and whether wider changes are required. Safeguarding, health and safety, RIDDOR, food-safety or commissioner reporting duties will be considered where applicable.

16. Related Thallo documents

- Health & Safety Policy and risk-assessment arrangements
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Admissions and Referral Policy
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy
- First Aid / Medication procedures
- Off-site Visits and Lone Working arrangements

17. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following a serious allergy incident or near miss, a material change in a young person's needs, a change in Thallo's food or activity arrangements, or relevant changes in law or government guidance.