

17 July 2017

## **Changes to Sodexo's Food Allergy Management Processes**

At Sodexo we place our client's health and wellbeing at the centre of everything we do. We know that like us, you are acutely aware of the severe, and in some cases fatal, outcome of an allergic reaction. The devastating consequences of a fatal food allergen incident to an individual's family and their educational community are difficult to comprehend.

We believe that reducing the threat of a food allergy incident within your educational institution will be as important to you as it is to us. It is for this reason that we are proposing some changes to the way in which we work together to reduce the risk of a food allergen incident.

### **What does Sodexo currently do to help to manage allergies within educational establishments?**

You may be aware of the processes that Sodexo has in place to try and reduce the risk of allergic reactions in children and young people that we provide catering services to. These include:

- appointing dedicated food Allergen Champions within our sites;
- monitoring legislation and best practice to understand its impact on our clients;
- providing our food handlers with regular allergen awareness training;
- asking our dedicated internal compliance team (Safeguard) to conduct regular and ad hoc audits at each site to ensure that policy and procedure is being followed;
- regularly reviewing our food allergen procedures;
- seeking feedback from our clients, children, young people, parents, guardians and carers; and
- asking our clients to provide us with details of children/young people in their care who have food allergens.

### **What changes are Sodexo making?**

Our team of dieticians together with our health and safety colleagues have refined our food allergen management processes: they have simplified the information that we ask you for and created new template documents and FAQ's.

In previous years we have sent a request asking you to provide the *dietary requirements* of the children/young people in your care accompanied by a medical diagnosis. This year we will be asking you to provide us with details of which children/young people in your care have a food *allergy*, together with an assessment regarding the child/young person's food allergy from either a doctor or a dietician. We would be grateful if you could provide this information in advance of the start of term in **September 2017**.

### **Providing details of which children/young people in your care have a food allergy**

We appreciate that in accordance with your statutory obligations you are likely to already have established processes in place to help you to gather current information from parents/guardians regarding the health requirements (including potential food allergies) of the children/young people in your care.

If you would like to supplement your communications by sending a separate letter to parents/guardians regarding food allergies or would simply like to provide more information regarding food allergens, we are providing you with some template documents and guidance that you may find it helpful to use and adapt. You are of course under no obligation to use any of the materials that we provide.

### **What happens if you cannot provide confirmation that a child/young person does not have a food allergy?**

Where you are unable to provide us with positive confirmation that a child/young person in your care **does not** have a food allergy, we will take this as your confirmation that the child/young person does not have a food allergy and that you consent to us providing that child/young person with a full food menu.

In the event that the child/young person subsequently verbally informs a member of Sodexo staff that they have a food allergy, we will:

Delta 1100 - Delta Office Park - Welton Road - Swindon - SN5 7XZ

Tel: +44 (0)1793 571050

Sodexo Limited - No 842846 - England - Registered Office - One Southampton Row - London - WC1B 5HA

[www.sodexo.com](http://www.sodexo.com)

- a) provide that child/young person with a restricted diet.
- b) notify you in writing that the child/young person has informed us that they have a food allergy and confirm that we are only able to provide the child/young person with a restricted diet until you have been able to provide us with a doctor's or dietician's assessment of the child/young person's allergy.

The restricted diet will consist of a plain jacket potato.

We do acknowledge that such a situation is challenging; we trust that you, in common with us, believe that it is wholly unacceptable to place the life or well-being of any child/young person at risk by allowing them to come into contact with foods that could induce an allergic reaction. To help you to obtain the information that you need in such circumstances we are providing you with a template letter that you may wish to use or adapt.

**Next steps**

If you already ask parents/guardians to provide assessments from a doctor or dietician in respect of children/young people who have a food allergy, you will need to ensure that you have their permission to share this information with Sodexo before the start of the September 2017 term.

If you do not already ask parents/guardians for food allergy information, or you have not sought their permission to share it with Sodexo, you are welcome to use the template letter we have provided to help you to collect the information and obtain permission to share it with us.

*Please remember that you are required to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 when you collect personal information about individuals. For more information please visit the Information Commissioner's Office website: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).*

Please rest assured that there will be no change to any financial terms of your agreement with Sodexo as a result of the change in the allergen processes.

We thank you in advance for your continued support. If you require any further information please contact your site manager. Alternatively, please e-mail [AllergenDocuments.Schools.UK@sodexo.com](mailto:AllergenDocuments.Schools.UK@sodexo.com) including your name, educational institution name and your telephone number. Your query will then be directed to the relevant department within Sodexo and an appropriate person will contact you.

Yours sincerely



**Paul Anstey**

CEO Schools and Universities



**Matthew Garner**

Managing Director Independent Schools

Encs.

**Please sign below to acknowledge that you have read and understand its contents.**

For and on behalf of:

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

Please return your signed copy of this letter either:

**By post to:** Mrs Karen Bulfield, Sodexo Limited, Delta 1100, Delta Office Park, Welton Road, Swindon SN5 7XZ, UK

**By e-mail to:** [AllergenDocuments.Schools.UK@sodexo.com](mailto:AllergenDocuments.Schools.UK@sodexo.com)

## Sample Parent/Guardian Food Allergy Information Letter

Please find below an example of a letter to a parent/guardian that you are welcome to use and adapt in order to help you to collect the information that we need to provide catering services at your educational establishment.

Before you use the letter please delete the unnecessary words between the square brackets and ensure that you provide details of where completed forms should be returned to. You may find it useful to include this information on your website as a resource for your educational community.

Please remember that you will need to provide details of any child/young person that has a food allergy to Sodexo [UK.Allergen.Education@sodexo.com](mailto:UK.Allergen.Education@sodexo.com).

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Dear Parent/Guardian

### Food Allergies

You will be aware that food allergies are a growing concern in educational establishments throughout the UK and Ireland. Individuals who are affected with a food allergy may suffer a severe or even fatal reaction if they eat, or, in some cases simply come into contact, with a food or ingredient that they are allergic to.

The health and safety of every child and young person in our care is very important to [us/me] and [I am/we are] asking you to help [me/us] to provide a secure educational environment.

Please complete the Food Allergy Information Form [enclosed/attached/below] in full as soon as possible. You will need to return it to [INSERT NAME AND ADDRESS or INSERT E-MAIL ADDRESS] at least **[3 weeks] before the start of the new term.**

### What do I do if my child/young person does not have a food allergy?

We are asking all parents/guardians to complete and return the Food Allergy Information Form even if your child/young person does not have an allergy.

### What do I do if my child/young person does have a food allergy?

If your child/young person does have a food allergy, you will need to provide us with a written assessment of their condition from either a doctor or a dietician. This information is essential to ensure that your child/young person is provided with a diet that is suitable for their food allergy and that does not unnecessarily restrict their diet. For example:

- *"I am allergic to eggs"*  
This could be an allergy to raw egg, cooked egg or foods containing egg. A letter from a doctor/dietician will help to clarify the food allergy;
- *"I am allergic to nuts"*  
There are different types of nut allergy and it is important to understand whether an individual is allergic to peanuts or tree nuts (for example hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, almonds, pine nuts etc.).

We will keep a record of your child/young person's Food Allergy Information Form to use in the event of a medical emergency. We will share details of any food allergy assessments with Sodexo Limited who provide our catering. Sodexo was established in 1966 and is a global leader in providing high quality catering services. Using their experience and a team of well-respected dieticians, Sodexo have developed robust food allergen management procedures to manage your child's/young person's dietary requirements.

If your child/young person has a food allergy and you do not return the Food Allergy Information Form together with a doctor/dietician's assessment where necessary, **your child/young person will be fed a restricted diet.** When you have been able to provide a doctor/dietician's assessment of your child/young person's condition, we will be able to offer them a wider menu appropriate to their needs.

### Keeping us up to date

Please ensure that you inform us if your child/young person develops a food allergy, or if there are any changes to their existing allergy. Before any altered diet can be provided, you will need to provide us with a written assessment of their condition from either a doctor or dietician.

You will find [on the next page/set out below/attached] some more information that you may find useful.

If you have any questions please contact [INSERT NAME OF CONTACT/E-MAIL ADDRESS/TELEPHONE NUMBER AS APPROPRIATE].

[Yours faithfully]

[NAME/POSITION]

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. Q. I think my child/young person has an allergy to certain foods but I am not sure. What should I write on the form?**

*A. If you think your child/young person has a food allergy then we strongly advise you to seek the advice of either a medical or nutritional professional to obtain further information as soon as possible. If you tell us that your child/young person has an allergy, but you do not yet have an assessment of their condition from either a doctor or a dietician, their diet will be restricted to foods which our catering partner Sodexo believes are unlikely to induce any allergic reaction. Once you have been able to provide a doctor or dietician's assessment of your child/young person's condition we will be able to offer them a wider menu appropriate to their needs.*

### **2. Q. Why do you need to receive a doctor/dietician's assessment before you will feed my child/young person?**

*A. Food allergens can cause life-long health issues and in certain circumstances cause death. We do not want to place any child/young person in the position where their health or their life could be at risk. Without a doctor/dietician's assessment we cannot be certain that we are providing a child/young person with a diet that is appropriate for their health needs.*

### **3. Q I have already told you verbally about the food allergy, why do I need to fill in a form?**

*A. We need to keep a written record with details of any food allergies that your child/young person has so that we can share it in an emergency with medical professionals. We also need to ensure that we are sharing accurate information about your child/young person's food allergy with Sodexo who are the company that provide our catering.*

### **4. Q. Can your catering partner Sodexo promise to provide food that is created and served in 'nut free' environments?**

*A. Sodexo is unable to commit to ensuring that any establishment that it provides food to will be completely 'nut free'. Whilst Sodexo does not use whole peanuts or tree nuts as ingredients within its premises (unless specifically requested to do so), some of those ingredients come from manufacturers who have placed a 'may contain traces of peanuts or tree nuts' label on them. This means that food produced using these ingredients cannot be claimed to be 'nut free'.*

### **5. Q. My child/young person has packed lunch. Why do I need to complete the form?**

*A. In certain educational establishments, children/young people who eat meals prepared by our caterers will sit with those who eat packed lunches. Some children/young people with food allergies can suffer a reaction by either coming into contact with or being in close proximity to the particular ingredient that they are allergic to. By understanding which child/young person has a food allergy we are able to limit the potential of an incident occurring.*

## Sample Food Allergy Information Form

*If your educational institution already has its own method of collecting allergen information, it is likely that you already hold the information that Sodexo requires. Alternatively, if you would like to use or adapt the form below to help you to gather allergen information you are welcome to do so.*

*You may find it helpful to make the form available on your website together with the FAQ's for your educational community to refer to.*

*You will need to provide details of who/where completed forms should be returned to at your educational institution.*

*Please remember to provide details of any child/young person that has a food allergy, together with their doctor/dietician's assessment to: [UK.Allergen.Education@sodexo.com](mailto:UK.Allergen.Education@sodexo.com).*

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Sample Food Allergy Information Form  
(to be completed for each child/young person under the age of 16 by their parent/guardian)

Dear Parent/Guardian

You will be aware that food allergies are a growing concern in educational establishments throughout the UK/Ireland. Individuals who are affected with a food allergy may suffer a severe or even life threatening reaction if they eat, or in some cases, simply come into contact with a food or ingredient that they are allergic to.

The health and safety of your child/young person is our number one priority. We need your help to ensure we continue to provide a safe environment for your child/young person during meal times by completing and returning the Food Allergy Information Form in full **at least 3 weeks before the start of the new term**.

If your child/young person has a food allergy, we will need to share information about their food allergy with the company that provides catering services for us, Sodexo Limited. We will only provide Sodexo with the information that is necessary for your child/young person to receive a meal appropriate for their dietary needs.

Sodexo will hold this information confidentially, and it will be used by their dieticians to determine which type of menu is appropriate for your child/young person's dietary needs. The information shall not be used for any other purpose.

[Yours faithfully]

[Name/Position]

Please complete the details below in BLOCK CAPITALS

When you have completed the form please return it:

By e-mail to: [XXXXXXXXXX@EDUCATIONALINSTITUTION]

Full name of child/young person	
Class or form	
Does your child have a food allergy?* (please tick box)  <i>* if your child is a coeliac (has a wheat allergy), please tick the 'Yes' box.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, my child/young person has a food allergy and I have attached or will provide you with a doctor/dietician's assessment of their condition in writing.  I understand that until I have been able to provide you with that assessment my child/young person will receive a restricted diet.  <input type="checkbox"/> No. My child/young person does not have a food allergy.
Parent/Guardian name	
Relationship to child/young person	
Contact address	
Contact telephone number	
Emergency contact name	
Emergency contact telephone number	
Parent/Guardian signature	
Date	