



## Food Allergy Policy

### POLICY

1. GS Plus & GSS Ltd is committed to reducing the risk to students, staff and customers with regard to provision of food and the consumption of allergens in food, which could lead to an allergic reaction.
2. This policy will be reviewed annually.

### STATEMENT

3. GS Plus & GSS Ltd are unable to guarantee a completely allergen free environment. However, we will aim to minimise the risk of exposure and ensure our staff are aware of who to contact in the event of possible emergencies. For Schools & EY settings, we will work with Senior Leadership Teams to endeavour to provide a school meal to all children, including those with special dietary requirements wherever it is possible and safe to do so.

### ROLE & RESPONSIBILITY

4. In Educational establishments, the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body have overall legal responsibility to make arrangements for pupils with medical conditions including those with food allergies under the Children & Families Act 2014. GS Plus & GSS Ltd will work pro-actively with Schools, Parents & Healthcare Professionals to provide appropriate meals to each child and appropriate allergen information will be available for all meals. However, based on an individual assessment of risk, in the event of a complex requirement where we cannot guarantee safety, we reserve the right to refuse to provide a meal.

### OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

5. To promote food allergen awareness to all staff and customers at GS Plus & GSS Ltd managed sites.
6. To provide clear guidance to all catering staff on their responsibilities for the provision of food to anyone using the catering facilities who may have a food allergy, food intolerance or Coeliac disease.
7. To ensure that relevant food allergy awareness and food hygiene training are provided for all catering staff.
8. To ensure appropriate information and support is available for all staff and customers.

### ALLERGY LABELLING LEGISLATION

9. From 13<sup>th</sup> December 2014, legislation (the EU Food Information for Consumer Regulation 1169/2011) requires food businesses to provide allergy information on food sold unpackaged. There are also changes to existing legislation on labelling allergenic ingredients in pre-packed foods.

More information about the new European legislation can be found on the Food Standards Agency (FSA) website.



## BACKGROUND

### WHAT IS A FOOD ALLERGY?

10. Food allergies affect the body's immune system. The body reacts to certain allergens in food by producing antibodies which can cause immediate and sometimes severe symptoms, such as: itching or strange metallic taste in the mouth; swelling of the throat and tongue; difficulty in swallowing or speaking; abdominal cramps; nausea and vomiting; skin hives (nettle rash) anywhere on the body. In most extreme cases, difficulties in breathing and a severe fall in blood pressure (anaphylactic shock) can prove fatal.

### WHAT IS FOOD INTOLERANCE?

11. This does not involve the immune system in the same way and is not usually as severe as a food allergy. Symptoms usually take longer to appear and may include headaches, fatigue and digestive problems.
12. Food intolerance is harder to diagnose than a food allergy. The person with a known allergen trigger may know what food ingredient will provoke a reaction. However, they may well have eaten this food or a specific dish previously and had no adverse reaction.

### COELIAC DISEASE

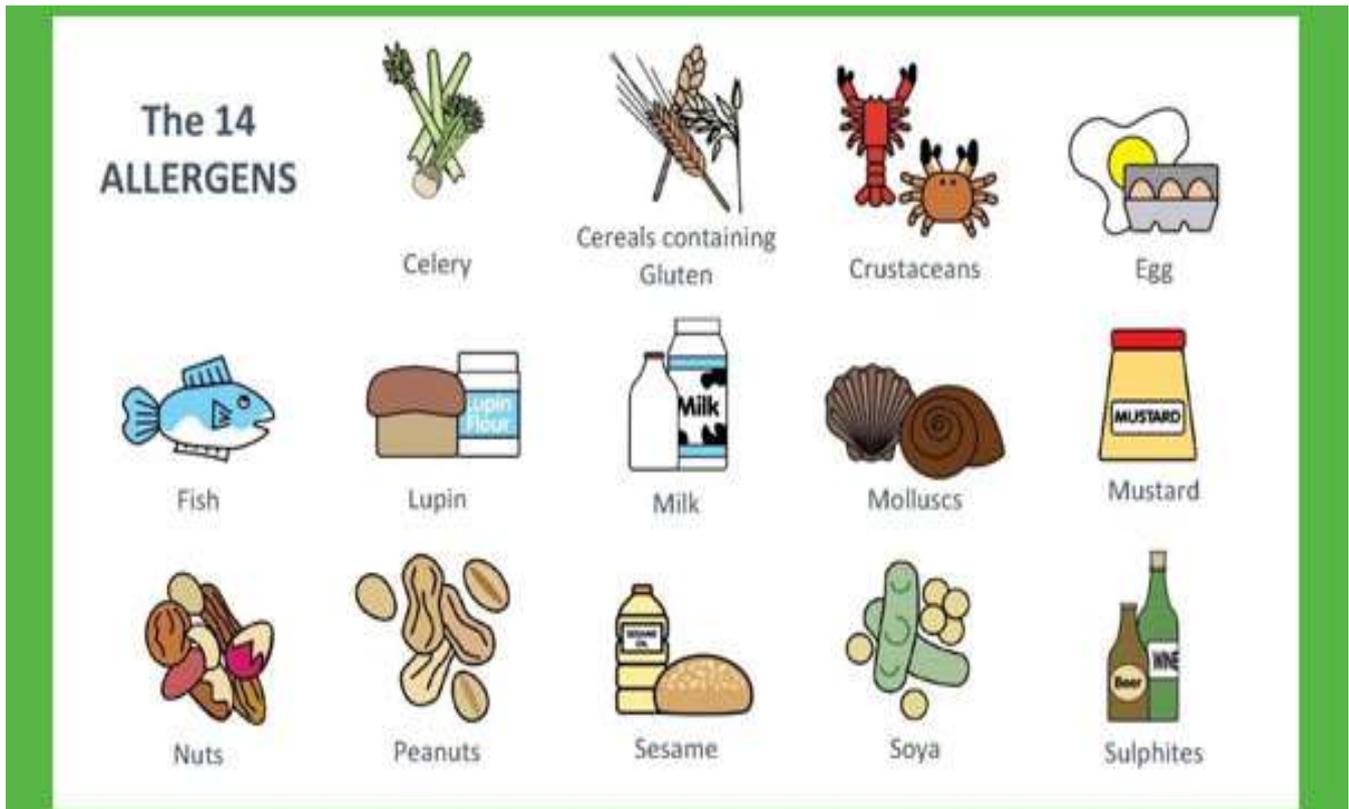
13. Coeliac disease is a lifelong auto immune disease caused by a reaction to Gluten.
  - 1 in 100 people have the condition.
  - Symptoms include bloating, diarrhoea, nausea, wind, constipation, tiredness, sudden and unexpected weight loss, hair loss and anaemia.
  - Once diagnosed, it is treated by following a Gluten-Free diet for life.

### WHO IS AT RISK?

14. Anybody can develop a food allergen or intolerance at any time in their life, irrespective of whether they have consumed the food previously. A person with an allergy is at risk even if they consume a small amount of the food allergen.
15. Food allergies and intolerances are life-changing. In the UK, they affect around 8% of children and 2% of adults. In December 2014, the law on how allergen information is provided to food businesses changed to make it easier when buying food or eating out with an allergy or intolerance.

## COMMON FOOD ALLERGENS

16. There are currently 14 allergens which must be clearly stated if they are present in the food on offer. People may report allergies to other foods not on the list below. Most common in the UK are kiwi, peas, other legumes (beans etc.), other seeds and other fruits and vegetables. In some cases, people only need to avoid these when raw and can have them cooked.



## STAFF TRAINING

17. All Site Managers & Catering Assistants will attend the following mandatory courses:
- Level 2 Food Safety
  - Food Allergy Awareness (delivered internally or externally)
18. All training records will be maintained by each Manager and stored in a shared training file which will be regularly updated.
19. Agency service staff must complete the following mandatory online courses:
- Food Hygiene Level 2 (Catering) - [www.saferfoodhandler.co.uk/index.html](http://www.saferfoodhandler.co.uk/index.html)
  - Food Allergen - [www.food.gov.uk/allergytraining](http://www.food.gov.uk/allergytraining)



## GOOD KITCHEN AND SERVICE PRACTICES

20. All dishes which are prepared on-site will be from standard ingredients from approved suppliers only. Any ingredient changes/supplier substitute changes affecting standard ingredients will be detailed.
21. Where allergenic ingredients are packaged openly/loosely, they are to be stored separately to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
22. Equipment/utensils used in the preparation of food for people with a food allergy are cleaned according to standard procedures (for further information see HACCP manual) which under normal circumstances should be sufficient.
23. All foods which are prepared for special diets must be prepared in an area which is sanitised and free from cross contamination as far as practicably possible.
24. When cooking food for customers with a food allergy or intolerance, this must be prepared separately to any other food to avoid cross contamination. The area must be thoroughly cleaned before preparation of food before and after use. The food once prepared, must be stored appropriately and securely covered and labelled as required.
25. Where dishes contain one of the 14 allergens, this must be clearly identified to customers.
26. The Unit Manager must provide a pre-service brief to all staff prior to the lunchtime service. This will include menu familiarisation and information relating to menu items containing allergens.
27. For Hospitality events, the Manager must provide a pre-service brief to all front of house staff to inform them of the menu and its content. If there are specific dietary requirements from the guests, then it must be absolutely clear which items have been prepared for their meal.

## NATASHA'S LAW

28. This is new tightening of Allergen Labelling legislation introduced on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019. This law will require **full ingredients labelling on all foods pre-packed for direct sale**. There is a transition period for businesses to implement the new ruling and this law will come into force in October 2021.
29. This law is named after 15 year old Natasha Ednan-Laperouse who tragically died in July 2016 following an allergic reaction from eating a Pret A Manger baguette containing sesame that she was extremely allergic to. There was no allergen advice on the wrapper of the baguette because, as it was made on the premises, it was not required by law.

**Julia Richardson**  
**Head of Catering & Cleaning**



## **Food Allergen Notice**

GS Plus and GSS are committed to reducing the risk to pupils, school staff and customers of allergens in the provision of food consumption which can lead to an allergic reaction.

Please note that our food dishes may contain any one or more of the following allergens:

Cereals containing Gluten,  
Peanuts,  
Nuts,  
Fish,  
Shellfish, Crustaceans,  
Sesame Seeds,  
Eggs,  
Milk,  
Soya, Soybeans,  
Celery and Celeriac,  
Mustard,  
Sulphur Dioxide and Sulphites,  
Lupin,  
Molluscs.

If in doubt please ask a member of our staff for more information and please advise us beforehand giving as much notice as possible. This will enable us to fully prepare for the allergy and ensure that your safety is of paramount importance in our provision of catering services.

NB. Please note that whilst every effort is made & care is taken to ensure that all food allergies are strictly complied with, with the upmost care in handling ingredients in the preparation of meals for special diets, there is a small risk of food contamination caused by trace levels of allergens which may be present in a busy kitchen. GS Plus/GSS restricts the purchase of all nuts and peanuts containing food at the supplier level. We do not accept any liability for the meals provided, given this risk. It is for every parent/customer to determine whether their child/ren/they receive(s) a special dietary meal.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Julia Richardson'.

**Julia Richardson**  
Head of Catering

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019**