A secondary school case study project using a whole school approach, to develop a practical toolkit for disseminating EAACI food allergy guidelines to all UK schools (Whole-School Allergy Awareness & Practical Action Management)

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**Aims:** Safeguarding pupils with allergy whilst at school is a growing need. EAACI guidelines [1] provide a sound basis for directing school allergy policy, but for effective risk minimisation, schools need them in a readily accessible format. This project bridges the gap between clinical guidance and practical policies secondary schools can adopt, using a stepwise, whole-school, risk assessment/management approach, with per-school unique outcomes.

**Methods:** Using a multidisciplinary case study model to ultimately produce a free, accessible, online toolkit schools can adapt to their own whole-school allergy policies. Central to success is a School-based Allergy Awareness Group (SAAG), to include School management, Teachers, Pupils, Parents, Caterers & School Nurse. 6 meetings over 1yr will guide this working group to assess needs, implement, test and review policy with automatic reappraisal. Integral evaluation tools assess change over time: baseline telephone survey; self-efficacy & attitudes, validated questionnaires; SAAG in-house survey; online self-audit.

**Results:** Consensus statement with expert collaboration to assure credibility for schools. Kick-off workshop provided content for website hosted by Allergy UK. 2 schools supported to pilot SAAG; each worked systematically to implement bespoke best practice policy. Case study evaluations analysis underway. Self-audit completed by 52 schools.

**Discussion:** The SAAG process enables schools to adapt a structured and thorough template to develop a bespoke school allergy policy that best suits their needs. We plan to test different school systems via 3 new case studies in England and Ireland. In parallel will recruit schools for minimal facilitation SAAG test, to simulate independent use of toolkit. Qualitative and quantitative feedback from project evaluations will feed final review process prior to making toolkit available via Allergy UK website.

**Conclusion:** Transposing from clinical to practical solutions can be achieved with beneficial results. School feedback indicates this is a worthwhile time and resource investment for the school. Our work to date demonstrates that implementing allergy awareness best practice in UK secondary schools is a slow process. Raising the profile via a live website and targeted communications programme will help schools to safeguard pupils with allergy and ensure the whole school is appropriately allergy aware, so that inclusion becomes the norm for school culture.

**References:**

**Consensus Statement**

**Whole-School Allergy Awareness & Management Collaboration**

*Our aim*
Support schools in carrying out their statutory duties, in order to safeguard pupils at school who have allergic medical conditions which may be life-threatening.

*Our vision*
Every school will have its own School Allergy Action Group, made up of key school staff, pupils and parents. This group will develop specific whole school policy and practices to ensure the safety of all pupils with allergic conditions and support them with the management of their medication so that they can engage fully in daily school activities.

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**The Whole-School Allergy Awareness & Management Collaboration will support schools in this by:**
- Increasing education and awareness of allergy throughout the whole school environment.
- Implementing European guidelines for allergy management as advised by EAACI (European Academy for Allergy and Clinical Immunology).
- Highlighting the need for prompt access to life-saving treatment i.e. adrenaline and salbutamol.
- Providing practical allergy information and support tools for schools to access, via the website.
- Working toward a ‘tool kit’ for schools, using systematic implementation strategies for effective practical allergy action management.
- Facilitating the formation of school policy and procedure to support pupils at school with the medical condition of allergy.
- Including preventative and emergency measures so that staff can recognise symptoms of allergic reactions and act quickly when a problem occurs.
- Highlighting the need for allergy awareness to be applied to cooking and handling of food anywhere in the school.