

Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy

This policy has been reviewed to reflect the Department for Education's July 2026 statutory guidance "Allergy Safety in Schools" (Benedict's Law), which takes effect in all English schools from September 2026.

Policy Review

Last reviewed:	19/08/2026
Next review date:	19/08/2027, or sooner if DfE statutory guidance, host school arrangements, or legislation changes

Applies to:

All permanent staff, freelance teachers, teaching assistants, volunteers and contractors delivering Showstoppers Performing Arts sessions, whether in schools, community venues or online.

1. Purpose and Policy Statement

Showstoppers Performing Arts is committed to keeping every child safe, including children with allergies or a risk of anaphylaxis. Around 8% of children in the UK have a diagnosed food allergy, roughly two children in every classroom, and a significant proportion of severe reactions happen in children with no prior diagnosis. This policy sets out how our staff identify, prepare for, and respond to allergy risks during every session we deliver.

Allergy is not limited to food allergy and anaphylaxis. It also includes conditions such as asthma, eczema and hay fever, which can co-exist with a food allergy and which staff should be aware of for any child flagged on the register, even where the primary concern noted is not anaphylaxis.

From September 2026, the Department for Education's statutory guidance "Allergy Safety in Schools" requires every school in England to have a whole-school allergy policy, provide allergy awareness training for all staff, stock spare adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs), and maintain Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) for pupils with known allergies. This duty sits within section 34 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, known as Benedict's Law, named after Benedict Blythe, who died in 2021 after an allergic reaction at his primary school.

Showstoppers does not operate as a school. However, because our sessions are delivered inside primary schools, community venues and online, we align our own practice with this new standard so that our staff support, rather than sit outside, each host school's allergy arrangements.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Chantene Hamilton, Director and DSL

- Ensures this policy is kept up to date and reflects current DfE and NHS guidance.

- Ensures all staff receive allergy awareness training before working unsupervised with children.
- Maintains a record of any known allergies flagged on Class For Kidz for every child enrolled.
- Acts as the point of contact for any allergy-related incident or concern.

2.2 Session Leaders and Instructors

- Check the Class For Kidz register for the blue medical flag before every session, and read any linked allergy information or Individual Healthcare Plan.
- Identify the host school's allergy lead and the location of spare adrenaline auto-injectors before the session begins, wherever the session takes place on school premises.
- Never give a child food, drink, stickers, or craft materials containing food ingredients (for example, sweets used as rewards) without first checking for allergies.
- Know the signs of an allergic reaction and anaphylaxis, and follow the emergency response procedure in Section 6 without hesitation.
- Report any allergic reaction, near miss, or missing information to Chantene Hamilton and the host school's allergy lead on the same day.

2.3 Parents and Carers

- Provide full and accurate allergy information at registration, and update it immediately if anything changes.
- Ensure any prescribed adrenaline auto-injector or antihistamine travels with the child to every session, clearly labelled with the child's name and in date.
- Share a copy of the child's Individual Healthcare Plan where one exists.

3. Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs)

Where a child has a diagnosed allergy, an Individual Healthcare Plan should be in place, usually held by the host school. Session leaders must ask the school's allergy lead or office whether an IHP exists for any child flagged on the Showstoppers register, and read it before delivering a session to that child's group. An IHP typically sets out:

- The specific allergen or allergens.
- Symptoms to watch for, and how they present in that individual child.
- What medication the child carries, where it is kept, and who is authorised to help administer it.
- Step-by-step emergency instructions specific to that child.

Where Showstoppers delivers a standalone club or online LAMDA sessions without a host school IHP in place, this information must instead be captured at registration and held on the Class For Kidz record, with a paper copy carried by the session leader.

4. Spare Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AIs)

Showstoppers does not currently stock its own spare adrenaline auto-injectors. Session leaders must, before every in-school session, confirm with the host school:

- Whether the school holds spare AIs under the new DfE guidance.

- Where these are stored, and how quickly they can be accessed from the teaching space.
- Who on site is trained to administer them if a parent, carer or Showstoppers staff member is not permitted to do so.

Where a child's own prescribed AAI is present at a session, staff should know its location at all times and must never move it out of easy reach. A child's own device should always be used in preference to a spare device where both are available and there is time to do so safely.

Showstoppers staff who are trained and confident to administer an AAI may do so in a genuine emergency, in line with general first aid principles: no one requires a specific licence to use an adrenaline auto-injector to save a life. If in doubt, call 999 first and follow the instructions given.

5. Recognising an Allergic Reaction

5.1 Mild to Moderate Reaction

- Itching or tingling in the mouth.
- Swelling of lips, face or eyes.
- Hives or a raised, itchy rash anywhere on the body.
- Abdominal pain, vomiting.

5.2 Signs of Anaphylaxis (Severe, Life-Threatening)

- Difficulty breathing, wheezing, or a persistent cough.
- Swelling of the throat or tongue.
- Difficulty swallowing, or a hoarse voice.
- Pale or blue-looking skin or lips.
- Confusion, floppiness, or loss of consciousness.
- A sense of impending doom, particularly in older children.

Anaphylaxis can develop within seconds or minutes of exposure to an allergen and is a medical emergency. If in doubt, always treat as anaphylaxis and act immediately.

6. Emergency Response Procedure

1. Call 999 immediately and state "anaphylaxis." Do this even if you are about to use an adrenaline auto-injector — do not wait to see if it works first.
2. If the child has a prescribed or spare adrenaline auto-injector available and you are trained to do so, administer it without delay, following the instructions printed on the device.
3. Lay the child flat with their legs raised, unless they are having difficulty breathing, in which case allow them to sit up. Do not stand the child up or allow them to walk.
4. If there is no improvement after five minutes, or symptoms return, a second dose may be given if a second device is available.
5. Stay with the child at all times. Send another adult to meet the ambulance and to alert the host school's allergy lead and Chantene Hamilton.

6. Contact the child's parent or carer as soon as reasonably possible, without delaying emergency treatment.
7. Every child who has received adrenaline must go to hospital by ambulance, even if they appear to recover, as symptoms can return.
8. Record the incident fully as soon as possible afterwards (see Section 9), including the time of onset, symptoms, actions taken, and the time any medication was given.

7. Food, Snacks and Materials Used in Sessions

Showstoppers sessions do not typically involve providing food, but allergens can still be present in props, craft materials, stickers, or rewards.

- Check the register for allergy flags before handing out any edible reward, sticker, or craft material that may contain nuts, gluten, dairy or other allergens.
- Where snacks are provided by the host school or parents as part of a wraparound club, Showstoppers staff must follow the school's own food allergy procedures and never share or swap food between children.
- Encourage good hygiene, such as handwashing before and after snack time, to reduce the risk of cross-contamination for children with contact allergies.
- Never assume a packaged snack is safe based on branding alone; always check with the school or parent if uncertain.

8. Online LAMDA and Remote Sessions

For 1:1 online sessions, the parent or carer is responsible for having any prescribed medication accessible in the room and for the immediate emergency response, as set out in the Health and Safety Policy.

Showstoppers instructors delivering online sessions should:

- Check the Class For Kidz register for any allergy flag before the session and be aware of what to do if the child appears unwell.
- If a child shows signs of a reaction during a session, advise the parent or carer to seek immediate help and call 999 if the parent or carer cannot be reached and the child appears to be at risk.
- Notify the DSL, Chantene Hamilton, as soon as possible following any such incident.

9. Recording and Reporting

Every allergic reaction, however mild, must be recorded in the accident and incident log as soon as possible after the event, and reported to Chantene Hamilton and the host school's allergy lead on the same day. The record should include:

- The child's name and the suspected allergen.
- The time symptoms began and what they were.
- Actions taken, including any medication given and the time it was administered.
- Whether an ambulance was called and the outcome.
- What worked well and any lessons for future sessions.

Following any anaphylaxis incident, Chantene Hamilton will carry out a review with the host school to identify whether the child's Individual Healthcare Plan, the Showstoppers register, or this policy need to be updated.

10. Training Requirements

- All staff must complete allergy awareness training as part of their induction, covering symptom recognition, emergency response and the safe use of adrenaline auto-injectors.
- Paediatric First Aid certification, already required of all Showstoppers staff, includes anaphylaxis response and must be kept in date.
- Staff are encouraged to complete refresher AAI training annually, in line with the standard expected of school staff under the new DfE guidance.
- Any staff member who does not feel confident recognising or responding to an allergic reaction should raise this with Chantene Hamilton, who will arrange further training.

11. Working with Host Schools

Because Showstoppers delivers most of its sessions on school premises, staff are expected to work within, not around, each host school's allergy arrangements.

- Before starting a new placement at a school, confirm whether the school has published its whole-school allergy policy and where spare AAIs are kept.
- Follow the host school's sign-in and site procedures, and identify the school's allergy lead alongside its Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Where a Showstoppers session takes place outside normal school hours (for example, an after-school club) and no school staff member is present, the session leader takes on responsibility for allergy safety for that session, as set out in Section 4.

12. Wellbeing and Avoiding Bullying

Living with an allergy can be a source of real anxiety for a child, and being singled out or excluded because of it can add to that. Showstoppers is committed to supporting the emotional wellbeing of children with allergies alongside their physical safety.

- Staff should handle any allergy-related accommodations (such as substitute snacks, seating, or craft materials) discreetly, so a child is not made to feel different or singled out in front of their peers.
- Teasing, exclusion, or unkind comments relating to a child's allergy will be treated as bullying under our Behaviour Policy and addressed in line with our Safeguarding Policy, whether it happens in person or online.
- Where appropriate and agreed with the child and their parents, staff may help build wider peer understanding of a child's allergy, without ever singling the child out or replacing the emergency response arrangements in Section 6.

As Showstoppers operates as an after-school club within existing school premises, our sessions do not involve off-site trips or visits. Where a Showstoppers event is held at an external venue (such as an end-of-

term show), the arrangements in Section 4 and Section 11 apply to that venue in the same way as any other location where we deliver a session.

A child's allergy and medical information is special category data under UK GDPR. It is handled in line with our Data Protection and Privacy Policy, and is shared only with those who need it to keep the child safe.

13. Key Contacts

Emergency	999 — call immediately for any suspected anaphylaxis
Showstoppers DSL	Chantene Hamilton — 07584 281994
NHS non-emergency advice	111
Anaphylaxis UK helpline	01252 542029

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually on 19/08/2027, or sooner if DfE statutory guidance changes, following any allergy-related incident, or if host school arrangements change in a way that affects this policy.

Showstoppers Performing Arts. All staff are DBS-checked.

DSL: Chantene Hamilton 07584 281994

This policy reflects the DfE's July 2026 statutory guidance "Allergy Safety in Schools" and section 34 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 (Benedict's Law).