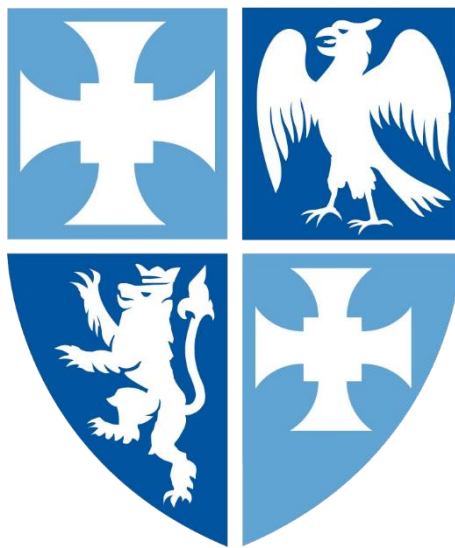


*St. John's College, Durham*  
**Health and Safety**  
**Food Allergen Policy**



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**Introduction**

St John's College Catering Department is committed to reducing the risk to students, staff and visitors regarding the provision of food and the consumption of allergens in food, which could lead to an allergic reaction.

This policy will be available on the College SharePoint and will be reviewed biennially or sooner, if there are changes in legislation.

**Statement**

St John's College Catering Department is not able to guarantee a completely allergen free environment. However, we will aim to minimise the risk of exposure, encourage self-responsibility and plan for effective response to possible emergencies.

**Objectives of this policy**

- To promote food allergen awareness to staff, students and visitors at St John's College.
- 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.
- To ensure that relevant food allergy training and food hygiene training are provided for all catering staff.
- To ensure appropriate information and support is available for catering staff and customers.

**Food allergen information****What is a food allergy?**

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 a 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?**

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.

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**

Coeliac disease is a lifelong autoimmune disease caused by a reaction to gluten.

- 1 in 100 people have the condition
- Symptoms include bloating, diarrhoea, nausea, wind, constipation, tiredness, sudden or unexpected weight loss, hair loss and anaemia.
- Once diagnosed, it is treated by following a gluten-free diet for life.

**Who is at risk?**

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.

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 by food businesses changed to make it easier when buying food or eating out with an allergy or intolerance.

Students and young people living away from home are a vulnerable group who may be at higher risk if they have allergies. This is due to several factors that are associated with learning to look after themselves in a new environment and, in addition, possibly not wanting to appear different from their peer group. It is because of this high-risk group that the Catering Department will provide as much information as possible to any customers with food allergens or intolerance.

**Recognised food allergens**

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 below list.

- Celery
- Cereals containing gluten
- Fish
- Peanuts
- Crustaceans
- Eggs
- Molluscs
- Soya
- Sesame seeds
- Tree nuts
- Sulphur dioxide
- Milk
- Mustard
- Lupin

**Roles and responsibilities**

The *Chef Manager* along with their team, is responsible for ensuring all food provided by the Catering Department has the relevant allergy information available on all packed and unpacked food.

The *Chef Manager* will ensure that allergen information is available for all 'common food allergens' listed above. This information is readily available and up to date in the main dining hall.

The customer (student, staff, visitor or guest) is responsible for choosing what food items are suitable for them. The Serving staff are there to advise on the different options, but the customer is ultimately responsible for themselves.

**Staff training**

All catering staff must attend the following mandatory courses:

- Food Safety in Catering
- Allergens Training
- COSHH
- Hand Hygiene

**Training records**

All training records will be maintained by the Chef Manager and updated regularly.

**Agency service staff**

Agency service staff must be trained on food allergy awareness by the agency prior to working at the College. Contractual terms between any agency supplying catering staff will make this a requirement of contract.

**Casual staff**

Casual staff must also complete the relevant training before been allowed to carry out the duties requires.

**Kitchen**

All dishes which are produced in house will be from standard ingredients from approved suppliers.

Where allergenic ingredients are packaged openly or loosely, they must be stored separately and appropriately labelled to reduce the risk of contamination.

Food handlers must wash their hands with hot, or suitably mixed warm water, and an anti-bacterial liquid soap and dry their hands using disposable paper towels as allergens can stick to cloths before they begin food preparation. Food handlers must avoid touching other food types until they have finished a specific preparation task.

Equipment and utensils used in the preparation of food for people with a food allergy must be cleaned according to standard procedures (see HACCP manual) which under normal circumstances should be sufficient.

All foods which are prepared for special diets must be prepared in an area which is sanitised and free from cross contamination. Separate colour coded chopping boards and equipment must be used for this purpose.

When cooking food for customers with a food allergy or intolerance this must be prepared before 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 with cling film and labelled as required.

When using cooking oil, it must be changed when preparing a meal that must not contain a certain food type. For example, if food is cooked in oil that has been previously used to cook egg, this could cause a reaction in someone who is allergic to eggs. If the oil can't be changed, for example when using a deep fat fryer, the customer must be informed that the food is cooked in shared oils.

All ingredients to prepare the dish should be taken from clearly labelled containers, service wells, cooler draws, using separate utensils to minimise the risk of cross-contamination.

Where dishes contain any of the 14 allergens this must be clearly identified to the customers.

**Food service**

The Chefs must provide a pre-service brief ('counter talk') to all front-of-house staff prior to service. This will include menu familiarisation and information relating to menu items containing allergens.

All front-of-house staff must attend the pre-service brief or counter talk.

The staff must be aware of any dishes which contain allergens and if in doubt must check with the Chef on duty if a customer has requested further information on the presence of allergens.

If there is an event, the Chef on duty must provide a pre-service brief to the 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 clear which items have been prepared for their meal.

Separate utensils must be used during service to avoid cross-contamination of allergens.

There will be a handover of all menu items produced, and the allergens included in any dishes.

**Signage & Information**

The Dining hall should have visible signage and allergen information must always displayed.

**Conference & events**

The conference and events team ask all organiser of events to provide details of guests who have allergies. These details are provided to the catering department as soon as possible so special arrangements can be made if required.

**Communication**

Catering staff are encouraged to communicate with customers who have specific dietary requirements and to help them to find a suitable product which is safe for them to eat.

The Catering department will endeavour to provide as much information as possible on the daily menus.

If customers need further information, they are encouraged to meet with the Chef on duty to identify any specific requests.

If you are unsure, never guess.

St John's is legally responsible for providing the customer with enough information to make an informed choice. Never tell them what they can and can't consume.

You can never rule out the risk of cross-contamination if you have all allergens within your kitchen. You can only develop best practice to minimise cross-contamination by implementing the above controls. Ensure your customer is aware of this.

### **Consequences of non-compliance**

Any College staff member found in breach of the *Food Allergen Policy*, will be managed through the College HR disciplinary procedure.

### **Incident Reporting**

Incident reporting relating to food allergens will follow the College's incident reporting procedures, and dependent on severity follow standard processes for critical incident or major incident.

### **Monitoring and review**

Full lifecycle of allergen management

- Frequency: Annually
- Method: Audit
- Who by: Chef Manager, Student Support

### **Summary**

St John's College take Food Allergens extremely seriously and are always intent on implementing any procedures and good practise that will protect students/staff and anyone else while on college property. We believe we are doing the utmost to ensure good practises and will always strive to do so by listening, learning, and considering what the government and food industry are telling us.





# 14 Allergens

**Food businesses must provide information about the allergenic ingredients used in any food they sell or provide.**

There are 14 major allergens which need to be mentioned (either on a label or through provided information such as menus) when they are used as ingredients in a food. Here are the allergens, and some examples of where they can be found:

**1 Celery**

This includes celery stalks, leaves, seeds and the root called celeriac. You can find celery in celery salt, salads, some meat products, soups and stock cubes.

**2 Cereals containing gluten**

Wheat (such as spelt and Khorasan wheat/Kamut), rye, barley and oats are often found in foods containing flour, such as some types of baking powder, batter, breadcrumbs, bread, cakes, couscous, meat products, pasta, pastry, sauces, soups and fried foods which are dusted with flour.

**3 Crustaceans**

Crabs, lobster, prawns and scampi are crustaceans. Shrimp paste, often used in Thai and south-east Asian curries or salads, is an ingredient to look out for.

**4 Eggs**

Eggs are often found in cakes, some meat products, mayonnaise, mousses, pasta, quiche, sauces and pastries or foods brushed or glazed with egg.

**5 Fish**

You will find this in some fish sauces, pizzas, relishes, salad dressings, stock cubes and Worcestershire sauce.

**6 Lupin**

Yes, lupin is a flower, but it's also found in flour! Lupin flour and seeds can be used in some types of bread, pastries and even in pasta.

**7 Milk**

Milk is a common ingredient in butter, cheese, cream, milk powders and yoghurt. It can also be found in foods brushed or glazed with milk, and in powdered soups and sauces.

**8 Molluscs**

These include mussels, land snails, squid and whelks, but can also be commonly found in oyster sauce or as an ingredient in fish steaks

**9 Mustard**

Liquid mustard, mustard powder and mustard seeds fall into this category. This ingredient can also be found in breads, curries, marinades, meat products, salad dressings, sauces and soups.

**10 Nuts**

Not to be mistaken with peanuts (which are actually a legume and grow underground), this ingredient refers to nuts which grow on trees, like cashew nuts, almonds and hazelnuts. You can find nuts in breads, biscuits, crackers, desserts, nut powders (often used in Asian curries), stir-fried dishes, ice cream, marzipan (almond paste), nut oils and sauces.

**11 Peanuts**

Peanuts are actually a legume and grow underground, which is why it's sometimes called a groundnut. Peanuts are often used as an ingredient in biscuits, cakes, curries, desserts, sauces (such as satay sauce), as well as in groundnut oil and peanut flour.

**12 Sesame seeds**

These seeds can often be found in bread (sprinkled on hamburger buns for example), breadsticks, houmous, sesame oil and tahini. They are sometimes toasted and used in salads.

**13 Soya**

Often found in bean curd, edamame beans, miso paste, textured soya protein, soya flour or tofu, soya is a staple ingredient in oriental food. It can also be found in desserts, ice cream, meat products, sauces and vegetarian products.

**14 Sulphur dioxide (sometimes known as sulphites)**

This is an ingredient often used in dried fruit such as raisins, dried apricots and prunes. You might also find it in meat products, soft drinks, vegetables as well as in wine and beer. If you have asthma, you have a higher risk of developing a reaction to sulphur dioxide.

For more information, visit: [food.gov.uk/allergy](http://food.gov.uk/allergy) or [nhs.uk/conditions/allergies](http://nhs.uk/conditions/allergies)

Sign up to our allergy alerts on [food.gov.uk/email](mailto:food.gov.uk@email), or follow [#AllergyAlert](https://twitter.com/AllergyAlert) on Twitter and Facebook

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