

P-05-932 Education On Food Allergies In Schools & Mandatory EPI PEN Training, Correspondence - Petitioner to Committee 04.03.20

Thank you again to the petitions committee for allowing me to respond to the Minister of Education's second response, firstly I'd like to show you these pictures;



These are just 2 separate occasions where my own child has come out of school covered in hives because the teachers that are meant to be 'fully supported' and 'fully capable' of aiding him when he has an allergic reaction simply aren't, because his own school haven't taken the appropriate action to make parents aware of the severity of his food allergies. This child could die if he comes into contact with food he is allergic too, will anyone want to take action then?

Why is it that Wales has to WAIT for a tragedy to happen why wouldn't you want to be leaders in showing the rest of the UK how you take control and put STRICT policies in place to ensure every child with a food allergy is taken SERIOUSLY, that every child with a food allergy is put as a priority and thought of first, instead of 'it benefits 60 other children, yours is only 1' and the cycle continues.

To address the minister of education, I met with the Cardiff Council Schools LA officers in December to offer Archie's Allergies Charity as a support system for families and schools alike when and where needed. It's funny that the local authority is having to solely deal with this because I've already spoken with the 'local authority' and where it stands they don't have a clue when it comes to allergies and they can't support the schools or the families within these schools to any kind of standard that's needed.

Not only are we living proof but so are many, many families that the 'local authority' fails their schools. I have a great example, someone from Cardiff Council, a health and safety officer for schools did a risk assessment on my son, without my knowledge by the way, when this assessment was done which I'll include, it states throughout, that everyone is to continuously apply hand gel throughout the day, unless these children are protecting themselves from germs, hand gel DOES NOT

remove food proteins or particles from hands, this coming from the local authority is alarming to say the least. Where is the 'local authority' getting this information? What reliable sources are they taking advice from?

Young children cannot and should not be responsible for their life threatening food allergies, WHO is looking after these kids?

I've asked parents across Cardiff, Penarth & The Vale if their children's schools are nut free, because for some reason this is the only allergen schools are prepared to ban, however it is only down to the head teacher that decides if they go nut free, still to this day my sons school refuses to ban nuts despite the high threat they have to not only his life but others within the school, my child nearly died because of something we all take for granted daily.

We aren't asking for nut free schools, because you'd have to be free of all the other allergens that exist. However an allergy aware school is what really makes a difference, a school that washes their hands several times a day, a school that is cautious of the pupils that suffer with allergic disease, a school that supports a child with food allergies and stands for making others aware, WOW how nice would that be and do you know it's really easy too!

Could you imagine dying from something you've never even eaten? Or just from being in the same room as it?

What attitude is 'nuts are a form of protein', I have to hear over and over as an excuse before a child is laying on the floor in anaphylactic shock, because to children with food allergies, food is a lethal weapon, it's the loaded gun, the sharp knife, yet we celebrate birthdays with cake that contain egg, we give our children granola bars with all kinds of nuts in it but it won't hurt those children not to eat these things around my child, but it can kill my child if it's eaten around him, all it takes is one touch, one bite and we never know when that might be.

If the minister of education does not want to take full responsibility for these children that are at risk DAILY, I ask the welsh assembly to make it Archie's Law that will ensure that in every school across Wales every child with a food allergy will be given the highest priority, their needs will be treated just as important as anyone else's. They will be equal and supported, they'll know they are no different to their peers.

How would you act if you couldn't bake cookies with the rest of your office, so your friend walks your around the car park for a bit? You'd feel not only humiliated but you'd think what disease do you have that your constantly left out of 'educational activities'.

We'd ensure that every person that comes into contact with that child will have had an educational session on food allergies because 'I have had epi pen training' is not good enough, understanding food allergies is what is needed, my sons teacher was looking for a 'milk' ingredient in pasta this week, why is she looking

for milk? She is meant to be a safe guarding officer for the infants at my sons school, don't forget the worrying amount of conversations and meetings we've had about his allergies but she's looking for MILK? He's allergic to eggs, peanuts and tree nuts, that's never changed since his diagnosis.

The problem is, teachers don't care. They don't have to care, no one is ticking boxes and checking them to ensure the right care is being given. No one is saying if you don't tick this box then you will be held accountable as a teaching professional, as a human being. So I'll do it, if it meant that every parent of an allergy child could feel assured, feel as if they are being taken as serious as life and death is, I'll do it.

Kirsty Williams has to tell local authorities that education on food allergies is needed but she won't, but I challenge her to live like someone that's allergic to eggs, nuts and peanuts for a day and go into a school and see for yourself. Show me the food you eat and read every ingredient over and over and over.

For every call I have received from his school, 'Hi Miss Murphy, nothing to worry about, Archie's arms/face are covered in hives, we've given him his medicine'

That's not normal, is it? How about making it mandatory to tell parents that a child in their child's class could die if you send them in with egg mayo.

Our children are not safe, my son is not safe and no one cares.

But I do, from the earliest time needed I care, from the worries that my child will be bullied because of the example TEACHERS are setting for shunning children with food allergies.

It's not good enough, I ask the Welsh Assembly to put these policies and vital education in place for every family that suffers because of allergic disease, for the parties our children can't attend, for the friends houses they can't go over and for the education they miss out on because of their very real and very serious medical conditions.

We welcome the Police into our schools to teach our children about drugs and alcohol that can kill them, why is this not the same as eating peanut butter next to children that are allergic. Food allergies should have been introduced to children years ago but it's only since my own child's diagnosis and the diabolical treatment we have received that it's taken to come to the Welsh Assembly to do something about it.

Schools are taking their own approach to food allergies and I've already highlighted how and to the extent they go too, why are they allowed to do as each pleases but others aren't guided to do the same?

The logo for Archie's Allergies is a blue speech bubble with the text "ARCHIE'S ALLERGIES" written inside in a blue, hand-drawn font.

ARCHIE'S ALLERGIES

If someone went into a school with a knife its a criminal offence, but the child that sits next to mine with a Nutella sandwich is just eating his lunch? So is my child just eating his lunch but it cost him his life.

But if we just added 2 educational sessions a year, we would change the way our children see food. How they treat it, where do our children go to learn? School and school is where these sessions are needed not just for children but the teachers and staff with them everyday.

Charlotte, Archie's Mum & Founder of Archie's Allergies Charity