



To the committee thank you for the opportunity given to me to respond to the attached letter.

Firstly, I'd like to thank the Minister of Education for her response, this has made pointing out the very specific policies that are in place that fail children including my own on a daily basis.

I highlight 'the key expectations are that'

- Learners with healthcare needs should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including trips and physical education
- Governing bodies must ensure that arrangements are in place to support learners with healthcare needs.
- Governing bodies should ensure that education setting staff consult the relevant professionals, learners and parents to ensure the needs of the learner with healthcare needs are properly understood and effectively supported.

My response:

- Children with food allergies including my own are excluded from educational activities as well as bake sales and specific celebrations encouraged by schools involving food.
- What is in 'place' does nothing to help aid schools along with curriculum that is and already has failed many children, these policies do not help support schools or help them support the child living with allergic disease.
- The appointed staff, such as the school nurses are not equipped or educated on food allergies and to the satisfactory level that is needed to keep children safe whilst under the care of the school.

Parents of children with food allergies are prepared, they prevent any risk of a chance for an allergic reaction, however schools do not, nor do their staff.

Following from my own experience with my sons school, schools hide the truth. Whether anyone wants to admit it, they can cover it up but when there is evidence to prove this, they brush it under the rug. Today 14th January 2020 I learnt that despite my sons head teacher profusely stating that all staff were Epi-Pen trained because of my own persistence and peace of mind, it come to light that not all staff or all teachers were trained, yet it was stated on multiple occasions that they were. What would have happened if I hadn't have gone on about it? Would they never have been trained?

Mandatory Epi-Pen training should be given when teachers start their training in university, it should be a subject that they have to be educated on themselves. The teachers and staff being trained today only know how to administer an epi-pen, they don't know what the top allergens are, they are not allergy aware, they don't know how to keep a child living with allergic disease safe. It is expected that the child is mainly responsible for their allergies.

Schools or at the moment the minister of education has to be held accountable for the lack of care and risk they put children with food allergies in. It may benefit 60 children but for that 1 child that can't participate what does this example of behaviour do to them? Introducing educational sessions on food allergies in school will help normalise the conversation and stigma that surrounds this particular medical issue. It will help minimise bullying.

If you tease a child that's allergic to nuts with a snickers you may as well be holding a knife to their throat, both will result in a tragic outcome.

I call on the welsh assembly to bring to light the disastrous failings of not one school but many, that because one head teacher doesn't believe in food allergies the children in their care suffer,



they are excluded from educational activities, something that they have every right in being a part of.

Schools don't want to act on the current policies because they don't need or have too, they don't have to invite third party organisations to teach children about food allergies because there is no one telling them that it's important enough, because if a child with food allergies has an allergic reaction the school and staff who is responsible for their care will only have themselves to blame for their lack of awareness.

The schools and teachers do not know the why or when to use an epi-pen, the vital signs that point to an anaphylactic reaction or at what point do they need administer an epi-pen because it isn't when my child is laying on the floor unconscious.

It is clear that the very practises that are in place are not keeping children safe, this has to change. Not after a tragedy, Not when an example has to be made but now, preventing the tragedy, be the example, do this for children and for the adults that wish it had been done for them.

My son is 7 years old and from the age of 4, his whole school life he has been excluded and made an example of by the teachers that I'm meant to have faith in to teach my child even just the every day stuff. The very governing body that is meant to support them, does nothing but say 'google it'. Why are children with food allergies being made to feel like the problem, just as seriously as schools take diabetes why are teachers comfortably allowing risk after risk to take place under their care and put it down too 'an over sight'.

'Hi, Archie's Mum, he's had another allergic reaction today, we've given him his medicine, we don't know how this has happened, there is no food where has been blah blah.' I've had this same conversation over 60 times since September 2019 alone, because teachers aren't telling 6 and 7 year olds to wash their hands after eating, the most easiest and simplest task, a task that we tell our children to do to avoid spreading germs or avoiding a stomach bug. Washing with soap and water or wet wipes stops cross contamination immediately.

I want, I need to know, I want, I need to see my child is safe in school, because I send him to his possible death everyday, and these policies are allowing this behaviour in our schools.

All this letter has done is saddened me, it's showed me that although the minister of education is confident enough to show me these policies, she is also confident enough that nothing will change, I will not wait for my son to die because of someone else negligence, which is exactly how every family that has been let down by their school feels.

I call for prevention and it starts in schools, with teachers that already educate us on maths, english, science, physical education.

I'd be more than happy to go into further detail of every catastrophic failure that my family has been through because of the simple lack of knowledge on food allergies, but it isn't just about us or just Archie, it's about every child like him and every family like us.

Can you imagine having a child who can die from food? The possibility of death for my child is everywhere ... everyday.

Thank you,

Charlotte, Archie's Mum and founder of Archie's Allergies Charity: 1186048.