



Boardgame Cafe Allergy Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

At the Boardgame Cafe, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all young people. Boardgame cafes present a unique risk because games are shared, pieces are handled frequently, and players are deeply engrossed in activities while snacking.

This policy outlines our procedures for managing food allergens, preventing cross-contamination, complying with UK law (including Natasha's Law), and ensuring our young customers can play safely. It applies to all adult staff/leaders, volunteers, youth leaders, and visitors.

2. UK Legal Compliance & the 14 Allergens

We strictly adhere to UK food safety laws. By law, we track, identify, and manage the 14 major allergens:

- Celery
- Cereals containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley, oats)
- Crustaceans
- Eggs
- Fish
- Lupin
- Milk
- Molluscs
- Mustard
- Tree nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, etc.)
- Peanuts
- Sesame
- Soya
- Sulphur dioxide/sulphites

3. Cafe Menu, Signage, and Communication

Because our primary demographic is young people, clarity and visible signage are paramount:

- **The "Ask" Policy:** High-visibility signs are placed at the counter, on menus, and on gaming tables stating: *"If you have a food allergy or intolerance, please tell a member of staff before ordering."*
- **Allergen Matrix:** The food sold at the café will usually be pre-packed bought snacks. These will have ingredients on the packaging. A fully updated Allergen Matrix detailing every ingredient in any open food and drink items is kept at the



front counter. This is reviewed and updated immediately if any product, brand, or recipe changes.

- **Pre-Packed for Direct Sale (PPDS) / Natasha's Law:** It is unlikely that any food will be packaged on our premises. However, any food that is packed on our premises before a customer orders it (e.g., sandwiches, cakes, or cookies put in bags or boxes ahead of time) must have a full ingredients label with the 14 allergens clearly **bolded**.

4. Specific Boardgame Cafe Risks & Mitigations

Playing boardgames involves unique cross-contamination risks from hands to game pieces, and back to mouths. We mitigate this through the following strict rules:

- **Nut-Free Policy Option:** The Boardgame Cafe operates a strictly [Nut-Free / Nut-Aware] policy. No loose peanuts or tree nuts are sold, and snacks containing high-residue nut dust are banned.
- **External Food & Drink:** Young people are strictly prohibited from bringing outside food or drink into the cafe, unless it is medically necessary and pre-arranged with management (to prevent unchecked allergens from entering the space).
- **Hand Hygiene:** All players are required to use hand sanitiser or wash their hands with soap and water before selecting a boardgame and starting play. Sanitiser stations are provided at every gaming table cluster.
- **Game Piece Cleaning:** Tables and high-touch game components (such as dice, plastic tokens, and laminated cards) are routinely sanitised using food-safe, allergen-removing cleaning agents between groups.

5. Kitchen Practices & Preventing Cross-Contamination

To ensure the integrity of our allergen-free orders, kitchen staff must follow these production steps:

- **Storage:** Allergen-containing ingredients are stored in sealed, clearly labelled containers, physically separated from allergen-free ingredients.
- **Preparation:** When preparing an allergen-free order, staff must wash hands, change gloves, and use a dedicated, sanitised preparation area, cutting board, and utensils.
- **Cooking:** Dedicated equipment (such as separate toaster bags for gluten-free bread or dedicated oil fryers) must be used where necessary.
- **Service:** Allergen-free orders must be served to the customer directly by the staff member who prepared it, or kept physically separate from other plates during delivery.



6. Staff Training

All front-of-house staff, kitchen staff, and youth volunteers must complete mandatory allergen training upon induction, with annual refreshers. Staff must be able to:

- Accurately direct a young person or parent to the Allergen Matrix.
- Understand the seriousness of anaphylaxis and food intolerances.
- Communicate severe allergy orders directly to the kitchen supervisor.
- Never "guess" an ingredient. If a staff member is unsure, they must say: *"I don't know, let me check with the manager."*

7. Emergency Response (Anaphylaxis Protocol)

Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction. Staff/volunteers must act immediately if a young person shows signs of breathing difficulties, swelling of the face/tongue, difficulty speaking, or dizziness after consuming food:

1. **Call 999 immediately:** State clearly that a customer is suffering from suspected anaphylaxis.
2. **Ask for an AAI:** Check if the young person carries an **Auto-Adrenaline Injector (AAI)**, such as an EpiPen or Jext, and assist them in administering it if they are unable.
3. **Position safely:** Keep the person flat on their back unless they are struggling to breathe, in which case they should sit up slightly. Do not make them stand or walk.
4. **Contact Emergency Contacts:** Retrieve the young person's emergency contact details from the membership database or sign-in sheet and contact their parents/guardians immediately.
5. **Log the Incident:** Record the timeline of the event entirely in the cafe's accident and incident log.

8. Review and Update

This policy is owned by the Boardgame Cafe and is reviewed annually, or immediately following any change in UK food legislation or any near-miss allergen incidents.

Date Approved: October 2026

Review Date: October 2027

Signed: Youth Leadership Team