



School Asthma Policy – St Luke’s CofE Primary School

Asthma is a condition that affects a person’s airways. When someone with asthma comes into contact with something that irritates their airways (an asthma trigger), the muscles around the walls of the airways tighten so that they become narrower, and their lining becomes inflamed and starts to swell. Sometimes, sticky mucus or phlegm builds up, which can further narrow the airways. These reactions make it difficult to breathe, leading to symptoms of asthma.

As a school, we recognise that asthma is a widespread, serious, but controllable condition. St Luke’s Primary School welcomes all pupils with asthma and aims to support these children in participating fully in school life. We endeavour to do this by ensuring we have:

- ✓ an asthma register
- ✓ an up-to-date asthma policy
- ✓ an identified asthma champion
- ✓ all pupils with immediate access to their reliever inhaler at all times
- ✓ all pupils have an up-to-date asthma action plan
- ✓ an emergency salbutamol inhaler
- ✓ promote asthma awareness pupils, parents and staff.

Asthma Register

We have an asthma register of children within the school, which we update regularly. We do this by asking parents/carers if their child is diagnosed as asthmatic or has been prescribed a reliever inhaler. When parents/carers have confirmed that their child is asthmatic or has been prescribed a reliever inhaler we ensure that the pupil has been added to the asthma register and has:

- an up-to-date copy of their personal asthma action plan,
- their reliever inhaler in school,
- permission from the parents/carers to use the emergency salbutamol inhaler if they require it and their own inhaler is broken, out of date, empty or has been lost.

Asthma Champion

This school has a named asthma champion – Miss S Phillipson. It is the responsibility of the asthma champion to manage the asthma register, update the asthma policy, manage the emergency salbutamol inhalers (please refer to the Department of Health Guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools, March 2015) and ensure measures are in place so that children have immediate access to their inhalers. Training for this role will be provided.

Medication and Inhalers

All children with asthma should have immediate access to their reliever (usually blue) inhaler at all times. The reliever inhaler is a fast-acting medication that opens up the airways and makes it easier for the child to breathe.

Children should not bring their preventer inhaler to school as it should be taken regularly as prescribed by their doctor/nurse at home. However, if the pupil is going on a residential trip, we are aware that they will need to take the inhaler with them so they can continue taking their inhaler as prescribed.



Children are encouraged to carry their reliever inhaler as soon as they are responsible enough to do so. We would expect this to be by key stage 2. However, we will discuss this with each child's parent/carer and teacher. We recognise that all children may still need supervision in taking their inhaler.

For Younger children, reliever inhalers are kept in the classroom they will be in.

Asthma Action Plans

Asthma UK evidence shows that if someone with asthma uses personal asthma action plan they are four times *less* likely to be admitted to hospital due to their asthma. As a school, we recognise that having to attend hospital can cause stress for a family. Therefore, we believe it is essential that all children with asthma have a personal asthma action plan to ensure asthma is managed effectively within school to prevent hospital admissions.

School Environment

The school does all that it can to ensure the school environment is favourable to pupils with asthma. The school has a definitive no-smoking policy. Pupil's asthma triggers will be recorded as part of their asthma action plans and the school will ensure that pupil's will not come into contact with their triggers, where possible.

We are aware that triggers can include:

- *Colds and infection*
- *Dust and house dust mite*
- *Pollen, spores and moulds*
- *Feathers*
- *Furry animals*
- *Exercise, laughing*
- *Stress*
- *Cold air, change in the weather*
- *Chemicals, glue, paint, aerosols*
- *Food allergies*
- *Fumes and cigarette smoke (Source: Asthma UK)*

As part of our responsibility to ensure all children are kept safe within the school grounds and on trips away, a risk assessment will be performed by staff. These risk assessments will include asthma triggers which the children could be exposed to and plans will be put in place to ensure these triggers are avoided, where possible.

Exercise and activity

Taking part in sports, games and activities is an essential part of school life for all pupils. All staff will know which children in their class have asthma and all PE teachers at the school will be aware of which pupils have asthma from the school's asthma register.

Pupils with asthma are encouraged to participate fully in all activities. If a pupil needs to use their inhaler during an activity they will be encouraged to do so, however, this will be recorded, and parents / carers informed.



When asthma is affecting a pupil's education

The school are aware that the aim of asthma medication is to allow people with asthma to live a normal life. Therefore, if we recognise that if asthma is impacting on their life a pupil, and they are unable to take part in activities, tired during the day, or falling behind in lessons we will discuss this with parents/carers, and suggest they make an appointment with their asthma nurse/doctor. It may simply be that the pupil needs an asthma review, to review inhaler technique, medication review or an updated Personal Asthma Action Plan, to improve their symptoms. However, the school recognises that Pupils with asthma could be classed as having disability due to their asthma as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and therefore may have additional needs because of their asthma.

Emergency Salbutamol Inhaler in school

As a school we are aware of the guidance 'The use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools from the Department of Health' (March, 2015) which gives guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools (March, 2015).

As a school we are able to purchase salbutamol inhalers and spacers from community pharmacists without a prescription.

We have 1 emergency kit, which is kept in the School Office so it is easy to access. Each kit contains:

- A salbutamol metered dose inhaler;
- At least two spacers compatible with the inhaler;
- Instructions on using the inhaler and spacer;
- Instruction on cleaning and storing the inhaler;
- Manufacturer's information;
- A checklist of inhalers, identified by their batch number and expiry date, with monthly checks recorded;
- A note of the arrangements for replacing the inhaler and spacers;
- A list of children permitted to use the emergency inhaler;
- A record of administration

We will ensure that the emergency salbutamol inhaler is only used by children who have asthma or who have been prescribed a reliever inhaler, and for whom written parental consent has been given.

The schools asthma lead and team will ensure that:

- On a monthly basis the inhaler and spacers are present and in working order, and the inhaler has sufficient number of doses available;
- replacement inhalers are obtained when expiry dates approach;
- The plastic inhaler housing (which holds the canister) has been cleaned, dried and returned to storage following use, or that replacements are available if necessary.

Any puffs should be documented so that it can be monitored when the inhaler is running out.

Spent inhalers will be returned to the pharmacy to be recycled.

The emergency salbutamol inhaler will only be used by children:



- Who have been diagnosed with asthma and prescribed a reliever inhaler OR who have been prescribed a reliever inhaler **AND** for whom written parental consent for use of the emergency inhaler has been given.

The name(s) of these children will be clearly written in our emergency kit(s). The parents/carers will always be informed in writing if their child has used the emergency inhaler, so that this information can also be passed onto the GP.

Common 'day to day' symptoms of asthma

As a school we require that children with asthma have a personal asthma action plan which can be provided by their doctor / nurse. These plans inform us of the day-to-day symptoms of each child's asthma and how to respond to them in an individual basis.

However, we also recognise that some of the most common day-to-day symptoms of asthma are:

- Dry cough
- wheeze (a 'whistle' heard on breathing out) often when exercising
- Shortness of breath when exposed to a trigger or exercising
- Tight chest

These symptoms are usually responsive to the use of the child's inhaler and rest (e.g. stopping exercise). As per DOH document; they would not usually require the child to be sent home from school or to need urgent medical attention.

Asthma Attacks

The school recognises that if all of the above is in place, we should be able to support pupils with their asthma and hopefully prevent them from having an asthma attack. However, we are prepared to deal with asthma attacks should they occur.

The department of health Guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools (March 2015) states the signs of an asthma attack are:

- Persistent cough (when at rest)
- A wheezing sound coming from the chest (when at rest)
- Difficulty breathing (the child could be breathing fast and with effort, using all accessory muscles in the upper body)
- Nasal flaring
- Unable to talk or complete sentences. Some children will go very quiet
- May try to tell you that their chest 'feels tight' (younger children may express this as tummy ache)

If the child is showing these symptoms we will follow the guidance for responding to an asthma attack recorded below. However, we also recognise that **we need to call an ambulance immediately** and commence the asthma attack procedure without delay if the child:

*Appears exhausted

*Has a blue/white tinge around lips

*is going blue

*has collapsed



It goes on to explain that in the event of an asthma attack:

- Keep calm and reassure the child
- Encourage the child to sit up and slightly forward
- Use the child's own inhaler – if not available, use the emergency inhaler
- Remain with the child while the inhaler and spacer are brought to them
- Shake the inhaler and remove the cap
- Place the mouthpiece between the lips with a good seal, or place the mask securely over the nose and mouth
- Immediately help the child to take two puffs of salbutamol via the spacer, one at a time. (1 puff to 5 breaths)
- If there is no improvement, repeat these steps up to a maximum of 10 puffs
- Stay calm and reassure the child. Stay with the child until they feel better. The child can return to school activities when they feel better.
- If we have had to treat a child for an asthma attack in school, it is important that we inform the parents/carers and advise that they should make an appointment with the GP
- If the child has had to use 6 puffs or more in 4 hours the parents should be made aware and they should be seen by their doctor/nurse.
- **If the child does not feel better or you are worried at ANYTIME before you have reached 10 puffs, call 999 FOR AN AMBULANCE and call for parents/carers.**
- If an ambulance does not arrive in 10 minutes give another 10 puffs in the same way
- A member of staff will always accompany a child taken to hospital by an ambulance and stay with them until a parent or carer arrives

References

- Asthma UK website (2015)
- Asthma UK (2006) School Policy Guidelines.
- BTS/SIGN asthma Guideline
- Department of Health (2014) Guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhaler in schools



Appendix 1

Symptoms of an asthma attack

- Not all symptoms listed have to be present for this to be an asthma attack
- Symptoms can get worse very quickly
- If in doubt, give emergency treatment.
- Side effects from salbutamol tend to be mild and temporary. These side effects include feeling shaky, or stating that the heart is beating faster.

Cough

A dry persistent cough may be a sign of an asthma attack.

Chest tightness or pain

This may be described by a child in many ways including a 'tight chest', 'chest pain', tummy ache

Shortness of breath

A child may say that it feels like it's difficult to breathe, or that their breath has 'gone away'

Wheeze

A wheeze sounds like a whistling noise, usually heard when a child is breathing out. A child having an asthma attack may, or may not be wheezing.

Increased effort of breathing

This can be seen when there is sucking in between ribs or under ribs or at the base of the throat. The chest may be rising and falling fast and in younger children, the stomach may be obviously moving in and out. Nasal flaring.

Difficulty in speaking

The child may not be able to speak in full sentences

Struggling to breathe

The child may be gasping for air or exhausted from the effort of breathing

CALL AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY, WHILST GIVING EMERGENCY TREATMENT IF THE CHILD

- Appears exhausted
- Has blue/white tinge around the lips
- Is going blue
- Has collapsed



Administering reliever inhaled therapy through a spacer

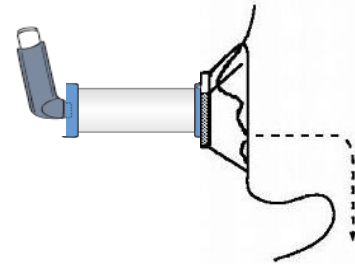
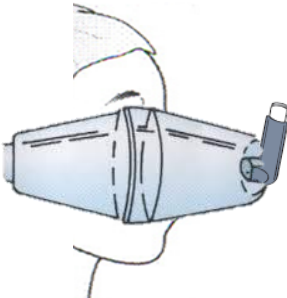
A metered dose inhaler can be used through a spacer device. **If the inhaler has not been used for 2 weeks then press the inhaler twice into the air to clear it.**

A Spacer might be

- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Clear

A spacer may have

- A mask
- A mouthpiece



1. Keep calm and reassure the child
2. Encourage the child to sit up
3. Remove cap from inhaler
4. Shake inhaler and place it in the back of the spacer
5. Place mouthpiece in mouth with a good seal, (or if using the mask place securely over the mouth and nose)
6. Encourage the child to breathe in and out slowly and gently
7. Depress the canister encouraging the child to continue to breathe in and out for 5 breaths
8. Remove the spacer
9. Wait 30 seconds and repeat steps 2-6
10. Assess for improvement in symptoms

Dependent on response steps 2-7 can be repeated according to response up to 10 puffs.

If there is no improvement **CALL 999**. If help does not arrive in 10 minutes give another 10 puffs in the same way.

If the child does not feel better or you are worried **ANYTIME** before you have reached 10 puffs, **call 999 for an ambulance and continue to treat as above.**