

# ASTHMA POLICY

# Chapel en le Frith C of E VC Primary School

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## **Asthma Policy**

Asthma is a condition that affects small tubes (airways) that carry air in and out of the lungs. When a person 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 the airways become narrower and the lining of the airways 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 (Source: Asthma UK).

As a school, we recognise that asthma is a widespread, serious, but controllable condition. This school welcomes all pupils with asthma and aims to support these children in participating fully in school life. We endeavour to do this by:

- Maintaining an asthma register
- Having an up-to-date asthma policy
- Giving all pupils immediate access to their reliever inhaler at all times
- Holding an emergency salbutamol inhaler
- Ensuring staff have regular asthma training.

### **Asthma Register**

We have an asthma register of children within the school, which we update as required. 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:

- their reliever (salbutamol/terbutaline) 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from the parents/carers to use the emergency salbutamol inhaler if they require it and their own inhaler is broken, out of date, empty or has been lost.

### **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.

Some children will also have a preventer inhaler, which is usually taken morning and night, as prescribed by the doctor/nurse. This medication needs to be taken regularly for maximum benefit. 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 cupboards in each year group communal area.

### **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. The school will ensure that pupils will not come into contact with their asthma 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

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 establish 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. (Source: Asthma UK)

Pupils with asthma are encouraged to participate fully in all activities. PE teachers will remind pupils whose asthma is triggered by exercise to take their reliever inhaler before the lesson, and to thoroughly warm up and down before and after the lesson. It is agreed with PE staff that pupils who are mature enough will carry their inhaler with them and those that are too young will have their inhaler labelled and kept in a box at the site of the lesson. If a pupil needs to use their inhaler during a lesson they will be encouraged to do so. (Source: Asthma UK)

There has been a large emphasis in recent years on increasing the number of children and young people involved in exercise and sport in and outside of school. The health benefits of exercise are well documented and this is also true for children and young people with asthma. It is therefore important that the school involve pupils with asthma as much as possible in and outside of school. The same rules apply for out of hours sport as during school hours PE. (Source: Asthma UK)

### **Emergency Salbutamol Inhaler(s) in School**

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

We have an emergency kit, which is kept in the medical room so it is easy to access. The kit contains:

- A salbutamol metered dose inhaler

- A spacer compatible with the inhaler
- Instructions on cleaning and storing the inhaler
- Manufacturer's information
- A checklist of inhalers, 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.

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 names of these children will be clearly written in our emergency kit. The parents/carers will always be informed in if their child has used the emergency inhaler.

The school 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
- Replacement spacers are available following use
- 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. Before using a salbutamol inhaler for the first time shake and release 2 puffs of medicine into the air.

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

The spacer cannot be reused. We will replace spacers following use. The inhaler can be reused, so long as it hasn't come into contact with any bodily fluids. Following use, the inhaler canister will be removed and the plastic inhaler housing and cap will be washed in warm running water, and left to dry in air in a clean safe place. The canister will be returned to the housing when dry and the cap replaced.

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

### **Common 'Day to Day' Symptoms of Asthma are:**

- Cough and wheeze (a 'whistle' heard on breathing out) when exercising
- Shortness of breath when exercising
- Intermittent cough

These symptoms are usually responsive to use of their own inhaler and rest (e.g. stopping exercise). They would not usually require the child to be sent home from school or to need urgent medical attention.

### **Signs of an Asthma Attack Include:**

- Persistent cough (when at rest)
- A wheezing sound coming from the chest (when at rest)
- Being unusually quiet
- The child complains of shortness of breath at rest, feeling tight in the chest (younger children may express this feeling as a tummy ache)
- Difficulty in breathing (fast and deep respiration)

- Nasal flaring
- Being unable to complete sentences
- Appearing exhausted
- A blue / white tinge around the lips
- Going blue

If a child is displaying the above signs of an asthma attack, the guidance below on responding to an asthma attack should be followed.

**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

#### **Responding to Signs 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 child while inhaler and spacer are brought to them
- Immediately help the child to take two separate puffs of the salbutamol via the spacer immediately
- If there is no immediate improvement, continue to give two puffs every two minutes up to a maximum of 10 puffs, or until their symptoms improve. The inhaler should be shaken between 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 the child does not feel better or you are worried at ANYTIME before you have reached 10 puffs, CALL 999 FOR AN AMBULANCE
- If an ambulance does not arrive in 10 minutes give another 10 puffs in the same way
- The child's parents or carers should be contacted after the ambulance has been called
- A member of staff should always accompany a child taken to hospital by ambulance and stay with them until a parent or carer arrives.