



Asthma Policy

Policy Type	Non-regulatory
Last Review	December 2017
Next Review	December 2018

Asthma Policy

Overview of asthma

Asthma is a disease characterised by recurrent attacks of breathlessness and wheezing. The condition is due to inflammation of the air passages in the lungs and affects sensitivity of the nerve endings in the airways causing them to become easily irritated. In an attack the lining of the passageways swell causing the airways to narrow, making it difficult to breath by reducing the flow of air in and out of the lungs. This sudden narrowing is what is termed an asthma attack.

Common Triggers

- Allergens, such as house dust mites, animal fur, pollens
- Other irritants such as cigarette smoke, strong odours, gases and cold air
- Exercise
- The common cold and chest infections
- Emotional upset

Symptoms

- Wheezing (a whistling sound when breathing)
- Breathlessness
- A tight chest- which may feel like a band tightening across the chest
- Coughing

Action to take in the event of an asthma attack

- Ensure that the reliever inhaler is taken immediately
- Sit (do not lie) the pupil down
- An adult must remain with the pupil and the parents informed
- Stay calm and talk to the pupil in a reassuring manner
- Loosen any tight clothing
- Ensure the pupil uses the inhaler every 30 – 60 seconds until relief is obtained.
- If no improvement in pupil's condition after 10 puffs -CALL 999 FOR AN AMBULANCE

In the event of a severe asthma attack call 999 FOR AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY

A severe asthma attack is defined as:

- The inhaler has no effect after 5 to 10 minutes
- The pupil is distressed and unable to talk
- The pupil is becoming exhausted
- The pupil shows signs of rapid deterioration
- There is any doubt about the pupil's condition

How to use an inhaler

The correct technique is essential to ensure the medication reaches the lungs. The pupil must be observed when taking the inhaler and help given as required

- Sit upright when using the inhaler
- Remove the inhaler cap
- Hold the inhaler upright and shake 4 or 5 times
- Breathe out fully
- Place the mouthpiece between the teeth without biting and seal around it with the lips
- Breathe in through the mouth, pressing the canister down at the same time to release a puff of the medication
- Continue to breathe in slowly and deeply for 3-5 seconds
- Hold the breath and take the inhaler from the mouth
- Continue to hold the breath for 10 seconds or as long as is comfortable, breathe out slowly
- Replace the cap straight away to keep out the dust

If mist is seen escaping from the top of the inhaler or the sides of the mouth the above steps must be immediately repeated

Management of asthma inhalers in school

- Any girl in the senior school who needs to use an inhaler should carry it with her at all times, and must be allowed to use it when necessary
- Junior school pupils must carry their inhaler in their school bag which will stay in their class room. If the pupil is away from her school bag, then emergency inhalers are available around the school site for use if required. If a junior school pupil is having a flare up of her asthma she will be allowed and encouraged to carry her reliever inhaler on her person during the school day until the flare up has improved.
- A spare named reliever inhaler should be kept in the medical room, for use in cases when a girl forgets to bring her inhaler to school
- The spare inhaler should be returned the next day or as soon as practicable if replacement of a lost inhaler is necessary
- The schools' medical database contains an asthma register listing all pupils who require an inhaler and a record of the expiry date of the inhaler
- The school nurse will write an individual care plan for each pupil and store a copy with the spare inhaler when a girl with asthma joins the school or is newly diagnosed

- The school provides an alert via the parent portal to remind parents when an inhaler is within a month of expiring
- The school nurse will contact the parents in the event of non-receipt of a replacement inhaler
- Expired inhalers should be returned to the girl to take home on receipt of the replacement and the nurse should update the register and print a new care plan specifying the expiry date of the new inhaler
- A number of emergency asthma kits are available around the school site if required.

PE and asthma management

- PE staff should ensure all senior girls requiring an inhaler have their reliever inhaler with them during activity or exercise and are allowed to take it when required.
- Junior school PE staff will ensure they have access to an emergency reliever inhaler during all lessons. If a junior school pupil is having a flare up of her asthma then she will be encouraged to bring her reliever inhaler to PE lessons.
- If a girl has asthma symptoms whilst exercising she must be allowed to stop, use an inhaler and as soon as she feels better allowed to return to the activity
- PE staff to remind pupils with exercise induced asthma to use their reliever inhaler prior to exercise
- Ensure pupils with asthma always warm up and cool down thoroughly
- All pupils requiring an inhaler must carry their own with them when attending away fixtures
- PE staff will take a spare inhaler kit with them to cover any eventuality of a girl's own inhaler running out of medication
- School trips and asthma management
- The expectation is that every girl attending a school trip will carry her own inhaler.
- The names of the girls who use asthma inhalers will appear on the major medical list prepared by the nurses and handed over to the teacher prior to the trip
- The teacher accompanying the girls will take a spare asthma inhaler kit to be used in the event of a girl's own medication running out
- If a member of staff becomes aware that a girl does not have her inhaler prior to commencement of the trip she will be sent to the medical room where a decision will be made.