

# ASTHMA FRIENDLY SCHOOL GUIDE



[asthmafriendlyschools@uhs.nhs.uk](mailto:asthmafriendlyschools@uhs.nhs.uk)

# INDEX

| Contents                                                                                                | Page |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| <b>Purpose and summary of document</b>                                                                  | 3    |
| <b>Appendix 1:</b> Asthma policy                                                                        | 7    |
| <b>Appendix 2:</b> Example school letter to parents                                                     | 11   |
| <b>Appendix 3:</b> School asthma register template                                                      | 12   |
| <b>Appendix 4:</b> Example letter to community pharmacy for emergency kit Salbutamol inhaler and Spacer | 13   |
| <b>Appendix 5:</b> Example emergency kit checklist                                                      | 14   |
| <b>Appendix 6:</b> Example letter/e-mail template for children who have used their inhaler in school    | 15   |
| <b>Appendix 7:</b> Standards checklist                                                                  | 16   |
| <b>Appendix 8:</b> Emergency plan                                                                       | 18   |

## **Introduction**

---

Asthma is one of the most common long-term conditions in childhood, affecting roughly 1 in 11 children in the UK. Most children with well-controlled asthma can take part fully in school-life. Every year, admissions for asthma attacks spike in September. This is due to new environmental exposures, viral infections and children returning to school with under-treated symptoms after the holidays.

An asthma-friendly school reduces missed school days, cuts emergency admissions and helps children participate confidently in PE, trips and everyday school life.

Asthma occurs because muscles in the airways tighten and narrow the airways making it harder to breathe. Symptoms can be triggered by stress, cold air, exercise, airway irritants, allergens and viral infections. Symptoms include wheeze, chest tightness, breathlessness and a tight, dry sounding cough.

Children might be on different types of inhalers:

- Preventer and reliever
  - A daily steroid inhaler plus a separate reliever, typically a blue salbutamol inhaler, to be used to relieve symptoms
- MART (Maintenance and Reliever Therapy) or AIR (Anti-inflammatory Reliever)
  - A single combination inhaler used both daily and to relieve symptoms

A child on MART or AIR can safely use the school's emergency blue inhaler if their own inhaler isn't available, or if the symptoms are not improving despite reaching the maximum number of puffs as advised in their Action Plan.

## **Action Plan**

---

Every child with asthma should have an Action Plan. This will cover:

- Current treatment
- Step-by-step emergency instructions
- How to use their inhaler

Schools should request an up-to-date Action Plan whenever a child starts or changes school, and after any hospital admissions or A&E attendance for asthma. Action Plans are reviewed with the child's GP or asthma nurse at least annually.

## **Asthma Attacks**

---

Staff should receive training to recognise the signs and symptoms of an asthma attack and what treatment should be given. Staff can complete the Tier 1 asthma training module provided through Supporting Children and Young People's Health.

Schools should have the Asthma Attack Action Plan (see appendix 8) clearly displayed in key staff areas (e.g. staff room and medical room) so that it is available for use in the event of an emergency.

If a pupil has an asthma attack:

- A member of staff should remain with the pupil, keeping them calm and reassuring them
- The pupil's reliever inhaler (or emergency salbutamol inhaler if needed) and spacer should be available
- Medication should be given promptly according to the Asthma Attack Action Plan and the pupil's action plan
- Parents or carers should be informed
- If the attack is severe, emergency services should be called immediately
- If the pupil is taken to hospital before a parent or carer arrives, a member of school staff should accompany them and remain until a parent or carer arrives

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

---

### **Parents and Carers**

- Inform the school if their child has asthma
- Provide the school with an up-to-date asthma Action Plan and notify the school of any changes to their child's treatment
- Ensure their child has an in-date prescribed inhaler (and spacer if required), clearly labelled with their name
- Ensure medication is available during school hours, educational visits and PE
- Replace inhalers and spacers before they expire or if they become damaged
- Ensure their child is reviewed by a healthcare professional after an asthma attack

### **School Management**

- The school has an up-to-date asthma policy (i.e. Appendix 1) that is reviewed annually and understood by all members of staff including teachers, teaching assistants, support staff and catering staff
- An Asthma Champion is appointed to act as the school's point of contact for asthma-related queries
- Appropriate arrangements are in place to support pupils with asthma in accordance with statutory guidance, including allowing students to have immediate access to emergency inhalers
- Staff receive asthma training and understand the school's emergency asthma procedures
- Maintain an up-to-date register of pupils with asthma

- Ensure emergency asthma medication is stored, maintained and used in accordance with guidance
- Ensure students with asthma are not excluded from activities due to their condition

### **Asthma Champion**

- Promote good asthma awareness across the school
- Maintain the school's asthma register
- Confirm that pupils with asthma have an up-to-date Action Plan
- Monitor the availability and expiry dates of emergency inhalers and spacers
- Coordinate staff training and ensure staff are familiar with the school's asthma procedures
- Support staff in responding to asthma concerns and emergencies
- Liaise with parents, school nurses and healthcare professionals should there be concerns about a pupil's asthma
- Lead on the school's Asthma Friendly School accreditation

### **All School Staff**

- Be familiar with the school's asthma policy and emergency asthma procedures
- Know which pupils have asthma and how to access their Action Plans
- Recognise the signs and symptoms of worsening asthma and how to respond
- Ensure pupils have access to their reliever inhaler
- Know not to send a pupil with acute asthma symptoms to collect their inhaler on their own; the inhaler and spacer should be brought to the pupil
- Encourage pupils with asthma to participate fully in school activities, including physical education, sports and educational visits, making reasonable adjustments where necessary
- Inform parents or carers if a pupil develops new asthma symptoms, requires their reliever inhaler unexpectedly or experiences an asthma attack
- Notify the Asthma Champion after any asthma emergency

### **Pupils**

Where appropriate for their age and level of understanding, pupils should be encouraged to

- Recognise when their asthma symptoms are worsening
- Tell a member of staff immediately if they develop asthma symptoms
- Carry and use their prescribed inhaler responsibly
- Participate fully in school activities while recognising when they need to stop and seek help

## **Emergency Inhalers**

---

Since 2014, schools in the UK have been permitted to buy a salbutamol inhaler without a prescription to keep on site for emergency use when a child's own inhaler isn't available or isn't working. This applies to all primary and secondary schools.

### **Practical points**

- Schools are not required to hold an emergency inhaler, but it is strongly recommended
- A spacer should always be available alongside it
- The emergency inhaler should only be used by children who have been diagnosed with asthma or have been prescribed a reliever inhaler and have parental consent on file
- It should be stored somewhere quickly accessible, with a named lead responsible for checking expiry dates and restocking
- After use, canisters should be checked for remaining doses and replaced promptly

Schools should still expect and encourage every child with asthma to carry (or have readily accessible) their own prescribed inhaler for relief of symptoms

## **Storage of Medication**

---

### **Storage**

- Pupils have immediate access to their prescribed reliever inhaler (and spacer, if required) at all times during the school day, including during PE, educational visits and other off-site activities
- Inhalers and spacers are clearly labelled with the pupil's name and stored safely in accordance with the school's asthma policy, while remaining readily accessible in an emergency
- Medication is stored at room temperature in line with manufacturer's instructions
- Parents or carers are responsible for providing in-date medication and replacing inhalers and spacers before they expire

## APPENDIX 1 – Asthma Policy

**Name of School:**

**Named School Asthma Champion:**

**Named Headteacher:**

**School Asthma Healthcare Professional Contact:**

**Date Approved:**

**Review Date:**

### **Introduction**

At [School Name], we are committed to supporting pupils with asthma to participate safely and fully in all aspects of school life.

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a legal duty on schools to support pupils with medical conditions, including asthma. This policy outlines how we support pupils with asthma and work in partnership with parents/carers and healthcare professionals to promote good asthma control.

### **Our Commitments**

We will:

- Maintain an up-to-date asthma register.
- Encourage parents/carers to provide an Action Plan.
- Ensure pupils have prompt access to their medication.
- Provide regular asthma awareness training for staff.
- Maintain an emergency salbutamol inhaler and spacer in accordance with national guidance.
- Support pupils with asthma to participate fully in school activities.
- Communicate any concerns about asthma control with parents/carers.

### **Asthma Champion**

The school has a named Asthma Champion who is responsible for:

- Maintaining the asthma register.
- Coordinating staff training and awareness.
- Overseeing emergency inhaler arrangements.

- Reviewing this policy annually.
- Acting as the school's point of contact for asthma-related queries.
- Promoting communication between the school, parents/carers and healthcare professionals.

## **Action Plans**

Parents/carers should inform the school if their child has asthma or has been prescribed an inhaler.

Pupils with asthma will be noted on the school's asthma register. We will ask parents/carers to:

- Provide written consent for use of the school's emergency salbutamol inhaler.
- Supply an in-date inhaler (and spacer where appropriate).
- Provide an Action Plan.

## **Medication**

All pupils with asthma should have immediate access to their prescribed inhaler(s).

Pupils will have been prescribed one of the following two options:

- Maintenance and Reliever Treatment (MART) or Anti-Inflammatory and Reliever (AIR) for which a single inhaler is used for prevention (if needed) and symptom relief.
- A separate preventer (brown) and reliever (blue) inhaler.

Children are encouraged to carry their inhaler when they are thought to be responsible to do so. This is usually by Key Stage 2 and should be agreed with parents/carers and school staff.

## **Staff Training**

The school is committed to ensuring staff have the knowledge and confidence to support pupils with asthma.

Asthma training will be provided and will include:

- Understanding asthma and its triggers.
- Recognising worsening symptoms and asthma attacks.
- Inhaler techniques.
- Awareness of different treatment approaches.
- Emergency asthma procedures.



- Use of the school's emergency salbutamol inhaler.

## **Physical Activity**

Pupils with asthma are encouraged to participate fully in PE, sport, educational visits and extracurricular activities.

Where exercise is identified as a trigger, pupils will follow their Action Plan. Inhalers will remain accessible during physical activities.

## **Monitoring Asthma Control**

The school recognises that asthma should not limit a pupil's attendance, participation or learning.

If a pupil experiences frequent symptoms, increasing inhaler use, difficulty participating in activities, or repeated absences related to asthma, we will discuss these concerns with parents/carers and may recommend a review with a healthcare professional.

Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be considered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

## **Emergency Salbutamol Inhaler**

The school maintains an emergency salbutamol inhaler and spacer in accordance with Department of Health guidance.

The emergency inhaler may be used for pupils who:

- Have asthma or have been prescribed a reliever inhaler.
- Have written parental consent for emergency inhaler use.

Parents/carers will be informed whenever the emergency inhaler has been used.

## **Asthma Attacks and Emergency Management**

All staff should be aware of the signs of an asthma attack, which may include:

- Wheeze
- Shortness of breath
- Working harder to breathe
- Feels tight chested
- Persistent dry cough

Severe life-threatening symptoms might include

- Breathing hard and fast
- Too breathless to talk in sentences
- Looks frightened and/or exhausted
- Blue or pale lips
- Confused or unresponsive

If a pupil has an asthma attack, staff will:

1. Keep the pupil calm and sitting upright.
2. Support them to use their inhaler.
3. Use the school's emergency inhaler if needed.
4. Follow the pupil's Action Plan
5. Monitor their response closely.

An ambulance will be called immediately if symptoms are severe, worsening, not responding to treatment, or if staff have any concerns regarding the pupil's condition.

Parents/carers will be informed.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Asthma Champion and Senior Leadership Team.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2 – Example School Letter to Parents

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are currently reviewing our asthma policy and would be grateful if you could update your child's asthma information.

Our asthma policy includes having an emergency salbutamol reliever inhaler on site. This is a precautionary measure for emergency use. You must still provide your child with their own inhaler. If you do not wish the school to use the emergency inhaler in an emergency situation, please indicate this below.

Please provide a copy of your child's Action Plan.

Yours sincerely,

- ☐ I confirm that my child has asthma.
- ☐ I confirm my child has been prescribed an inhaler.
- ☐ My child has a labelled, in-date inhaler which they will have with them at school
- ☐ I have provided a copy of my child's Action Plan
- ☐ I consent for the school to use the emergency salbutamol inhaler if needed in an emergency.

Signed:

Date:

Name:

Relationship to child:

Child's Name:

Year Group/Form:

## APPENDIX 3 – School Asthma Register Template

[illegible]

## APPENDIX 4 – Example Letter to Community Pharmacy for Emergency Kit Salbutamol Inhaler and Spacer

*Please ensure letter is on School Headed Paper*

*Please ask the pharmacist to demonstrate inhaler and spacer use if not familiar with the inhaler and/or spacer.*

**Date:**

Dear Community Pharmacist,

As part of the Asthma Friendly School initiative, I would like to purchase **one/two salbutamol inhalers** and **one/two suitable spacers**. These inhalers and spacers will be used in the event of an emergency for children with asthma where parents have provided prior consent. The Human Medicines (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2014 allows schools to buy emergency inhalers to keep in school.

Yours Sincerely,

*Wet signature*

School Name:

Head Teacher Name:

Date:

## APPENDIX 5 – Example Emergency Kit Checklist

| <b>An emergency asthma inhaler kit should include:</b>                                  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Date and signed</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Two salbutamol metered dose inhalers that are within their expiratory date with spacers |            |           |                        |
| Instructions on using the inhaler and spacer                                            |            |           |                        |
| Manufacturer's information leaflet kept with inhaler and spacer                         |            |           |                        |
| A list of children permitted to use the emergency inhaler                               |            |           |                        |
| A record of administration                                                              |            |           |                        |
| Asthma Champions' details                                                               |            |           |                        |

## APPENDIX 6 – Example Letter/Email Template for Children Who Have Used Their Inhaler in School

**Child's name:**

**Class:**

**Date:**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This letter is to notify you that..... has had problems with their breathing today and required their reliever inhaler.

..... number of puffs were given at ..... (time and date).

If your child continues to need their inhaler for worsening symptoms, we recommend you arrange an urgent review according to your child's Action Plan

Yours sincerely,

## APPENDIX 7 – Standards Checklist

| Standard                        | Checklist                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Evidence/Comment                                                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Asthma Champion</b>          | Asthma Champion identified and school staff made aware of role                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <i>Name of person and role in school</i>                                  |
| <b>Asthma Policy</b>            | Asthma policy in place.<br>Asthma policy available for parents to review.<br>Inhalers are kept with the child or in an accessible place in school (with spacers).<br>When kept in school the Asthma Champion checks expiry dates at least every 6 months and reminds parents to provide another inhaler prior to expiry. | <i>Asthma policy displayed- for example on the school website.</i>        |
| <b>Asthma Register</b>          | An asthma register is in place and accessible to staff.<br>Parents/carers are routinely contacted before starting school to ask about asthma.<br>Parents/carers are reminded to inform school of any diagnosis of asthma.                                                                                                | <i>Confirm asthma register in place and how this is kept updated.</i>     |
| <b>Emergency Medication Kit</b> | School has an Emergency Medication Kit(s) consisting of an inhaler and a spacer.<br>This can be purchased from a local pharmacy.<br>The kit is kept in an accessible space within school.<br>Provision should be made for emergencies when on school trips/residentials/attending sports events.                         | <i>Confirm emergency kit in school.</i>                                   |
| <b>Asthma Action Plan</b>       | A copy of a child's Asthma Action Plan is requested for each child with asthma.<br>Each school should have an Asthma Attack Emergency Plan that can be used in the absence of an Action Plan                                                                                                                             | <i>Confirm that Action Plans have been requested from parents/carers.</i> |



|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recording and Sharing Information</b> | <p>Staff should keep a register in school of all students who have asthma. Staff should inform the Asthma Champion when a child has used their inhaler within school (wherever possible).</p> <p>Staff/Asthma Champion should ensure that contact is made with parents/carers when an inhaler is used in school.</p> <p>PE staff/Asthma Champion should take note of any children who wheeze or regularly require their inhaler post exercise and should ensure parents are informed to seek clinical review.</p> | <p><i>Confirm that a record sharing system is in place and that staff understand that deterioration in condition (including the use of medication such as inhalers) should be shared with parents.</i></p> |
| <b>Training</b>                          | <p>At least 85% of school staff should have received asthma training. All members of PE staff should complete training.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p><i>Confirm the number of staff who have completed training within the last 12 months (must equate to 85%).</i></p>                                                                                      |

### Asthma Attack Action Plan

