



MANAGEMENT OF ASTHMA IN SCHOOLS POLICY



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Policy for the Management of Asthma in Schools in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

Name of Policy: Management of Asthma in Schools

Authors: Asthma Education Sub-Group members Other Contributors: Asthma Clinical Network Members

Purpose: The purpose of this policy document is to enable schools to support children and young people with asthma effectively whilst is the care of the school

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STW Asthma Policy

1. Policy Statement

To provide a framework for the management of asthma in schools.

2. Context

Asthma is a common long-term condition; it affects the airways which carry air in and out of the lungs and it can make it difficult to breathe.

- In the UK it is estimated that 5.4 million people have asthma: one in 11 children (1.1 million)
- Approximately 4,000 school age children living in Shropshire Telford and Wrekin have a diagnosis of asthma
- In addition, many children have suspected asthma and are prescribed asthma treatment
- The UK has among the highest prevalence rates of asthma symptoms in children worldwide
- On average there are two children with asthma in every classroom in the UK
- Every 10 seconds someone has a potentially life-threatening asthma attack
- Asthma is the most common long-term medical condition in children and the predominant reason for children to take medication at school
- Asthma causes more absences from school than any other medical condition

All children must be safe and able to fully participate in school life. Asthma is a long-term condition and if well controlled (with preventive medication taken at home) should not impact on a child's quality of life or ability to participate in any activity. Children with asthma must be supported to manage their own asthma at school by people that understand their condition. A school environment must be sensitive to the needs of a child with asthma. Children with asthma should not need to routinely take asthma medication at school but must always have access to their reliever medication. Emergency treatment may be required by **ANY** child with asthma when they are having an asthma attack.

Further information about asthma in children can be found in Appendix 1

3. Responsibilities

The school:

- Will recognise the needs of pupils with asthma
- Will have a named member of staff to act as a school asthma champion (**see appendix 2**)
- Will maintain and regularly update a register of pupils with asthma
- Will maintain a written record of treatment and emergency treatment, as per the Individual Health Care Plan (and Personalised Asthma Action Plan if available), for all pupils with asthma
- School staff will be aware of and follow the guidance in each child's Individual Health Care Plan (**see appendix 3**)
- Will inform parents when their child has used their own inhaler or the school emergency inhaler whilst in the care of school
- Will understand that immediate access to reliever medication (**usually an inhaler**) is vital for the safety of all pupils with asthma
- Will ensure that all pupils with asthma have easy access to their reliever inhaler, and a spare/emergency inhaler if required
- Will encourage and help pupils with asthma to participate fully in all aspects of school life
- Will do all it can to ensure that the school environment is safe for all pupils with asthma
- Will ensure all school staff receive annual training on the basic awareness of asthma and the correct use of inhalers (**see appendix 4**)
- Will ensure all staff have a clear understanding of what procedures to follow if a child has an asthma attack (including the use of the emergency salbutamol inhaler)
- Will ensure that children with asthma have access to their reliever inhaler during off site activities or trips and this should be included in their risk assessment

The school nursing team:

- Will ensure school nurses are up to date in asthma management and receive annual updates on medical developments in asthma and its management **(see appendix 4)**
- Will recommend asthma training to schools annually
- Will advise schools on the development of Individual Health Care Plans by signposting to relevant policy and templates
- Will promote and manage the Asthma Friendly Schools Scheme **(see Appendix 5)** and provide evaluation and feedback to leadership and commissioners

Pupils with asthma:

- Will have a clear understanding of how to seek help if they have asthma symptoms or having an asthma attack
- Will carry their own reliever inhaler or know how to access their reliever inhaler if they need it

Parents/carers:

- Will inform the school of their child's asthma diagnosis
- Will provide school with a reliever inhaler (and spacer device if prescribed) that has been prescribed for their child at the beginning of each school year. The original prescription label must be on the inhaler
- Will ensure that their child's reliever inhaler/s (and spacer/s if prescribed) are maintained and replaced when expired or otherwise indicated
- Will notify school in the event of any changes to their child's asthma management plan as soon as possible and share a copy of their child's Personalised Asthma Action Plan with the school every time it is updated by the child's asthma health care provider
- Will complete all documentation required by school, including consent for the administration of medication
- Will support the school with the development of their child's Individualised Health Care Plan
- Will retrieve their child's inhaler from school at the end of the summer term.

4. Asthma Medication in School

- The school will encourage all children with asthma to have their own reliever inhaler (and spacer device if prescribed) in school
- The school will either: in accordance with statutory guidance, ensure that an emergency salbutamol inhaler and spacer device is available for emergency use or ensure a spare reliever inhaler for all children on the school asthma register, can be stored at school
- In exceptional circumstances a child may have access to the emergency inhaler and spacer following the guidance set out by the Department of Health **(see appendix 3)**
- The school will risk assess for the need to purchase a minimum of 1 emergency salbutamol inhaler and at least one spacer device from a pharmacy and complete appropriate documentation
- The school will (if applicable) replace the emergency salbutamol inhaler/s prior to the inhaler expiry date
- The school will take responsibility for the safekeeping of the emergency salbutamol inhaler or each child's spare reliever inhaler.
- If the emergency salbutamol inhaler is misplaced it is the responsibility of the school to purchase a replacement from a pharmacy
- Schools should follow national guidance on arrangements for the supply, storage, care and disposal of the inhaler as set out in the national guidance **(see appendix 3)**
- All inhalers will be returned to parents at the end of the summer term

5. Training

- All staff should complete Tier 1 children's asthma training as recommended by NHS England (**see appendix 4**)
- Asthma Champions should have additional training to support them to implement the school asthma policy locally – this will be provided by the school nursing team or NHS Children's Asthma Specialist
- All school staff will complete an annual update on asthma awareness and correct inhaler technique (**see Appendix 4**)
- All new school staff to complete Tier 1 children's asthma training as soon as possible after appointment
- Additional/alternative asthma training may be delivered to school staff by a recognized Tier 1 provider e.g. school nursing team or accredited training provider

Appendix 1

Asthma awareness information and guidance

Asthma is a condition that affects small tubes (airways) that carry air in and out of the lungs. Asthma is not the same in all children; there are different types of asthma, and the condition can range in severity. Asthma is a chronic but variable condition which means that children can seem quite well much of the time but have periods where they are affected by asthma symptoms. The symptoms of asthma are:

- Cough
- Wheeze
- Chest tightness
- Shortness of breath

When a child with asthma is exposed to something that irritates their airways ([a trigger](#)), the muscles around the walls of the airways tighten so that the airways become narrow and inflamed. These processes within the airways cannot be seen but will lead to asthma symptoms that can worsen (over time or suddenly) if not managed correctly.

[Asthma attacks](#), **which can be life-threatening**, develop over a period of hours/days or can occur quite suddenly; this may depend on several factors' individual to each child. Asthma can usually be controlled, and asthma attacks can usually be avoided if asthma is managed well.

[To control asthma](#), medication is needed to reduce inflammation in the airways – this medication is usually prescribed to be taken regularly, once or twice daily, and is taken in the home setting. In the event of asthma symptoms or an asthma attack occurring, [reliever medication](#) is needed to open the tightened airways. Generally, reliever medication should only be needed occasionally, **not on a regular basis**.

Traditionally, reliever inhalers were blue and therefore were easily recognisable.

Other reliever inhalers, **which are not blue in colour**, are now available. Children with these inhalers have an asthma treatment plan called [MART](#) or [AIR](#) – they have one inhaler that both reduces inflammation in the airways and relieves symptoms. If necessary, the school emergency inhaler can still be used by children with a MART or AIR inhaler – the child's Individual Health Care Plan (and Personalised Asthma Action Plan) should be followed.

Appendix 2

School Asthma Champions

A school Asthma Champion is a member of school staff who takes an active role supporting the school with the practical implementation of their asthma policy. They should work closely with their school nurse and link with others within and outside the school for support as needed e.g. Asthma Nurse Specialist, local community asthma team, school safeguarding lead, SEND lead.

The school's asthma champion will have responsibility to ensure that:

- They have a clear understanding of the school asthma policy
- The school asthma policy is accessible to all staff and parents
- The school asthma register is kept up-to date and accessible to all staff
- All children on the school asthma register have an Individual Health Care Plan
- All children on the asthma register have consent status recorded for use of emergency salbutamol inhaler and their own reliever inhaler, and their personal asthma plan should be shared with the school
- Procedures for the management of asthma attacks in school are in place
- Children with asthma always have access to their own reliever inhaler and the school emergency inhaler (or their own spare reliever inhaler)
- All school staff asthma training is up to date
- Whole school awareness of asthma is promoted via adopting the Asthma Friendly School Scheme and other methods such as school assemblies, awareness events and curriculum activity,
- Asthma medication in school is monitored to ensure it is accessible and within expiry dates
- School has an adequate supply of emergency asthma kits, each containing a salbutamol inhaler and spacer devices for emergency use, as set out in the Department of Health guidance
- Emergency asthma kits are checked regularly and contents replenished immediately after use
- Parents/carers are informed if a child has needed to use their own reliever inhaler or the school's emergency inhaler whilst at school

Appendix 3

Documentation Supporting pupils with medical conditions:

All schools have a statutory duty to support pupils with medical conditions.

This duty is set out [in guidance from the Department for Education](#) about the support that all pupils with medical conditions should receive whilst at school.

The [detailed guidance document](#) includes both statutory and non-statutory advice.

The statutory guidance applies to any 'appropriate authority' as defined in section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014. That means governing bodies in the case of maintained schools, proprietors in the case of academies and management committees in the case of pupil referral units (PRUs).

'Appropriate authorities' must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their statutory duty to make arrangements to support pupils at school with medical conditions. The guidance also applies to activities taking place off-site as part of normal educational activities. In this document, references to schools are taken to include academies and PRUs and references to governing bodies include proprietors in academies and management committees of PRUs. Further advice, where provided, is based on good practice but is non-statutory.

- A full set of [supporting template documents](#) is available for schools to adopt and use to implement the guidance
- Links to a [range of supporting resources](#) have also been provided
- Early years settings should continue to apply the [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#).

Emergency salbutamol inhalers for schools:

From 1st October 2014 the Human Medicines (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2014 will allow schools to buy salbutamol inhalers, without a prescription, for use in emergencies. This applies to all primary and secondary schools in the UK. Schools which choose to keep an emergency inhaler should establish a policy or protocol for the use of the emergency inhaler based on this guidance.

[Guidance for schools in England on using emergency salbutamol inhalers](#) from the Department of Health and Social Care sets out the legislation and the process for schools to follow. The emergency salbutamol inhaler should only be used by children, for whom written parental consent for use of the emergency inhaler has been given, who have either been diagnosed with asthma and prescribed an inhaler, or who have been prescribed an inhaler as reliever medication. The inhaler can be used if the pupil's prescribed inhaler is not available (for example, because it is broken, or empty).

Appendix 4

Whole School Asthma Awareness Asthma Training for School Staff

The [NHS National bundle of care for children and young people with asthma](#) sets out a [capability framework](#) detailing the skills and capability required for all health and non-healthcare professionals involved in the care of children with asthma. There are 5 Tiers in the framework. The level of skills and capability for school staff is set out in Tier 1 of the framework as follows:

Level of care: Signposting

Example profession: School staff, social care staff, leaders of children's clubs

Knowledge and skills: Basic awareness of asthma, its management, inhaler use and basic modifiable risk factors. Able to signpost families to appropriate support and resources.

[A free online Tier 1 course is available.](#) This course is accredited by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health is recommended for all school staff in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin.

Additional local supplementary training will also be available but does not replace the need for completion of the recommended Tier 1 training. Information about this will be shared via local authority communication and the school nursing team.

Asthma awareness and education for pupils and parents

Whole school asthma awareness offers many benefits for the school community:

- Supports school inclusivity for children with asthma
- Helps parents of children with asthma to be confident that their child will be safe at school
- Improves awareness and understanding of the most common medical condition experienced by children across the whole school community
- Provides opportunities for relevant curriculum activities

The Asthma Friendly School Scheme (**see Appendix 5**) provides schools in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin with access to a range of resources to support whole school asthma awareness and a straightforward process to achieve Asthma Friendly School status and accreditation.

Appendix 5

Asthma Friendly Schools Scheme

The Asthma Friendly Schools Scheme in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin is a partnership initiative between health and the local authority that encourages all schools to welcome children with asthma and put simple strategies in place to ensure they can fully participate in school life.

An Asthma Friendly School is one where children with asthma are safe and can fully participate in all elements of school life. By signing up, schools are committing to ensuring that all school staff know what to do if a child has an asthma attack. An Asthma Friendly School

- Adopts their local authority recommended school asthma policy or equivalent
- Has a named asthma lead/champion amongst its staff
- Maintains an up-to-date asthma register of the children in its care
- Ensures staff complete baseline asthma training and annual updates
- Ensures staff can recognise when a child is having an asthma attack and know what to do if this happens
- Ensures children always have easy access to their reliever inhaler
- Provides a school emergency inhaler and spacer device within the allowable legislation **or** ensures every child with asthma has a spare inhaler for emergency use stored safely on site.

Further information and details about how to apply can be found at **Asthma Friendly Schools Scheme (link to be added once created)**