



# Asthma Policy

**St Paul's**  
Primary School

**Adopted by: Children, Families and Community Committee**

**On: Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

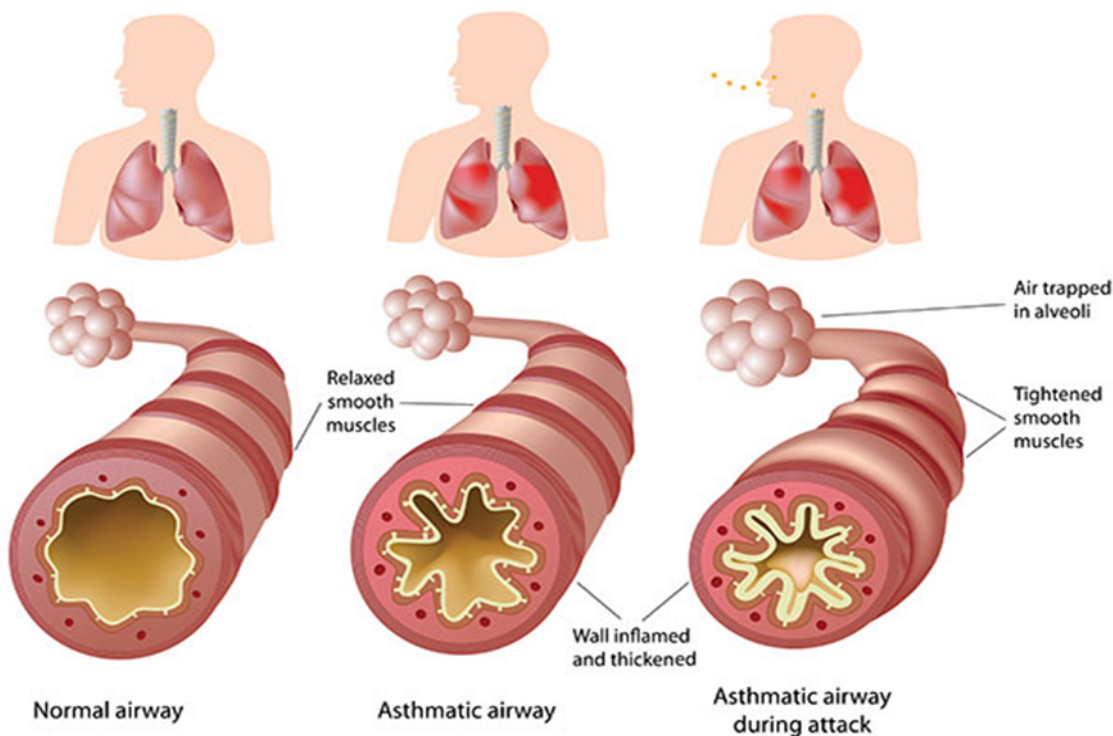
**Review: Summer 2027**

**Asthma Lead: Hannah Douglas-Pennant**

**Welfare Officer: Hannah Douglas-Pennant**

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.

## Asthma and Your Airways



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 ensuring we have:

- ✓ an asthma register
- ✓ up-to-date asthma policy,
- ✓ an asthma lead,
- ✓ all pupils with immediate access to their reliever inhaler at all times,
- ✓ an emergency salbutamol inhaler
- ✓ ensure all staff have regular asthma training,
- ✓ promote asthma awareness pupils, parents and staff.

## **Asthma Register**

We have an asthma register of children within the school, which we update on a regular basis. The register is collated onto Arbor (the school MIS). A hard copy is kept by the Asthma Lead in the welfare folder. When parents/carers have advised us 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) 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from the parents/carers to use the emergency salbutamol inhaler if they require it and their own inhaler is broken, out of date, empty or has been lost. (Appendix 2)

## **Asthma Lead**

This school has a member of staff who is trained in asthma management. It is the responsibility of this member of staff to manage the asthma register, update the asthma policy, manage the emergency salbutamol inhalers, ensure measures are in place so that children have immediate access to their inhalers.

## **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.

We recognise that all children will need supervision in taking their inhaler.

Reliever inhalers are kept in the classroom in the class medical bag, as per the guidelines.

School staff are not required to administer asthma medicines to pupils however many children have poor inhaler technique, or are unable to take the inhaler by themselves. Failure to receive their medication could end in hospitalisation or even death. Staff who have had asthma training, and are happy to support children as they use their inhaler, can be essential for the well-being of the child.

## **Asthma Action Plans**

Asthma UK evidence shows that if someone whose asthma is well managed is 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. Hospital admissions will be considerably reduced for all children whose asthma is managed effectively.

Children, with an asthma diagnosis shared with the school, have an asthma plan (Appendix 1). This is scanned onto their *Arbor* profile. A hard copy is kept in the class medical bag, along with their inhaler, and in the Asthma Lead's asthma folder.

## **Staff training**

Staff receive annual asthma training provided by asthma nurse specialists/school nurses

## **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 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*

As part of our responsibility to ensure all children are kept safe within the school grounds and on school trips, 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.

Pupils with asthma are encouraged to participate fully in all activities. During PE, teachers will remind pupils whose asthma is triggered by exercise to take their reliever inhaler during or after physical activities if required.

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.

## 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 asthma is impacting on 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 the school nurse 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, 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. We have summarised key points from this policy below.

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

We have THREE emergency kits, which are kept in The Welfare Room (on each site) and in the main school office . Each kit contains:

- A salbutamol metered dose inhaler;
- Three disposable 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.
- A note of the arrangements for replacing the inhaler and spacers;
- A list of children permitted to use the emergency inhaler:

We understand that salbutamol is a relatively safe medicine, particularly if inhaled, but all medicines can have some adverse effects. Those of inhaled salbutamol are well known, tend to be mild and temporary are not likely to cause serious harm. The child may feel a bit shaky or may tremble, or they may say that they feel their heart is beating faster.

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 school's main asthma trained staff member will ensure that:

- 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.

The spacer can be reused by the same child and must be named. 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.

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 their own inhaler or the emergency inhaler, so that this information can also be passed onto the GP.

### **Common 'day to day' symptoms of asthma**

We 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, they would not usually require the child to be sent home from school or 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.

All staff will receive an asthma update annually, and as part of this training, they are taught how to recognise an asthma attack and how to manage an asthma attack. Asthma posters are displayed throughout the school.

### **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. 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

### **The guidance explains 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 you 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 within 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



# My Asthma Plan



Your asthma plan tells you when to take your asthma medicines.



And what to do when your asthma gets worse.

Name:

## 1 My daily asthma medicines

- My preventer inhaler is called \_\_\_\_\_ and its colour is \_\_\_\_\_
- I take \_\_\_\_\_ puff/s of my preventer inhaler in the morning and \_\_\_\_\_ puff/s at night. I do this every day even if I feel well.
- Other asthma medicines I take every day:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- My reliever inhaler is called \_\_\_\_\_ and its colour is \_\_\_\_\_. I take \_\_\_\_\_ puff/s of my reliever inhaler (usually blue) when I wheeze or cough, my chest hurts or it's hard to breathe.
- My best peak flow is \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 When my asthma gets worse

I'll know my asthma is getting worse if:

- I wheeze or cough, my chest hurts or it's hard to breathe, or
- I'm waking up at night because of my asthma, or
- I'm taking my reliever inhaler (usually blue) more than three times a week, or
- My peak flow is less than \_\_\_\_\_

### If my asthma gets worse, I should:

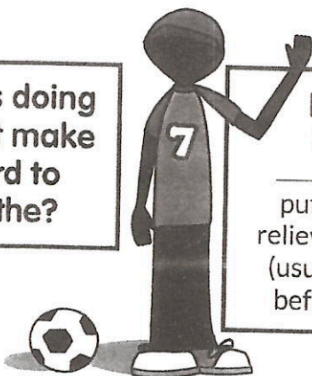
Keep taking my preventer medicines as normal.

And also take \_\_\_\_\_ puff/s of my blue reliever inhaler every four hours.



If I'm not getting any better doing this I should see my doctor or asthma nurse today.

Does doing sport make it hard to breathe?



If YES I take:

\_\_\_\_\_ puff/s of my reliever inhaler (usually blue) beforehand.

Remember to use my inhaler with a spacer (if I have one)





# My Asthma Plan

## 3 When I have an asthma attack

I'm having an asthma attack if:

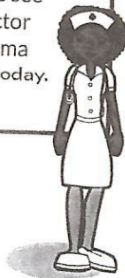
- My blue reliever inhaler isn't helping, or
- I can't talk or walk easily, or
- I'm breathing hard and fast, or
- I'm coughing or wheezing a lot, or
- My peak flow is less than \_\_\_\_\_

When I have an asthma attack, I should:

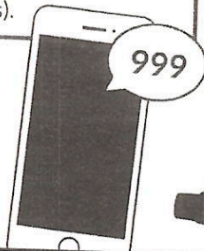
Sit up – don't lie down. Try to be calm.

Take one puff of my reliever inhaler every 30 to 60 seconds up to a total of 10 puffs.

Even if I start to feel better, I don't want this to happen again, so I need to see my doctor or asthma nurse today.



If I still don't feel better and I've taken ten puffs, I need to call 999 straight away. If I am waiting longer than 15 minutes for an ambulance I should take another \_\_\_\_\_ puff/s of my blue reliever inhaler every 30 to 60 seconds (up to 10 puffs).



My asthma triggers:

Write down things that make your asthma worse

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I need to see my asthma nurse every six months

Date I got my asthma plan:

Date of my next asthma review:

Doctor/asthma nurse contact details:

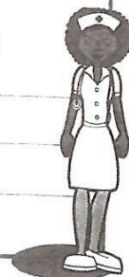
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Make sure you have your reliever inhaler (usually blue) with you. You might need it if you come into contact with things that make your asthma worse.

## Parents – get the most from your child's action plan

Make it easy for you and your family to find it when you need it

- Take a **photo** and keep it on your mobile (and your child's mobile if they have one)
- **Stick a copy** on your fridge door
- **Share your child's action plan** with school, grandparents and babysitter (a printout or a photo).

You and your parents can get your questions answered:

Call our friendly expert nurses

**0300 222 5800**

(9am – 5pm; Mon – Fri)

Get information, tips and ideas

**www.asthma.org.uk**



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Mr J Wright Headteacher

*Caring for all...Growing with God*

CONSENT FORM

USE OF EMERGENCY SALBUTAMOL INHALER

Child showing symptoms of asthma / having asthma attack

1. I can confirm that my child has been diagnosed with asthma / has been prescribed an inhaler [delete as appropriate].
2. In the event of my child displaying symptoms of asthma, and if their inhaler is not available or is unusable, I consent for my child to receive salbutamol from an emergency inhaler held by the school for such emergencies.

Signed:

Date: .....

Name (print).....

Child's name: .....

Class: .....

