St. John’s Primary School

Asthma Policy

**What is Asthma?**

Asthma is a condition affecting the airways – the small tubes that carry air in and out of the lungs. Children with asthma have airways that are almost always red and sensitive (inflamed). The airways can react badly when they come in contact with something that irritates their airways. The usual symptoms of asthma are coughing, wheezing, tightness in the chest and shortness of breath.

**Policy**

This policy has been drawn up following the school’s health service guidelines in consultation with staff and governors, to respond to the needs of children with asthma in our school. When a child joins the school, parents/carers are asked if their child has any medical conditions, including asthma, on their Admissions Form.

**Our School**

* Welcomes all pupils with asthma and recognises that it is a widespread, serious but controllable condition
* will encourage and help children with asthma to participate fully in all aspects of school life, including PE lessons outings and after school clubs
* recognises that immediate access to inhalers at all times is vital
* will do all it can to ensure that the whole school environment is favourable to children with asthma
* will ensure that all pupils understand asthma
* will work in partnership with parents/carers, school governors, health professionals, school staff and children to ensure the successful implementation of a school asthma policy
* ensure that all staff who come in contact with pupils know what to do in an asthma attack

**Medication and Inhalers**

There are two types of treatments, both of which come in an inhaler: **Relievers** - taken quickly to open up the airways and help the child to breathe. They are usually in blue containers. The blue inhaler needs to be taken as soon as asthma symptoms start. They work by quickly relaxing the muscles that surround the airways, making it easier to breathe.

**Preventers**  - taken daily to make airways less sensitive to triggers. They are usually in brown or white containers.

**Managing Asthma Medication in School**

* Children should keep their inhaler with them at all times as soon as they are able. The child’s parent/carer and doctor should decide when they are old enough to do this.
* Parents/carers are asked to ensure that the school has a labelled spare reliever inhaler. This is stored in the school office. All inhalers must be labelled with the child’s name by the parent/carer. Inhalers must be accessible to the pupil at all times.
* A record of each child’s medication will be kept using the Pupil Medication Request Form. This should be completed by the child’s doctor/parent/carer. One copy will be kept in the School Office and one copy in the classroom with the medication.
* Inhalers must always be taken on school trips and outings.
* School staff are not required to administer asthma medicines to pupils (except in an emergency), however many of the staff are happy to do this. All school staff will let pupils take their own medicines when they need to.
* All staff will record the administration of asthma medication in our medicines book which is stored in the office.

**PE and Exercise**

* All staff should understand the needs of children with asthma whilst taking part in physical activity.
* All teachers should know which children in their class have asthma.
* Children with exercise-induced asthma should be given the opportunity to take a puff of their inhaler before they start exercise, and to thoroughly warm up and down before and after the lesson.
* Children should bring their inhalers to P.E. class and all sports events.
* If children say they are too wheezy to continue, they should take their reliever inhaler and rest until they feel better.
* All staff should familiarize themselves with children’s medical needs and ensure inhalers are with the children at all activities.

**After School Activities**

All teachers and coaches involved with after school sports activities will be made aware of the children with asthma and the potential triggers for pupils with asthma when exercising. They will be provided with guidance on what to do in the event of an asthma attack.

**What to do in the Event of an Asthma Attack**

In the event of an asthma attack, the school follows the procedure outlined by Asthma UK in its School Asthma pack. This procedure is visibly displayed in the Staff Room, and every classroom.

* Ensure that the child’s blue reliever inhaler is taken.
* Stay calm and reassure the child.
* Hold the child’s hand but do not put your arm

around the child as this can be restricting.

* Help the child to breathe. Encourage slow, deep breathing. Most children find it easier to sit upright. Lying down is not recommended.
* The attack should then subside and the child can carry on with normal activity.

 In the event of an emergency, phone for an ambulance immediately and contact the child’s parent/carer.

An emergency situation exists when:-

- the reliever has no effect after 5 – 10 minutes

- the child is distressed or unable to talk

- the child is getting exhausted

- there are any doubts about the child’s condition

**Making the school asthma-friendly**

The school will ensure that all pupils and staff understand asthma.

Asthma will be included in the curriculum as the need arises in relation to personal health and the role of drugs as medicines.

The school environment will be favourable to pupils with asthma. The school will not use any chemicals that are potential triggers for pupils with asthma.

**When a pupil is falling behind in lessons**

* If a pupil misses a lot of time at school or is tired in class due to lack of sleep related to their asthma the class teacher will make the parents/carers aware of ways to help their child. If necessary the teacher will discuss the child’s needs with the special education needs co-ordinator.
* The school recognises that pupils may have special education needs because of their asthma.
* **Using a School Asthma Card**

Our school will issue a School Asthma Card to the parents/carers to be completed for each child with asthma.

**Guidelines for Implementing the Policy**

* All staff and parents/carers of children with asthma will be given a copy of the policy.
* All staff will be made aware of asthma.
* New staff will be informed about the policy, and training reinforced when necessary.
* Guidelines on what to do in the event of an asthma attack will be displayed in the Staff Room and every classroom.
* Smoking will not be allowed on the school premises to ensure that children are never exposed to the dangers of passive smoking.
* School pets will not be kept in classrooms other than when they are linked to a topic which the children are learning about.
* All staff should familiarise themselves with children’s medical needs and ensure inhalers are with the children on any outing or after school activity and returned to the classroom at the end of the session.