



St Mary's School
C A M B R I D G E

Asthma Policy

This policy is the responsibility of the Nurses

Last review: October 2021

Next review: September 2022

Overview

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires that governing bodies of English schools to make arrangements for supporting students at school with medical conditions. It requires that schools develop policies to support these pupils, write health care plans, have procedures to safely manage the medicines involved and ensure staff are appropriately trained and supported.

Asthma is the most common chronic condition, affecting young people in school. On average there are two children with asthma in every classroom. There are over 25,000 emergency hospital admissions for asthma amongst children in a year.

Aim

The aim of the policy is to ensure that all pupils suffering with Asthma are identified, have a treatment plan, always have access to appropriate medicines in school and their asthma is safely managed by school staff.

Supporting documents

DOH September 2014 Guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools

DfE 2015 Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and academies in England

Key responsibilities for nursing staff

- Identify all pupils with Asthma in the School by ensuring parents have completed a school medical form either at school entry or at the request of the nursing team.
- A **School Asthma Card** must be completed by parents in association with the prescribing doctor or nurse and be updated annually. This will act as the pupil's treatment plan to clarify asthma status, detail the pupil's medication and requests permission for school staff to administer prescribed medication. This will also act as permission for staff to use the emergency asthma kit should it be required.

- Advise parents that students must have access to two inhalers at any time whilst in school. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that pupils carry one reliever treatment (inhaler) on their person and that one is provided for the School to keep on site for use in case of an emergency.
- A list of students suffering with Asthma is kept in the medical centre, reception and with PE staff and updated annually or when new asthmatic pupils join the School. It must be easily accessed by all staff and designed to act as a quick reminder for all staff of current asthmatics in the School.
- Provision must be made by the nursing team to ensure an **Emergency Asthma Kit** is available and kept up to date and ready for use for all Students who have been diagnosed with asthma. This kit can be used by any child who has been prescribed a relieving inhaler but their own is unavailable (for example because it is lost, broken or empty) Written parental consent should be held by the School for this purpose and a list of children with consent will be held with the kit.
- Ensure the safe storage and disposal of asthma medication, treatments and associated medical devices
- Nursing staff will receive completed medical forms and ensure any pupils who are asthmatic are recorded on the school systems. Parents will then be sent a letter requesting appropriate inhalers be sent to school and reminded that all asthmatic children must hold an in-date inhaler on their person and have one additional inhaler held in school for their child's use.
- Nurses will ensure that the second inhaler held by the School is clearly labelled and stored safely in an accessible place. It should be stored with the child's asthma card or treatment plan along with the register as above.

Procedure for use of emergency asthma kit

It is essential that ONLY children who have been diagnosed asthmatic or have been prescribed an emergency reliever inhaler (salbutamol) are able to use the emergency inhaler and for whom a written consent from the parents has been given.

In the event of the inhaler being used its use should always be recorded by the staff member who administered it in the documents kept with the inhaler.

Parents must always be informed of its use.

Emergency Asthma Kit

The Kit will contain

- A Salbutamol metered inhaler with clear expiry date
- A plastic spacer with instructions for use
- List of children with consent
- Instructions on correct use of an inhaler

Cleaning and Disposal

The plastic spacer should not be reused. Once used it can either be given to the pupil to take home for further use or should be returned to the pharmacy. Inhalers can be reused so long as they have been appropriately washed after use. Please therefore return to nurses who will wash and replace. Empty inhalers should be disposed of as per manufacturer's guidelines through a community pharmacy. The School is registered with a local pharmacy where spent inhalers can be disposed of.

School trips, sports fixture, lessons and visits off site

All Students that are diagnosed asthmatic must always have an inhaler with them for their safety and well-being. In the event of a school trip or visit away from the School site it will be the responsibility of each pupil to ensure they have their inhaler with them. This will be checked by the lead member of staff before leaving the site. In the event of the pupil being without their own inhaler the spare prescribed inhaler (stored with the nurses) will be used. If this is unavailable, then the pupil will be unable to partake in the trip/visit off site.

NB The emergency asthma kit can only be used in an emergency and not to replace a lost or spent inhaler for a school trip/visit off site.

Staff Training

Staff should receive regular training on asthma, recognition of symptoms and treatment including the use of a salbutamol inhaler. This training will be covered as part of the annual inset training and the information will be available for staff to access on St Mary's cloud. Nursing staff are always available to teach or talk to staff on the safe administration of inhalers or any aspects of asthma care of a child whilst in school.

APPENDIX 1: How to recognise an asthma attack

HOW TO RECOGNISE AN ASTHMA ATTACK

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)

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

APPENDIX 2: What to do in the event of an asthma attack

Guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools

WHAT TO DO 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
- Immediately help the child to take two separate puffs of salbutamol via the spacer
- If there is no immediate improvement, continue to give two puffs at a time every two minutes, 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 the child does not feel better or you are worried at ANYTIME before you have reached 10 puffs, CALL 999 FOR AN AMBULANCE
- If an ambulance does not arrive in 10 minutes give another 10 puffs in the same way

APPENDIX 3: Specimen letter to inform parents of inhaler use.

Guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol Inhalers in schools

Annex B

SPECIMEN LETTER TO INFORM PARENTS OF EMERGENCY SALBUTAMOL INHALER USE

Child's name:

Class:

Date:

Dear.....

[Delete as appropriate]

This letter is to formally notify you that.....has had problems with his / her breathing today. This happened when.....

A member of staff helped them to use their asthma Inhaler.

They did not have their own asthma Inhaler with them, so a member of staff helped them to use the emergency asthma Inhaler containing salbutamol. They were given puffs.

Their own asthma Inhaler was not working, so a member of staff helped them to use the emergency asthma Inhaler containing salbutamol. They were given puffs. .

[Delete as appropriate]

Although they soon felt better, we would strongly advise that you have your seen by your own doctor as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 4: Locations of emergency inhalers

- Main School Reception
- 6th Form Centre
- Mary Ward House
- PE Department
- Junior School
- Medical Centre
- St Mary's Boathouse