

**ST. BRIGID'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**ASTHMA POLICY**



Date adopted by governing body -

12<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Chair of Governors

Mr Chris O'Connor

Headteacher –

Mrs Rachael Tyler

To be reviewed annually

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governors

## Asthma at School - Policy Guide

### **Introduction and background**

This policy has been written with advice from the Department for Education & Employment, Asthma UK, the local healthcare professionals (school nurse), the governing body and pupils.

The school recognises that asthma is a widespread, serious but controllable condition affecting many pupils at the school. The school positively welcomes all pupils with asthma. St Brigid's school encourages pupils with asthma to achieve their potential in all aspects of school life by having a clear policy that is understood by school staff, their employers (LA / Archdiocese) and pupils. Supply teachers and new staff are also made aware of the policy. All staff who come into contact with pupils with asthma are provided with training on asthma from the school nurse who has had asthma training. Training is updated once a year.

### **Asthma medicines**

- Immediate access to reliever medicines is essential. Pupils with asthma are encouraged to carry their reliever inhaler as soon as the parent/carer, doctor or nurse and class teacher agree they are mature enough. The reliever inhalers of younger children are kept in the classroom in an asthma basket marked clearly with children's names marked on their inhalers.
- Parents/carers are asked to ensure that the school is provided with a labelled spare reliever inhaler. The class teacher will hold this separately in case the pupil's own inhaler runs out, or is lost or forgotten. All inhalers must be labelled and expiry date clearly visible with the child's name by the parent/carer.
- School staff are not required to administer asthma medicines to pupils (except in an emergency or for children who are unable to administer themselves), however many of the staff at this school are happy to do this. **All school staff will let pupils take their own medicines when they need to.**

### **Record keeping**

- At the beginning of each school year or when the pupil joins the school, parents/carers are asked if their child has any medical conditions including asthma on their enrolment/admission form
- The school keeps its asthma register, which is available to all school staff. Parents/carers are also asked to update the school if their child's medicines or how much they take, changes during the year .
- After each time an inhaler is used a record is made by the Admin or teaching staff identifying time, date, dose and reason for giving medication.

### **PE, games and activities**

- Taking part in sports, games and activities is an essential part of school life for all pupils. All teachers/support staff will know which children in their class have asthma and all coaches /PE teachers at the school are aware of which pupils have asthma from the school's asthma register.
- Pupils with asthma are encouraged to participate fully in all PE lessons. PE teachers will remind pupils whose asthma is triggered by exercise, to take their reliever inhaler before the lesson and to thoroughly warm up and down before and after the lesson. It is agreed with teaching/support staff that each pupil's

inhaler will be labelled and kept in an asthma basket at the site of the lesson. If a pupil needs to use their inhaler during a lesson they will be encouraged to do so.

- Classroom teachers follow the same principles as described above for games and activities involving physical activity.

### **Out-of-hours sport**

- 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 our school involve pupils with asthma as much as possible in after school clubs.
- Coaches, PE teachers, classroom teachers and out of hours school sport coaches are aware of the potential triggers for pupils with asthma when exercising, tips to minimise these triggers and what to do in the event of an asthma attack. All staff and support staff are provided with training from the school nurse who has had asthma training.

### **The school environment**

- The school does all that it can to ensure the school environment is favourable to pupils with asthma. The school does not keep furry or feathery animals and has a definite no-smoking policy. As far as possible the school does not use chemicals in science and art lessons that are potential triggers for pupils with asthma. Pupils with asthma are encouraged to leave the room and go and sit in a quiet area if particular fumes trigger their asthma.

### **Making the school asthma-friendly**

- The school ensures that all pupils were appropriate understand asthma. Asthma can be included in the National Curriculum Key Stages 1 and 2 in science, design and technology, geography, history and PE (for more details see below).

### **When a child or young person is falling behind in lessons**

- If a child or young person is missing a lot of time from school or is always tired because their asthma is disturbing their sleep at night, the class teacher will initially talk to the parents to work out how to prevent their child from falling behind. If appropriate, the teacher will then talk to the school nurse and leadership team about the pupil's needs
- The school recognises that it is possible for pupils with asthma to have special education needs due to their asthma

### **Asthma attacks**

- All staff who come into contact with pupils with asthma know 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 policy guide. **This procedure is visibly displayed in every classroom and staffroom including school office.**

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

St Brigid's and Asthma UK recommends the following roles in developing an asthma policy:

### **Employers**

Employers have a responsibility to:

- Ensure the health and safety of their employees (all staff) and anyone else on the premises or taking part in school activities (this includes pupils). This responsibility extends to those staff and others leading activities taking place off site, such as visits, outings or field trips. Employers therefore have a responsibility to ensure that an appropriate asthma policy is in place
- Make sure the asthma policy is effectively monitored and regularly updated
- Report to parents/carers, pupils, school staff and local health authorities about the successes and failures of the policy
- Provide indemnity for teachers who volunteer to administer medicine to pupils with asthma who need help
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### **Head teachers and Acting Deputy Heateacher will:**

- Plan an individually tailored school asthma policy with the help of school staff, school nurses, local education authority advice and the support of their employers
- Plan the school's asthma policy in line with devolved national guidance
- Liaise between interested parties – school staff, school nurses, parents, governors, the school health service and pupils
- Ensure the plan is put into action, with good communication of the policy to everyone
- Ensure every aspect of the policy is maintained
- Assess the training and development needs of staff and arrange for them to be met
- Ensure all supply teachers and new staff know the school asthma policy
- Regularly monitor the policy and how well it is working
- Delegate a staff member to check the expiry date of spare reliever inhalers and maintain the school asthma register
- Report back to their employers and their LA / Archdiocese about the school asthma policy

### **School staff**

All school staff have a responsibility to:

- Understand the school asthma policy
- Know which pupils they come into contact which have asthma
- Know what to do in an asthma attack
- Allow pupils with asthma immediate access to their reliever inhaler and remain with them at all times.
- Tell parents if their child has had an asthma attack and if they used their reliever medicines
- Ensure pupils have their asthma medicines with them when they go on a school trip or out of the classroom
- Ensure pupils who have been unwell catch up on missed school work
- Be aware that a pupil may be tired because of night-time symptoms
- Keep an eye out for pupils with asthma experiencing bullying
- Liaise with parents/carers, the school nurse and Leadership team with any concerns or if a child is falling behind with their work because of their asthma

### **Coaches/PE teachers**

All teachers/support staff have a responsibility to:

- Understand asthma and the impact it can have on pupils. Pupils with asthma should not be forced to take part in activity if they feel unwell. They should also not be excluded from activities that they wish to take part in if their asthma is well controlled
- Ensure pupils have their reliever inhaler with them during activity or exercise and are allowed to take it when they need to
- If a pupil has asthma symptoms while exercising, allow them to stop, take their reliever inhaler and as soon as they feel better allow them to return to activity. (Most pupils should wait at least five minutes)
- Remind pupils with asthma whose symptoms are triggered by exercise, to use their reliever inhaler a few minutes before warming up
- Ensure pupils with asthma always warm up and down thoroughly

### **School nurses**

School specialist nurse will:

- Help plan/update the school asthma policy
- If the school nurse has an asthma qualification it should be their responsibility to provide regular training for school staff in managing asthma
- Provide information about where schools can get training if they are not able to provide specialist training themselves

### **Individual doctor/nurse of a child or young person with asthma**

Doctors and nurses have a responsibility to:

- Complete the school asthma cards provided by parents
- Ensure the child or young person knows how to use their asthma inhaler (and spacer) effectively
- Provide the school with information and advice if a child or young person in their care has severe asthma symptoms (with the consent of the child or young person and their parents)

### **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers have a responsibility to:

- Tell the school if their child has asthma
- Ensure the school has a completed and up-to-date school asthma card for their child
- Inform the school about the medicines their child requires during school hours
- Inform the school of any medicines the child requires while taking part in visits, outings or field trips and other out of school hours activities such as school team sports
- Tell the school about any changes to their child's medicines. What they take and how much

Inform the school of any changes to their child's asthma (for example, if their symptoms are getting worse or they are sleeping badly due to their asthma)

Provide the school with a spare reliever inhaler (and spacer where relevant) labelled with their child's name

Ensure their child's reliever inhaler that they take to school with them is labelled with his/her name

Ensure that their child's reliever inhaler and the spare is within its expiry date  
Keep their child at home if he/she is not well enough to attend school

Ensure their child catches up on school work missed if their child is unwell

### **Pupils**

Where appropriate pupils have a responsibility to:

- Treat other pupils with and without asthma equally
- Let any pupil having an asthma attack take their blue inhaler and ensure a member of staff is called
- Tell their parents, teacher or PE/coach teacher when they are not feeling well
- Treat asthma medicines with respect
- Know how to gain access to their medicine in an emergency
- Know how to take their own asthma medicines

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Q Where should the school keep reliever medicines?**

- Immediate access to reliever medicines is essential. Delay in taking a reliever inhaler, even for a few minutes, can lead to a severe attack and in very rare cases has proved fatal
- As soon as a child is mature enough, allow them to keep their reliever inhaler with them at all times. The child's parents, doctor or nurse and teacher can decide when they are old enough to do this.
- Keep younger children's inhalers in an accessible place in the classroom such as in an asthma basket. Make sure they are clearly marked with the pupil's name. At break time, in PE lessons and on school trips make sure the inhaler is still easily accessible to the pupil
- All parents of children and young people with asthma should be asked to provide a spare inhaler so that if their child forgets or loses their own, a spare is available
- Spare inhalers should be kept in the pupil's individual classroom.
- Reliever inhalers must never be locked up or kept away from the pupil with asthma

**Q What happens if a child or young person takes too much reliever medicine?**

- Relievers are a very safe and effective medicine and have very few side effects. Some children and young people do get an increased heart rate and may feel shaky if they take a lot of reliever. However, they cannot overdose on reliever medicines and these side effects pass quickly
- Parents should always be told when their child has used their reliever inhaler

**Q What happens if a child or young person without asthma experiments with another child's reliever inhaler?**

- It is not harmful for a child or young person without asthma to try another child or young person's reliever inhaler. If they take a lot of reliever inhaler, they may experience an increased heart rate or tremor and be a little shaky, but this will pass shortly and will not cause any long-term effects. Parents/carers will be informed immediately.
- It is important, however, to talk firmly with the child or young person who has tried somebody else's medicine so that they learn to treat all medicines with respect

**Q Do inhalers have an expiry date?**

- Yes all relievers have an expiry date. Parents should be responsible for ensuring that their child's medicines are within the expiry date. Reliever inhalers and preventers usually last about two years
- A named staff member should be responsible for checking the expiry dates of all spare reliever inhalers kept at school

**Q What happens if a child or young person forgets their reliever inhaler?**

- Parents should be asked to provide a spare reliever inhaler labelled with their child's name. Spare reliever inhalers should be kept in an accessible place in case the one the child or young person brings to school with them runs out, or they forget or lose it

**Q Should a child or young person with asthma use another child or young person's inhaler if they are having asthma symptoms and their reliever (or spare) is not to hand?**

- Reliever inhalers are prescribed for individuals only and they should not be used by anyone else
- If pupils with asthma have immediate access to their reliever inhaler and have a spare as back up kept in an accessible place, this situation should not occur
- Remember, in an emergency situation school staff are required under common law, duty of care, to act like any reasonably prudent parent

**Q Why is an asthma register at school important?**

- It is important to identify all pupils at school with asthma so that all school staff and supply teachers are aware of the pupils with asthma and their asthma triggers. An asthma register will:
- Help staff to remind the right pupils to keep their reliever inhalers with them at all times
- Help inform staff and supply teachers about the individual needs of pupils with asthma

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- Help staff to remind the right pupils to keep their reliever inhalers with them at all times
- Help inform staff and supply teachers about the individual needs of pupils with asthma
- Allow important contact details for pupils with asthma to be kept in one central location
- Assist the school and parents to keep asthma medicines kept at school, within the expiry date
- Help the school identify common asthma triggers they can reduce or control in the school environment
- Allow pupils with asthma to participate more fully in all aspects of school life

**Q How often should the school asthma register be updated?**

- An identified member of school staff should have responsibility for the school asthma register (Ms Barker). Part of this responsibility should be to ensure that the expiry dates of all spare reliever inhalers at school are checked every six months (Ms Clays).
- This member of staff should also ensure that all parents are asked every year if their child has asthma. This could be part of their registration form
- It is the responsibility of parents to provide the school with details of what medicines their child is taking during the school day. Asthma UK produces a school asthma card that all parents of children and young people with asthma can be given to pass on to their child's doctor or nurse to complete. Parents should then return these completed forms to the school

**Q What should happen if a child or young person with asthma is falling behind with work because of time off school?**

Many children and young people do miss school because of their asthma or are tired in class because they have had a disturbed night's sleep. This could be because:

1. The child or young person has severe asthma symptoms or
2. The asthma is not well controlled because the child or young person:
  - has not been prescribed the right medicine for their needs
  - is not using the correct inhaler technique
  - is not taking their medicines as prescribed
  - is not avoiding, or able to avoid, their asthma triggers
  - If a teacher is worried about a pupil they should first talk SLT and then to the parents.

**Q What are the most common things that trigger asthma symptoms in the school environment and what can be done to minimise their impact?**

- Asthma triggers commonly found in schools include furry or feathery animals, chemicals or fumes, mould, chalk dust, pollen, grass and cigarette smoke. Taking the following steps in the school environment can go some way to preventing asthma attacks in pupils:
- Adopt a complete non-smoking policy on the school premises and for school activities and ensure it is upheld and maintained
- Ensure all staff and adults leading school activities taking place off site, such as sport training, school visits, outings and field trips adhere to a complete non-smoking policy
- Do not keep furry or feathery pets in classrooms or in the school

- If a teacher is worried about a pupil they should first talk to SLT and then the parents and school nurse.
- person's asthma, allow them to leave the room until the fumes are no longer in the classroom
- Wet dust chalk boards
- Ensure rooms are regularly wet dusted and cleaned to reduce dust and house-dust mites
- Ensure classrooms are well aired
- Remove any damp and mould in the school quickly
- Avoid condensation as this will help reduce house-dust mites and mould spores
- Close windows during thunderstorms as they can release large quantities of pollen into the air and trigger asthma attacks
- Avoid keeping pollinating plants in the classroom or playground areas
- Ensure piles of autumn leaves (that may contain mould spores) are kept in areas away from pupils and are regularly removed from the school grounds
- Be aware that some chemicals in cleaning products may trigger asthma symptoms for some pupils. Check the list of triggers on the school asthma cards and stop using those identified

**Q Is asthma included in the national curriculum or school syllabus?**

Asthma UK believes all pupils should be taught about asthma. Asthma can be included in several areas of the National Curriculum in England and Wales. These include:

**Science: Key Stages 1 and 2** – Life processes and living things

- In Key Stage 1, asthma, its causes and treatments, can be included in both the sections on personal health and the role of drugs as medicines. In Key Stage 2 this can be extended to cover the effect that asthma has on the function of the lungs. It can also include the identification of 'triggers', both within the school and the wider environment

**Design and Technology: Key Stages 1 and 2** – Knowledge and Understanding

- In both Key Stages, the area of products and applications can include a study of how different asthma inhalers work. The section on health and safety covers the control of risks within the environment

**Geography: Key Stages 1 and 2**

- In both Key Stages, thematic studies can include learning about asthma and its relationship to environment quality. In Key Stage 1, local studies of the area around the school could focus on air quality. In Key Stage 2, the study can cover the need to manage and sustain the environment in order to avoid pollution and other asthma triggers

**History: Key Stages 1 and 2**

- Studies of local history can incorporate sections that focus on the change in the local environment caused by changes in industry and transport

**PE: Key Stages 1 and 2**

- Children and young people should be encouraged to understand and adopt lifestyle choices that contribute to good health and well-being. PE teachers should be aware that pupils with asthma require access to all areas of the PE National Curriculum

### **Q How should the school get agreement and support for the school asthma policy?**

Involve all relevant groups in developing the policy including:

- Pupils with and without asthma
- All school staff
- The school health service and other local health professionals
- The local health authority
- Parents and their representative bodies
- The local education authority

To ensure ongoing support for the policy, regular monitoring and updates of school asthma policies are essential. It is also important to make sure the policy is achievable

### **Q Do school staff need training?**

- It is important that all school staff who come into contact with pupils with asthma are trained and that the training is updated regularly. School staff cannot be expected to be responsible for a particular condition without training
- If the school nurse has an asthma qualification it should be their responsibility to provide training for school staff in managing asthma
- If the school nurse does not have an asthma qualification it is their responsibility to provide information about where schools can get training, through their local health authority or local healthcare contacts

### **FAMOUS PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA**

- There is nothing to stop children and young people with asthma achieving their full potential. Many famous and successful people have asthma including gold medal-winning athlete Paula Radcliffe, footballer Paul Scholes and 'Coronation Street' star Nikki Sanderson.
- People with asthma have been high achievers for centuries. Both author Charles Dickens and the classical composer Beethoven had asthma.