

LEECHPOOL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Asthma Policy



This policy should be read in conjunction with the Administrations of Medicines Policy and the First Aid Policy.

The school recognises that asthma is a widespread, serious but controllable condition affecting many children in our school.

This policy aims to: -

Offer practical advice about the problems that asthmatic children face in school.
Make clear the importance for the school to be well prepared to assist in the management and control of asthma in children.

Underline parental obligations in letting the school know if a child has asthma and the relative seriousness of their child's case.

The policy is reviewed annually.

Leechpool Primary School welcomes all pupils with asthma and will encourage and help children to participate fully in all aspects of school life.

AGREED PROCEDURE

Record keeping

- At the beginning of each school year or when a child joins the school, parent/carers are asked if their child has any medical conditions, including asthma, on their enrolment form. All parents of children with asthma are consequently sent a consent form to complete and return to school with their child's inhaler.
- From all this information 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 condition or medicines change, or the dosage/frequency changes during the year.
- Children with significant asthma should have an individual health care plan.

Asthma medicines

We recognise that access to reliever medicines is essential. Reliever inhalers are kept in an accessible place in the classroom and will accompany the child when leaving the classroom for any significant period of time. All inhalers must be labelled by the parent/carer with the child's name and class. The inhaler must also be in the original box with the prescription label attached. The School will hold an emergency inhaler and spacer in the School Office in case the pupil's own inhaler runs out, or is lost or forgotten.

School staff are not required to administer asthma medicines to pupils, but all school staff will let pupils take their own asthma medicines when they need to. School staff will assist a child if he/she is unable to administer their medicine on their own.

Parent/carers are responsible for ensuring that children always have a reliever inhaler with them at school and to ensure that the inhaler is within its expiry date.

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There are two main types of medicines used to treat asthma: relievers and preventers. Usually a child will only need a reliever during the school day. Relievers (blue inhalers) are medicines taken immediately to relieve asthma symptoms and are taken during an asthma attack. They are sometimes taken before exercise. Whilst preventers (brown, red, orange inhalers) are usually used out of school hours.

The school has qualified first aiders who have a clear understanding of what to do in the event of a child having an asthma attack.

PE, games and after school clubs

Taking part in sports, games and activities is an essential part of school life for all pupils. The school ensures that all adults leading PE are aware of which children have asthma. Pupils with asthma are encouraged to participate fully in all PE lessons whether inside or outside. Classes will take asthma medication with them to PE lessons.

Children attending after school clubs will have access to their reliever inhalers at all times. Sports coaches from outside providers are responsible for ensuring that they are able to deal with an asthma crisis. They must ensure that they are aware of which children in their care have problems with asthma.

School trips, residential visits

Risk assessments are carried out prior to any visits. The visit leader will be aware of the potential triggers for pupils with asthma. Accompanying staff will be made aware of the children with asthma. A designated member of staff will be responsible for the safe keeping and administration of the inhaler if needed. Adequate first-aid provision for all off-site activities must be made.

The school environment

The school does all that it can to ensure the school environment is favourable to pupils with asthma. The school has a non-smoking policy throughout the building and grounds both within and outside normal school hours. As far as possible the school does not use chemicals in science and art lessons that are potential triggers for pupils with asthma.

An asthma attack

Signs and symptoms:

- Difficulty in breathing, with a very prolonged breathing-out phase
- Wheezing as the casualty breathes out
- Difficulty in speaking and whispering
- Distress and anxiety
- Grey-blue skin (cyanosis)
- Cough
- In a severe attack the casualty may be exhausted. Rarely, he or she may become unconscious and stop breathing.

Call for a First Aider immediately.

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Treatment and action:

- **Stay calm and reassure the child** – attacks can be frightening so stay calm; the child will probably have been through it before. Listen carefully to what the child is saying.
- **Ensure that the reliever medicine (blue) is taken** – this should open up the narrowed airways.
- **Help the child to breathe** – encourage the child to breathe slowly and deeply. Most children find it easier to sit upright or leaning forward slightly resting on a table. Lying flat on the back is not recommended.
- **Ensure a good supply of fresh air** – but not cold air.

If the attack is mild and eases within 5-10 minutes, ask the child to take another dose from the same inhaler. Immediate medical help is not vital but parents should be informed.

CALL 999 IMMEDIATELY IF:

- The reliever has no effect after 5 to 10 minutes.
- The child is getting worse.
- Breathlessness makes talking difficult.
- The child is getting exhausted.
- If you have any doubts about the child's condition.
- If the casualty stops breathing or loses consciousness, open the airway and check breathing, be ready to resuscitate if necessary.
- Children must be accompanied in the ambulance by a member of staff, in the absence of the parent/carer.

After the attack:

Parents will be informed if an attack has occurred. In instances where an ambulance has been called, office staff will inform parents immediately.

IS IT WORKING?

The Governing Body and/or Head Teacher should ensure that the policy is put into action and maintained, with good communication of the policy to everyone. The policy should be monitored regularly on how well it is doing.