



St. Mark's Catholic Primary School

ASTHMA POLICY

INTRODUCTION

ASTHMA - A Physical Condition

Asthma affects at least one in every ten children. An attack is caused by a sudden narrowing of the air passages making it difficult to breath. The passages are almost continuously inflamed or red or sore. Asthma can be controlled by firstly avoiding known irritants and, secondly, by inhaling specific drugs. Drugs can be self-administered by the child concerned.

Known Irritants

Staff should be aware that the following irritants might trigger as asthma attack :

- dust mites
- grass pollen
- furry or feathery animals
- certain foods
- exposure to high winds
- fumes such as glue, paint or tobacco
- exercise
- prolonged laughter or crying
- rotting vegetation
- shock, excitement

Drugs - Preventers and Revivers

There are two main groups of drugs, one to prevent attacks and the other to relieve attacks once suffered. Preventers include such product as Intal, Becotide or Pulmicort and relievers include Ventolin or Atrovent.

SCHOOL POLICY

St. Mark's School :

- welcomes all pupils with asthma
- encourages and helps children with asthma to participate fully in all aspects of school life
- recognises that asthma is an important condition affecting many school children
- recognises that immediate access to inhalers is vital



St. Mark's Catholic Primary School

- will be responsive to the individual needs of pupils
- will do all it can to make sure that the school environment is favourable to children with asthma
- will ensure that other children understand asthma so that they can support their friends and children with asthma can avoid the stigma sometimes attached to this chronic condition
- has a clear understanding of what to do in the event of a child having an asthma attack
- will work in partnership with parents, school governors, health professionals, school staff and children to ensure the successful implementation of the school policy.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

The policy has been agreed by governors and staff at the school and follows LEA guidelines. A copy has been sent to the School Co-ordinator at the NBC (North Birmingham Community Health NHS Trust)

- A statement about the policy is included in the School Prospectus.
- All new parents to the school will be given a copy of the policy.
- All parents will be asked to notify the school if their child is asthmatic (see letter to parents - School Asthma Proforma - Appendix I)
- A list of pupils with asthma is displayed in the :

Headteacher's office

School office

A class list and individual proformas are held by each classteacher.

MAKING THE POLICY WORK

- All parents of children with asthma have a copy of the policy.
- All teaching staff and classroom assistants have been involved in initial training so that they feel confident about the policy (Sept 96). Further training will take place when, and if, necessary.
- Training is planned for dinner supervisors annually in September.
- We will ensure that all new staff understand the policy.
- We will ensure that guidance on what to do in the event of an asthma attack (A4 poster - National Asthma Campaign - see Appendix 2) is displayed prominently in school in the following places :

Headteacher's office

School office

Staffroom

School hall (on right hand wall inside front door)

Classteachers, classroom assistants and lunchtime supervisors will have a copy.

In the event of an asthma attack, the parents/guardians of the child will be notified.



St. Mark's Catholic Primary School

An A4 double sided sheet on how to use different types of inhaler is included in this policy (Appendix 3)

ALL STAFF SHOULD FAMILIARISE THEMSELVES WITH THE ABOVE PROCEDURES

MAKING THE SCHOOL ASTHMA FRIENDLY

The school has a no smoking policy which ensures that pupils are never exposed to the dangers of passive smoking whilst in school.

Generally, school pets are housed in the courtyard area. When choosing groups to take care of school pets, the needs of pupils with asthma should be considered. Classteachers should check their class list of children with asthma before considering to have a pet in the classroom.

The school is vacuumed on a daily basis.

HOW TO DEAL WITH INHALERS

All inhalers will be kept in respective classrooms in teachers' cabinets or cupboards. Pupils will approach their classteacher if they need an inhaler. We encourage all pupils to administer their own inhaler. Parents should mark inhalers clearly with child's name and year group.

There are two types of treatment both of which come in an inhaler.

Relievers. These medicines, sometimes called bronchodilators, quickly open up the narrow airways and help the child's breathing difficulties. Generally speaking, relievers come in blue containers. These should be administered before exercise, if required, or if child is wheezy. As a rule, they need not be taken at lunchtime unless recommended by a doctor, in which case, the school requires a doctor's note.

PLEASE NOTE Inhalers must not be locked away during the school day. During the lunchtime session, inhalers should be brought to the Medical Room. After lunch, inhalers should be collected and returned to the classrooms.

Preventers : These medicines are taken daily to make the airways less sensitive to the triggers. Generally speaking, preventers come in brown/beige/white containers. It is not necessary to administer preventers in school. If recommended by a doctor, the school requires a doctor's note to this effect. Preventers should be taken on all residential visits.

Reliever inhalers are crucial for the successful management of asthma. Delay in taking reliever treatment, even for a few minutes, can lead to a severe attack and in rare cases has proved fatal.



St. Mark's Catholic Primary School

Many children use a plastic spacer to help them take their inhaler more effectively. If a child who does not have asthma 'experiments' with another child's asthma medication, this will not be harmful. Relievers act simply to dilate or open up the airways and will not have an adverse effect on a child who does not have asthma. However, children who suffer from heart conditions may be an exception to this rule. Staff vigilance is needed at all times.

A record is kept of each child's medication, both in the secretary's office (registration file) and in the pupil's Record Folder held by each class teacher.

A child may overdose on his/her medication - reliever medication will not be harmful however much is used - you can not overdose on an inhaler. However, a child may become light-headed on a Ventolin overdose which should wear off quickly, within a few minutes. In such circumstances, it is important to keep the child calm.

Inhalers must be brought to the medical supplies area.

We ensure that inhalers are always taken on school trips to swimming baths.

We will liaise with a health professional on correct management if a child needs to use a nebuliser at school.

We will want to ensure that the child understands their full responsibilities in administering the inhaler. We may need to ask the school nurse to check technique before accepting full responsibility.

INVOLVING CHILDREN WHO HAVE ASTHMA IN SPORT AND EXERCISE

Children with asthma can suffer because many people think that their asthma prohibits them from joining in. The aim of full participation should be the goal for all but the most severely affected pupil with asthma. However, most young people with asthma can become wheezy during exercise. Taking a dose of reliever Intal can help prevent exercise-induced asthma.

The school will :

- Make sure that everyone involved in physical education is aware of the needs of children with asthma.
- Make an opportunity for children who have exercise-induced asthma to take a puff of their inhaler before they start exercise. Teachers should be aware that some children are shy of doing this in public.



St. Mark's Catholic Primary School

- Make sure that children bring their inhalers to the hall, the sportsfield, playground or swimming baths.
- Make sure that children who say they are too wheezy to continue take their reliever inhaler and rest until they feel better.

RESOURCES

National Asthma Campaign 'Getting Your Breath Back' pack, including 'Asthma at School' pamphlet.

National Asthma Campaign Video - 'Fighting Asthma Together' - a guide for schools (running time approx. 21 minutes).

COMMUNITY LINKS

The school is involved with fundraising for the George Coller Memorial Fund, a local charity that raises money for the National Asthma Campaign.

Reviewed: September 2018

Review date: Annually – July 2019

APPENDIX 1

PUPILS WITH ASTHMA



St. Mark's Catholic Primary School

Dear Parent

St Mark's School takes its responsibilities to pupils with Asthma very seriously. With advice from the National Asthma Campaign and training for members of our staff, we have established a School Asthma Policy for use by all staff.

As part of accepted good practice we are now asking all parents of pupils with asthma to help us complete a School Asthma Proforma for their child. The proforma should be returned to school immediately. If you are unsure of any of the information we require, you should consult your doctor.

The completed information will have details of the pupil's current treatment and also what steps to take if they should have an asthma attack at school. This will ensure that pupils with asthma will receive the best possible treatment at all times. Information will be updated regularly.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. D. Linley
Acting Headteacher



St. Mark's Catholic Primary School

SCHOOL ASTHMA PROFORMA

INHALERS

There are two types of treatment, both of which come in an inhaler:-

- i) relievers (blue containers)
- ii) preventers (brown/white containers)

It is school policy to administer relievers only. Preventers should **not** be sent to school unless specifically prescribed by your doctor.

As a rule, relievers will only be administered when required. Relievers will only be administered regularly in the school day e.g. lunchtime, if prescribed by your doctor.

Please complete the information below, relating to your child

Type of inhaler e.g. spacer, ventolin, nebuliser _____

Does your child need treatment before exercise? _____

Is your child likely to need relief treatment for sudden chest tightness, wheeze, breathlessness or cough? If yes, please specify how many puffs required.

If you have any queries or concerns about inhaler administration in school, please contact the Headteacher.

Name of child: _____ Year: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____
(please print)

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____