



St Lawrence Primary School

Asthma Policy

2023 - 2025

Review date: November 2025

Reviewed By: Governing Body

Approved by: Alan Brannen

Policy amendments may occur at any time, and you should consult the Policies page on the website for the latest update.

1. Introduction

Asthma is a condition that affects the airways – the small tubes that carry air into and out of the lungs. Asthma symptoms include coughing, wheezing, tightness of the chest and shortness of breath – however not every individual will get these symptoms.

Asthma sufferers have airways that are almost always red and sensitive (inflamed). Their airways can react badly when the individual has a cold or other viral infection or comes into contact with an asthma trigger.

A **trigger** is anything that irritates the airways and causes the symptoms of asthma to appear. There are many triggers including, colds, viral infections, house-dust mites, pollen, cigarette smoke, animal fur or feathers, exercise, air pollution, laughter and stress. Asthma is different in each individual and young people should try to get to know their own triggers and stay away from them or take precautions.

When someone with asthma comes into contact with a trigger that affects their asthma the airways do three things.

1. The airway lining begins to swell
2. It secretes mucus
3. The muscles surrounding the airways begin to get tighter.

These three effects combine to make the tubes very narrow, making it difficult to breathe normally. This results in asthma symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and tightness in the chest – an asthma attack. It is at this point that the young person will need to take their reliever inhaler medication.

Asthma varies in severity with some young people experiencing an occasional cough or wheeze whereas for others the symptoms may be much more severe. Avoiding known triggers where appropriate and taking the correct medication can usually control asthma effectively. However, some young people with asthma may have to take time off school or have disturbed sleep due to their symptoms, making them tired in class and perhaps resulting in a lack of concentration.

2. Rationale

St Lawrence CE Primary School recognises that asthma is a widespread, serious but controllable condition affecting many pupils in school. We also accept that there will be members of staff who have been diagnosed with asthma.

This policy deals mainly with the management of asthma among pupils, where staff or other adults coming into school have been diagnosed with asthma, any risk management will be dealt with separately via our HR procedures.

St Lawrence CE Primary School positively welcomes all pupils with asthma and encourages them to achieve their potential in all aspects of school life by having clear procedures which are understood by school staff, other adults, employers (the LA or Governing Body) and pupils. All new staff and other adults are made aware of the procedures at their Induction.

In order that pupils diagnosed with asthma are fully integrated into school life, we will:-

- ensure that those with asthma can and do participate fully in all aspects of school life, including P.E., design technology, science, visits, outings or field trips and other extended school activities;
- recognise that those with asthma always need immediate access to their reliever inhaler;
- keep a record of all those diagnosed with asthma and the medicines they take.
- ensure that the whole school environment, including the physical, social, sporting and educational environment, is favourable to those with asthma;
- where required, ensure that a semi-private area is provided for pupils who are uncomfortable taking their medication in front of others;
- ensure that all pupils understand asthma so that they can support their peers; and so those with asthma can avoid the stigma sometime attached to this condition;
- ensure that all staff and other adults working in the school and who come into contact with pupils with asthma know what to do in the event of a pupil having an asthma attack;
- take steps to ensure that pupils with asthma are not being bullied by others and apply our anti-bullying procedures to prevent this;
- work in partnership with all interested parties including the school's governing body, all school staff and other adults, the school nurse, parents/carers, other employers of adults working in the school (e.g. cleaning and catering staff), Health Authority staff and pupils to ensure these procedures are, implemented and maintained successfully.

3. Asthma medicines

- Immediate access to reliever medicines is essential. The reliever inhalers of the children are kept in their classroom.
- All inhalers must be labelled with the child's name by the parent/carer.
- School staff will check the expiry date on all inhalers at the end of every term. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that any medication provided by them for their child is 'in date'. Where reasonably possible, parents/guardians will be

informed if the 'Use-by date' is expired.

- The parent/guardian will be informed if it appears that their child is using their reliever inhaler more often than usual.
- If a pupil suffers an asthma attack, the parent/guardian will always be informed, even if a full recovery is made and the pupil continues as normal for the remainder of the school day. This may be by telephone during the day, face to face at the end of the school day, or via Parentmail, depending on the age and comprehension of the pupil concerned.
- School staff are not required to administer asthma medicines to pupils (except in an emergency), however many of the staff at this school are happy to either do this or to supervise a pupil whilst he/she self-administers the medication.
- School staff who agree to administer medicines are insured by the local authority/school when acting in agreement with this policy. All school staff will allow access to inhalers whenever asked to by individual pupils.

4. Record keeping

At the beginning of each school year or when a child joins the school, parents/carers are asked if their child has any medical conditions, including asthma, on their enrolment form.

All parents of pupils with asthma are sent an Asthma Health Care Plan letter, a School Asthma Health Care Plan form, and a Parental Agreement for School to Administer Medicine form, which is to be returned to school on the day of a child's enrolment or first day back at school after diagnosis.

Each class records the date, time and how much asthma medication has been administered, every time a child uses their inhaler.

5. Exercise and activity – PE and games

- Taking part in sports, games and activities is an essential part of school life for all pupils. All teachers know which children in their class have asthma and 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. Those whose asthma is triggered by exercise are reminded to use their reliever inhaler just prior to warm-up exercises.
- Inhalers are kept in the class backpack, which is taken with the child, down to the field or off site if necessary.
- If asthma symptoms develop during an activity, the individual will be encouraged to stop, take their reliever inhaler and sit quietly for at least five minutes, or until they feel well again, before re-joining the activity.
- PE teachers reassure all pupils who lack the confidence to partake in activities that

they can take their inhaler whenever necessary and that they fully understand their condition. Failing this reassurance, the teacher will attempt to find a different role to keep the pupil involved in the activity and feel part of the group, such as umpire, referee, coach etc.

- Classroom teachers follow the above principles for games and activities involving physical activity.
- Where possible, on high pollen days, alternative indoor activities will be made available to those pupils particularly at risk.

6. Out of Hours

There has been a large emphasis in recent years on increasing the number of 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 young people with asthma. It is therefore important that the school involve pupils with asthma as much as possible in after school clubs.

PE teachers, classroom teachers and extended 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.

7. School Environment

- The school does all that it reasonably can to ensure the school environment is favourable to pupils with asthma.
- This school has an absolute 'no smoking' policy and steps are taken to ensure that staff and other adults leading or supervising on off-site visits also adhere to this 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 the school office if particular fumes trigger their asthma.
- All classrooms are regularly wet dusted and cleaned to reduce dust and house dust mites. Rooms are well ventilated to prevent the build-up of mould through condensation. Any damp or mould areas are treated as quickly as possible.
- Where contractors are on site, regular discussions take place with the contractor to ensure that pupils or staff with asthma are not placed at increased risk as a result of chemicals or working procedures e.g. adhesives or dust.
- Where possible, grassed areas are not mowed during school hours and pollinating plants will be avoided inside the school.

8. Off-site and Residential Visits

- During off-site visits, inhalers, where required, are carried in the class backpack, which is accessible to all relevant children, at all times. All school staff will allow individuals with asthma to take their medication when they need to.
- Preventer inhalers may be necessary on off-site visits with a residential element. In this case, the parent/guardian must complete the medical section of any Visit Consent Form with full details of the dose and frequency of the medication. All preventer inhalers will be labelled with the pupil's name by the parent.
- Other medical requirements for a pupil on an off-site visit may include oral steroids (usually taken in the morning) and the use of a nebuliser. The usual procedures for administering medication (steroids) will be followed such as written parental consent, administration of medication record etc. Any staff assisting with the use of a nebuliser will receive training from a medical professional.

9. When a pupil is falling behind in lessons

If a pupil is missing a lot of time at school or is always tired because their asthma is disturbing their sleep at night, the class teacher will initially talk to the parents/carers to work out how to prevent their child from falling behind. If appropriate, the teacher will then talk to the school nurse and special education needs coordinator 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.

10. Bullying

Whilst bullying can happen to any pupil in school, the school recognises that those that are different can be particularly vulnerable. Our Anti-bullying procedures which are part of the Whole School Behaviour Policy will be used and enforced in any situation where a pupil is being bullied or intimidated.

11. Asthma Attacks

All staff and other adults 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 a clear procedure visibly displayed in several locations throughout school.

12. Disclaimer

This school cannot accept responsibility for any pupil whose parent/guardian has not provided an inhaler for use by their child during the school day, although every attempt will be made to ensure that medical attention is sought at the earliest opportunity in the event of an emergency.

13. Access and Review of Policy

The Asthma Management Policy will be accessible to all staff and other adults working in the school and the community through the school's website. Hard copies can be obtained through the school office. These procedures will be reviewed on a two yearly cycle.

Last review date: November 2023