



Asthma Policy

King's College School recognises that asthma is a widespread, serious but controllable condition affecting several pupils at the school. King's College positively welcomes all pupils with asthma. The School encourages children with asthma to achieve their potential in all aspects of school life by having a clear policy that is understood by all school staff, parents and pupils.

What is Asthma?

- Asthma is a common condition and appears to be increasingly prevalent in children and young people. One in ten children has asthma.
- The most common symptoms of asthma are coughing, wheezing or whistling noise in the chest, tight feelings in the chest or getting short of breath. Younger children may verbalise this by saying that their tummy hurts or that it feels like someone is sitting on their chest. Not everyone will get all these symptoms, and some children may only get symptoms from time to time.
- However, in Early Years settings staff may not be able to rely on younger children being able to identify or verbalise when their symptoms are getting worse, or what medicines they should take and when. It is therefore imperative that Early Years and Primary School staff, who have younger children in their classes, know how to identify when symptoms are getting worse and what to do for children with asthma when this happens. This should be supported by written asthma plans, provided by parents and regular training and support for staff. Children with significant asthma should have an individual health care plan.

Aims

- To provide a safe environment within the school.
- To provide guidance for the care of children with asthma.
- To ensure that staff have an awareness of the causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma.

Objectives

- To ensure that staff are fully informed of the signs and symptoms of an asthma attack and aware of the children who are affected.
- To ensure that parents are aware of their responsibilities.
- To ensure that staff involved in the care of that child have been instructed in the emergency care of a child who is having an asthma attack.

Signs and Symptoms



Asthma attacks are characterized by:

- Coughing.
- Wheeziness.
- Difficulty in breathing, especially breathing out.
- Anxiety and distress.
- In severe attacks the pupil's skin and lips may become blue.

Treatment

- There are several medications used to treat asthma. Some are for long-term prevention and are normally used out of school hours and others relieve symptoms when they occur (although these may also prevent symptoms if they are used in anticipation of a trigger, e.g. exercise).
- Most pupils with asthma will relieve their symptoms with medication taken via an inhaler.
- It is good practice to allow children with asthma to take charge of and use their inhaler from an early age, and many do so.
- Immediate access to reliever inhalers is vital. Pupils are encouraged to carry their reliever inhalers as soon as the parent, School Nurse and class teacher agree that they are mature enough to do so.
- Where it has been agreed that pupils carry their own medication the parents will be asked to provide the school with a labelled spare reliever inhaler. The School Nurse (or class teacher) will hold this separately in case the pupil's own inhaler runs out or is lost or forgotten.
- If a pupil is not able to administer the reliever inhaler themselves, it should be kept in the Nurse's office in a safe and accessible place. The School Nurse will give training and support to all staff that come into contact with the asthmatic child. It may be necessary for the School Nurse, or named person, to administer the medication to a pupil e.g. where the child is using a spacer device or is inexperienced in taking the medication.
- All school staff will allow the pupil to take their own medication when they need to.
- The medication of any individual pupil with asthma will not necessarily be the same as the medication of another pupil with the same condition. Pupils should not take medication that has been prescribed for another pupil. Should a pupil take a puff of another's inhaler there is unlikely to be any serious adverse reaction. However, the school should take appropriate disciplinary action if inhalers are misused by the owner or other individuals.
- The above action should not be recommended except under critical acute emergency situations where a pupil is having a severe asthma attack and they do not have access to their own inhalers.



Record Keeping

- When a pupil joins the school, his/her parents are requested to complete a Health Form. Parents can supply a more detailed record of their child's severity of symptoms, medications used, emergency treatment and contact numbers for the parents in the event of an emergency.
- Parents are requested to inform the school if their child's medication changes.

School Trips and Visits

- At times children may leave the school environment for trips and visits. The class teacher should ensure that all asthmatic children in their class take their inhalers with them.
- Provision may be made for a named person to be responsible for the medication of a child who is unable to administer it themselves. See King's College "Medication in School Policy" – "Medications on Day Trips and Residential Trips".

Physical Education / Sports lessons

- Taking part in sports is an essential part of school life. PE teachers will be made aware of all the pupils with asthma as they appear on the asthma register.
- Pupils with asthma will be positively encouraged to participate fully in PE. Teachers will remind pupils whose asthma is triggered by exercise to take their reliever inhaler before the lesson and complete a gentle warm up prior to the lesson. For pupils with severe asthma, inhalers should be clearly labelled and taken in a container to the site of the lesson.
- If a pupil needs to use their inhaler during the lesson they will be encouraged to do so.

The School Environment

- The school does all it can to ensure that the school environment is favourable to pupils with asthma. The school does not keep furry or feathery pets and has a no smoking policy in all areas where pupils are present.
- As far as possible the school does not use chemicals in science and art lessons that are potential triggers for pupils with asthma. Pupils will be asked to see the School Nurse if their asthma is triggered by any substance used in lessons. This will be investigated fully and alternatives found if possible.

Asthma Attacks

All staff that come into contact with children with asthma know what to do in the event of an asthma attack. The school follows the following procedure:



- Ensure that the reliever is taken immediately. The teacher should summon the School Nurse if appropriate.
- Reassure the child in a calm and comforting manner, encouraging them to breathe slowly and deeply.
- Loosen tight clothing to help the pupil breathe more easily.
- The pupil should sit rather than lie down as this allows for more expansion of the lungs.
- If the medication has not had an effect within 10 minutes a repeat dose may be given.
- If a repeat dose of medication does not relieve the symptoms, or the pupil appears very distressed, is unable to talk and is becoming exhausted then medical advice must be sought and emergency services summoned.

Minor attacks should not interrupt a child's involvement in school. When they feel better they can return to school activities. The child's parents must be notified about the episode.

Responsibilities

Parental

- To inform the school if their child has asthma.
- To inform the school of the medication the child requires during the school day.
- To keep the school informed of any changes in medication.
- To provide the school with a spare reliever inhaler labelled with the pupil's name, if appropriate.
- To ensure the pupil's reliever medication is labelled with his/her name.
- To ensure that the child's medication and the spare is within the expiry date.
- To keep the child at home if he/she is not well enough to attend.

The Head of School

- To support and approve the policy.
- To liaise between interested parties – school staff, School Nurse, parents and pupils.
- To ensure good communication of the policy to all concerned.
- To ensure every aspect of the policy is maintained.
- To assess the training and development needs of staff and arrange for those needs to be met.
- To ensure supply teachers know the asthma policy.



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- To monitor regularly how the policy is working.

School Nurse

- Identify pupils with asthma through screening of health records.
- Provide support to pupils with asthma.
- Provide emergency care during an asthma attack when summoned.
- Liaise with parents, Head of School and teaching staff in respect of pupils with asthma.
- Provide training for school staff in recognition and management of an asthma attack.
- Inform parents/guardians if a pupil has an asthma attack in school.
- To ensure that reliever medication is kept in an appropriate, accessible place in the nurse's office as necessary.

Teachers and School Staff

- To understand the school's asthma policy.
- To be aware of all the children with asthma with whom they come into contact.
- To allow children immediate access to their reliever medication.
- To summon the School Nurse in the event of a pupil developing an asthma attack.
- To ensure pupils have their asthma medication with them when they go out of the classroom or on school trips.
- To liaise with the School Nurse, parents and special educational needs coordinator if a child is falling behind with their work because of their asthma. A pupil may miss a lot of time from school or be tired in class because of disturbed sleep which may in turn lead to them not achieving their full potential. Early recognition in such an instance is vital to address any support needs that may be put into place.
- PE teachers should discreetly remind pupils with exercise-induced asthma to take their medication prior to the exercise and to do several short warm up sprints over a five-minute period.

Role of the Pupils

- To treat other pupils with and without asthma equally
- To let any pupil having an asthma attack take their reliever inhaler and summon the School Nurse or member of school staff.
- To treat asthma medication with respect.



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References

- Department for Education and Skills/DOH 'Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings' guidance, March 2005.
- Asthma UK – School Policy Guidelines.

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