

Ravenswood Community Primary School

Asthma Policy

Introduction

Asthma is a chronic respiratory disorder characterised by sudden and violent attacks of breathlessness and wheezing resulting from obstructed and constricted air passages. Although asthma usually results from an allergic reaction, specific allergy-producing substances are not always identifiable. Illness and emotional or physical stress may precipitate an attack. For acute attacks, adrenaline injections and oxygen therapy bring immediate relief. Long-term control includes the use of bronchodilators, steroids, breathing exercises and, if possible, the identification and avoidance of allergens.

This school recognises that asthma is an important condition affecting many school children and positively welcomes all pupils with asthma.

We encourage children with asthma to achieve their potential in all aspects of school life by having a clear policy that is understood by school staff and pupils. Supply teachers and new staff are also made aware of the policy. The school ensures that all children understand asthma.

Factors which may precipitate an asthma attack

- Allergic:
- House dust mite
 - Upper respiratory tract infections (i.e. common cold)
 - Smoking
 - Chemicals (eg felt-tip pens)
 - Exercise – especially in cold, damp air
 - Grass
 - Pollen
 - Caged animals
- Non-allergic:
- Test stress
 - Dramatic temperature changes

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Medication

Immediate access to reliever inhalers is vital. Children are encouraged to carry their reliever inhaler as soon as the parent, doctor or nurse and class teacher agree they are mature enough. The reliever inhalers of younger children are kept in the classroom in a place agreed between the teacher and child. Parents are encouraged to ensure that the school is provided with a labelled spare reliever inhaler. This will be held separately in the school medical office in case the child's own inhaler runs out, is lost or forgotten. A member of the office staff will have access to spare inhalers kept in the medical office at lunchtime. All inhalers must be labelled with the child's name by the parent. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that medication is up to date. School staff are not required to administer medication to children except in an emergency, however, many of our staff are happy to do this. School staff who agree to do this are insured by the Local Education Authority when acting in accordance with this policy. All school staff will let children take their own medication when they need to.

Record Keeping

When a child joins the school, parents are asked if their child has asthma and this information will be put on the school's central database. From this information, the school keeps its asthma register that is available for all school staff. If medication changes in between times, parents are asked to inform the school.

PE

Taking part in sports is an essential part of school life. Class teachers and outside sport providers are made aware of which children have asthma from the asthma register. Children with asthma are encouraged to participate fully in PE. Teachers will remind children whose asthma is triggered by exercise to take their reliever inhaler before the lesson. All PE lessons commence with a warm up session. Each child's inhaler will be labelled and taken to the site of the lesson or sport event. If a child needs to use their inhaler during the lesson they will be encouraged to do so.

The School Environment

The school does all that it can to ensure the school environment is favourable to children with asthma. The school does not keep furry and feathery pets and does not allow smoking. As far as possible the school does not use chemicals that are potential

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triggers for children with asthma. Children are encouraged to leave the room and go and sit outside the office if particular fumes trigger their asthma.

If a child's educational progress is being impeded

If a child is missing a lot of time from school because of asthma, or is tired in class because of disturbed sleep and falling behind in class, the class teacher will initially talk to the parents. If appropriate the teacher will then discuss the issue with the school nurse and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. The school recognises that it is possible for children with asthma to have special educational needs because of asthma.

Asthma Attacks

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

1. Ensure that the reliever inhaler is taken immediately
2. Stay calm and reassure the child
3. Help the child to breathe by ensuring tight clothing is loosened

After the attack

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 told about the attack.

Emergency Procedure

Call 999 urgently from the school office if:

- The reliever has no effect after five minutes
- The child is either distressed or unable to talk
- The child is becoming exhausted
- You have any doubts at all about the child's condition

Please also refer to the Administration of Medicines Policy.