



READING BLUE COAT

Asthma Policy

Introduction

At Reading Blue Coat School (RBCS), we recognise that asthma is a widespread, serious, but controllable condition. The School welcomes all students with asthma and aims to support these children in participating fully in School life. We endeavour to do this by ensuring we:

- Keep an up-to-date asthma register
- Keep up-to-date asthma policy
- Encourage all students to always have immediate access to their reliever inhaler
- Keep a stock of emergency salbutamol inhalers
- Ensure all staff attend an annual asthma information session

Asthma Register

RBCS has a register of students who suffer from asthma within the School, which is updated yearly or as required. We do this by sending an “Annual Emergency Salbutamol Consent Form” to parents/guardians. This form asks parents/guardians to confirm their child has asthma or a prescribed inhaler, that their child has a working, in-date inhaler that is clearly labelled and that they will bring with them to School every day, the child’s usual asthma triggers and symptoms and that they are happy for an emergency inhaler to be administered if their child’s own is not available. Once we receive this form back, we can add the student to the asthma register which includes:

- The students name
- The students tutor and year group

The asthma register can be found by accessing the “Medical Information” section on the Staff Intranet and then selecting “Student Medical Information”.

Medication and Inhalers

All children with asthma should always have immediate access to their reliever (usually blue) inhaler. The reliever inhaler contains a fast-acting medication that opens up the airways and makes it easier for the child to breathe.

Some students will also have a preventer inhaler, which is usually taken morning and night, as prescribed by the doctor/nurse. This medication needs to be taken regularly for maximum benefit. Students should not bring their preventer inhaler to School as it should be taken regularly as prescribed by their doctor/nurse at home. However, if the student is going on a residential trip, we are aware that they will need to take the inhaler with them so they can continue taking their inhaler as prescribed.

Students are encouraged to always carry their reliever inhaler on them. If a student anticipates being away from their inhaler (for example, during PE or swimming), they must hand it into their teacher at the beginning of the lesson, so it is always easily accessible.

In the normal course of events, students would be expected to administer their own asthma medication. In an emergency and when a student feels unable to treat themselves, assistance may be required from a staff member. See “asthma attack” on page 5. If there are any concerns over a student’s ability to use their inhaler, they should be referred to the School nurse who can advise parents/guardians to arrange a review with their GP/nurse. Please refer to the *Medication Administration Policy* for further details about administering medicines.

School Environment

The School does all that it can to ensure the School environment is favourable to students with asthma. The School has a definitive no-smoking policy. Student’s asthma triggers will be recorded on iSAMS from the information provided on their Annual Emergency Salbutamol Consent Form and the School will aim to ensure that students avoid contact with their triggers, where possible.

Common triggers include:

- Colds and infection
- Dust and house dust mite
- Pollen, spores, and moulds
- Feathers
- Furry animals
- Exercise
- Laughing
- Stress
- Cold air/change in the weather
- Chemicals, glue, paint, aerosols
- Food allergies
- Fumes
- Cigarette smoke

As part of our responsibility to ensure all children are kept safe within the School grounds and on trips away, a risk assessment will be performed by staff. These risk assessments will establish asthma triggers which the children could be exposed to, and plans will be put in place to ensure these triggers are avoided, where possible.

Exercise and activity

Taking part in sports, games and activities is an essential part of School life for all students.

All staff can either check the asthma register or look at student’s medical flags on the Student Manager section of iSAMS and are encouraged to do so regularly to ensure they are aware of any asthmatic students in their class.

Students with asthma are encouraged to participate fully in all activities. PE teachers will remind students whose asthma is triggered by exercise to take their reliever inhaler before the lesson, and to thoroughly warm up and down before and after the lesson.

During sports, games and activities, there is a risk that the student may be separated from their inhaler. We recommend that the student hands their inhaler to their teacher before participating to ensure there is no delay in treatment. They must ensure their inhaler is labelled before doing this to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

If a student needs to use their inhaler during a lesson, they will be encouraged to do so.

There has been a large emphasis in recent years on increasing the number of children and 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 children and young people with asthma. It is therefore important that the School involve students with asthma as much as possible in and outside of School. The same rules apply for out of hours sport as during School hours PE.

When asthma is affecting a student's education

The School are aware that the aim of asthma medication is to allow people with asthma to live a normal life. Therefore, if we recognise that asthma is impacting on their academic performance, and they are unable to take part in all activities, tired during the day, or falling behind in lessons there will be discussion between parents/guardians, the School nurse, head of year and head of learning support. It will be suggested they make an appointment with their asthma nurse/doctor. It may simply be that the student needs an asthma review, to review inhaler technique or a review of medication to improve their symptoms. However, the School recognises that students with asthma could be classed as having disability due to their asthma as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and therefore may have additional needs because of their asthma.

Emergency Salbutamol Inhaler in School

As a School we are aware of the guidance 'The use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in Schools from the Department of Health' (March, 2015) which gives guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in Schools (March, 2015).

As a School we are able to purchase emergency salbutamol inhalers and spacers without a prescription.

We have 2 emergency kits, which are kept in the Medical Centre and Boathouse. Each kit contains:

- A salbutamol metered dose inhaler
- At least two spacers compatible with the inhaler
- Instructions on using the inhaler and spacer
- Instructions on cleaning
- A note of the arrangements for replacing the inhaler and spacers
- A list of children permitted to use the emergency inhaler
- A record of administration

These kits are checked twice termly.

We understand that salbutamol is a relatively safe medicine, particularly if inhaled, but all medicines can have some adverse effects. Those of inhaled salbutamol, tend to be mild and temporary and are not likely to cause serious harm. The child may feel a bit shaky or may tremble, or they may say that they feel their heart is beating faster.

We will ensure that the emergency salbutamol inhaler is only used by children who have asthma or who have been prescribed a reliever inhaler, and for whom parental consent has been given.

The School nurse will ensure that:

- Twice termly checks are done to ensure the kits are in good, clean condition and that the Salbutamol is in date and working
- Replacement inhalers are obtained when expiry dates approach
- Disposable spacers are always available
- The plastic inhaler housing (which holds the canister) has been cleaned, dried and returned to storage following use, or that replacements are available if necessary. Before using a

salbutamol inhaler for the first time, or if it has not been used for 2 weeks or more, shake and release 2 puffs of medicine into the air.

Any puffs should be documented so that it can be monitored when the inhaler is running out. The inhaler has 200 puffs, so when there are 50 puffs remaining, a replacement will be ordered.

The inhaler can be reused if it hasn't come into contact with any bodily fluids. Following use, the inhaler canister will be removed, and the plastic inhaler housing and cap will be washed with soap, rinsed with warm running water, and left to dry in air in a clean safe place. The canister will be returned to the housing when dry and the cap replaced.

Spent inhalers will be returned to the pharmacy to be recycled.

The emergency salbutamol inhaler will only be used by students who have been diagnosed with asthma, prescribed a reliever inhaler and for whom written parental consent for use of the emergency inhaler has been given.

The names of these students will be clearly written in our emergency kits. The parents/guardian will always be informed if their child has used the emergency inhaler, so that this information can also be passed onto their asthma nurse/GP.

Common 'day to day' symptoms of asthma

As a School, we recommend that children with asthma have a personal asthma action plan which can be provided by their doctor/nurse. These plans inform us of the day-to-day symptoms of each child's asthma and how to respond to them in an individual basis.

We understand that asthma symptoms are different for each student, but recognise that some of the most common day-to-day symptoms of asthma are:

- Dry cough
- Wheeze (a 'whistle' heard on breathing out) often when exercising
- Shortness of breath when exposed to a trigger or exercising
- Tight chest

These symptoms are usually responsive to the use of the child's inhaler and rest (e.g. stopping exercise). The School would not usually send a student home if they have needed to use their inhaler unless the student requires urgent advice from a medical professional.

Asthma Attacks

The School recognises that if all the above is in place, we should be able to support students with their asthma and hopefully prevent them from having an asthma attack. However, we are prepared to deal with asthma attacks should they occur.

The department of health Guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in Schools (March 2015) states the signs of an asthma attack are:

- Persistent cough (when at rest)
- A wheezing sound coming from the chest (when at rest)
- Difficulty breathing (the child could be breathing fast and with effort, using all accessory muscles in the upper body)
- Nasal flaring
- Unable to talk or complete sentences. Some children will go very quiet
- May try to tell you that their chest 'feels tight' (younger children may express this as tummy ache)

If the child is showing these symptoms, we will follow the guidance for responding to an asthma attack recorded below. However, we also recognise that we need to call an ambulance immediately and commence the asthma attack procedure without delay if the child appears exhausted, is turning blue (cyanosis), has a blue/white tinge around the lips or has collapsed.

It goes on to explain that in the event of an asthma attack:

- Keep calm and reassure the child
- Encourage the child to sit up and slightly forward
- Use the child's own inhaler – if not available, use the emergency inhaler kit
- Remain with the child while the inhaler and spacer are brought to them
- *Shake the inhaler and remove the cap
- *Place the mouthpiece between the lips with a good seal
- *Immediately help the child to take two puffs of salbutamol via the spacer, one at a time. (1 puff to 5 breaths)
- Send a runner to the Medical Centre to alert the School Nurse and gather the emergency inhaler kit if it needed. This contains instructions on how to use an inhaler and spacer and contains a list of all students with consent from parents/guardians for use of the emergency inhaler
- If there is no improvement, repeat these steps* up to a maximum of 10 puffs, waiting 30 seconds between each puff
- Stay calm and reassure the child. Stay with the child until they feel better. The child should see the School Nurse for review after an asthma attack
- If the child does not feel better or you are worried at ANYTIME before you have reached 10 puffs, call 999 FOR AN AMBULANCE and call for parents/guardians.
- If an ambulance does not arrive in 10 minutes give another 10 puffs in the same way
- A member of staff will always accompany a child taken to hospital by an ambulance and stay with them until a parent/guardian arrives
- If you have had to treat a child for an asthma attack in School, it is important that we inform the parents/guardians and advise that they should make an appointment with the GP
- If the child has had to use 6 puffs or more of Salbutamol in 4 hours, the parents should be made aware, and should be advised to see a nurse/GP.

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