

# ASTHMA POLICY

## *Black Firs School*

### ***INTRODUCTION***

Asthma, which is sometimes described as wheezing or wheezy bronchitis, particularly affects children. It causes the airways in the lungs to narrow, making it difficult to breathe. Sudden narrowing produces what is usually called an attack of asthma. Lesser or more persistent narrowing leads to less dramatic symptoms.

Although one in ten children in the UK have asthma, most children can expect to lead a normal life if medicines are taken properly and used regularly. Periodically, however, some children may experience attacks of asthma.

It is important that each teacher can respond positively to these questions:

1. Do you know which, if any, pupils have asthma in the classes that you teach?
2. Are you aware of the situations that can lead to an asthma attack?
3. Would you know what to do if this happened in one of your lessons?

### ***IDENTIFICATION OF PUPILS WITH ASTHMA***

All parents have the opportunity to inform the school as to whether or not their child has asthma. Details of treatment and clear guidance on correct use of medication will be kept in the main office alongside the inhalers.

### ***ACCESS TO INHALERS***

All children who need to have access to asthma medication should be encouraged to leave their inhalers in the school office - which is accessible at all times (including lunch times, breaks etc.).

Teachers should ensure that pupils have access to reliever inhalers at the swimming pool and on school trips.

### ***CURRICULUM SITUATIONS WHICH MAY LEAD TO AN ASTHMA ATTACK***

#### **Physical Education**

Exercise is a common trigger for an asthma attack but this should not be the reason for children not to participate in PE or games. Prolonged spells of exercise are more likely than short spells to induce asthma attacks.

Teachers of PE should be particularly aware of pupils with asthma when working outside on cold, dry days or when there are strong winds.

Asthmatic pupils are commonly allergic to grass pollen so this should be considered, especially during the summer months.

Swimming is a good form of exercise for asthmatic pupils, who are unlikely to suffer an attack unless the water is very cold or heavily chlorinated.

Teachers should beware of competitive situations when pupils with asthma may over exert themselves.

#### **Technology**

Teachers should be particularly aware of asthma sufferers during activities producing dust and fumes, e.g. glue, paint, varnish.

In food technology / home economics, allergic reactions to foods such as milk and eggs are possible, but rare. Ratified by the Governing Body.

**Science**

Particular care needs to be taken in the production of irritant gases and when burning materials.

The issues relating to exercise apply in situations such as investigating the effect of exercise on pulse rate, measuring the power output of the body etc.

During field trips in science and other subjects, grass and other pollen can present difficulties for asthmatic pupils.

***THE ASTHMA ATTACK - WHAT TO DO***

A pupil having an asthma attack will normally respond well and quickly to their reliever treatment. However, severe attacks of asthma need urgent medical attention. In rare cases, asthma can prove fatal and so it must never be underestimated.

All School staff need to know how to help in an attack and what to do in an emergency.

A suggested procedure is enclosed.

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Information from the National Asthma Campaign is available and is kept close to the inhalers. A particularly useful booklet to be found in the pack "Asthma at School" - a guide for teachers.