



# AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST

## Avanti House School Asthma Policy

**September 2023**

***Review date: November 2024***

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## School Environment

At Avanti House School, we recognise that asthma is a widespread, serious, but controllable condition. Avanti House School welcomes all pupils with asthma and aims to support these children in participating fully in school life. A well-managed asthmatic student should never have to miss participating fully in school life due to their asthma. The school does all that it can to ensure our environment is favourable to pupils with asthma. The school has a definitive no smoking policy. Pupil's asthma triggers will be recorded as part of their asthma management and the school will ensure that pupil's will not come into contact with their triggers, where possible.

We are aware that triggers can include those listed below:

- 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 and cigarette smoke (Source: Asthma UK)

## Asthma Action Plans

Asthma UK evidence shows that if someone with asthma has an asthma action plan, they are four times less likely to be admitted to hospital due to their asthma. Therefore, it is essential that you visit your GP or practice nurse for regular asthma checks.

During these checks asthma is monitored, and the correct inhalers and instructions provided. As a school, we recognise that having to attend hospital can cause stress for a family and the student. We believe it is essential that all children with asthma have a personal asthma action plan provided at their asthma checks, to ensure it is well managed.

Avanti House School should be provided with the details of every student suffering from asthma, so we can keep our records up to date and provide the best possible support.

- It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school whether their child has asthma. Parents and carers should ensure the school has been provided with complete and up to date information on how the pupils asthma is managed and what inhalers have been prescribed. Where possible the asthma action plan should be given, along with any spare inhalers to be kept in medical as

necessary. It is also vital that a student's inhaler is always carried in school with them, and that it is checked regularly to ensure it is in date and working.

- Asthma UK have been updating their website for students with asthma, please see the link provided below. Parents should contact their GP if they have any concerns regarding medication or management. Their child may also be under the care of the Harrow asthma nurse specialist who can give further support, as well as the Harrow school nursing team. Parents and carers can also contact the school at any time, to discuss concerns they have regarding a student's asthma, or if they need to provide additional information or have questions to ask. A helpful site for more information and useful tips on managing asthma is:  
<https://www.asthma.org.uk>

## Medication and Inhalers

All children with asthma should always have immediate access to their reliever (usually blue) inhaler. The reliever inhaler is a fast-acting medication that opens the airways and makes it easier for the child to breathe. (Source: Asthma UK). At school a student should always carry their own prescribed inhaler with them. Some children 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. Children 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 pupil 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. (Source: Asthma UK).

Students should carry their reliever inhaler on them along with a space chamber plus, or Volumatic spacer device. It is recommended now that both are used together, so that more of the medication is inhaled as needed. Staff who have had asthma training, are happy to support students as they use their inhaler. If we have any concerns over a child's ability to use their inhaler, we will refer them to the school nurse and advise parents/carers to arrange a review with their GP/nurse. If students visit medical often with asthmatic symptoms a form will be completed, and we will notify parents. It could be that their asthma is not being properly managed, and they need to visit the GP or practice nurse at the surgery.

If a student forgets their own inhaler or needs to use the school's spare inhaler for whatever reason, a note will be sent home with the student, to advise parents this has been used. We will always check our records first that a parent has agreed to the emergency inhaler being used.

Measures are in place so that all students have immediate access to their inhalers, and the emergency inhaler. The door to the medical room is never locked, inhalers are kept easily visible and accessible located on the shelf.

## Emergency Salbutamol Inhaler in school

At Avanti House School we are aware of the guidance '*The use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools from the Department of Health*' which gives guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools. At Avanti House School we are now allowed to keep emergency asthma inhalers and offer them to students who need to use one, but have forgotten their own, or have an inhaler that is broken or out of date.

All information on asthma can be found on <https://www.asthma.org.uk/>.

## When asthma is affecting a pupil's education

Avanti House School recognise the aim of asthma medication is to allow people with asthma to live a normal life. Therefore, if we recognise asthma seems to be having a negative impact on a students' life; if a student is unable to take part in activities as normal during the day or if a student is overly tired or falling behind in lessons. We will discuss this with parents/carers and the school nurse with consent and suggest an appointment be made with their asthma nurse/GP.

It could simply be that the pupil needs an asthma check-up to review inhaler technique, medication or receive an updated "Personal Asthma Action Plan". This should then help to improve their symptoms. The school does recognise that pupils with asthma should not be classed as having a disability, as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Students just need a proper review in place and the right medication.

## Exercise and activity

- Taking part in sports, games and activities is an essential part of school life for all pupils. All staff will know which children in their class have asthma and all PE teachers at the school will be aware of which pupils have asthma from the school's asthma register. (Source: Asthma UK) Details are also maintained on the school's data system.
- Pupils with asthma are encouraged to participate fully in all activities. PE teachers will remind pupils 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. It is agreed with PE staff that students who suffer from asthma carry their inhaler with them. If a student needs to use their inhaler during a lesson, they will be encouraged to do so. (Source: Asthma UK)
- The health benefits of exercise is 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 and outside of school.
- The same rules apply for out of hours' sport as during school hours. (Source: Asthma UK) If a students' inhaler is out of date, empty or has been lost, the school's emergency inhaler would be offered.

## **Asthma Register**

We have an asthma register of children within the school, which we check regularly. We do this by asking parents/carers if their child has been diagnosed as asthmatic when they first start at school. Also, if a reliever inhaler has been prescribed. When parents/carers confirm their child is asthmatic and an inhaler has been prescribed we ensure the pupil's details are updated, and that their name is added to the asthma register. An asthma letter has also been sent to parents with tick boxes, to confirm if their child is asthmatic, and carries an inhaler. There was also an option to opt out of the use of the school's emergency inhalers, if parents wanted to.

## **Asthma Lead**

Avanti House School has an asthma lead who is named above. It is the responsibility of the asthma lead to manage the asthma register, update the asthma policy, and manage the needs of asthmatic students. They also carry out regular checks of the emergency salbutamol inhalers kept by the school, to ensure they are in date and working properly.

## **Staff training**

- Staff receive regular asthma updates and training annually. This training is provided by the school nursing team.
- 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.
- All students need to bring their inhalers and spacers with them on any trips away, outings, or sporting events. The school's spare emergency inhalers kits will always be provided and given to staff on all trips and outings.

## **What does asthma feel like?**

- Children and young people who have asthma tell us that it feels like someone is standing on their lungs.
- It feels like they are being squashed. "When having an attack, it feels like a rope is being slowly tightened around their chest".
- When a child or young person with asthma encounters an asthma trigger, the muscles around the walls of the airways tighten so that the airways become narrower. The lining of the airways becomes inflamed and begins to swell, making it difficult to breathe and leading to symptoms of coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath or feeling tight in the chest. It is at this point that the child or young person with asthma will need to take a dose of their reliever medicine.

## Common signs of an asthma attack

- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Feeling tight in the chest
- Being unusually quiet
- Difficulty speaking in full sentences.
- Tummy ache (sometimes in younger children)

## What to do

- Keep calm.
- Encourage the child or young person to sit up and slightly forward – do not hug or lie them down.
- Make sure the child or young person takes two puffs of reliever (blue) inhaler immediately (preferably through a spacer) □ Loosen tight clothing.
- Reassure the child if there is no immediate improvement and continue to make sure the child or young person takes one puff of reliever inhaler every minute for five minutes or until their symptoms improve.
- Call 999 or a doctor urgently if: The child or young person's symptoms do not improve in 5-10 minutes.
- The child or young person is too breathless or exhausted to talk.
- The child or young person's lips are blue, continue to give the child or young person their reliever inhaler 10 puffs every 15 minutes. Monitor closely, contact parents.