

Supporting children with Asthma to thrive in school



Asthma in Children: What Every Parent Needs to Know

Asthma is one of the most common long-term health conditions affecting children in the UK. It can impact a child's attendance, participation in school activities, and overall wellbeing if not well controlled. Schools and families play an important role in working together to ensure children with asthma remain healthy, safe and able to achieve their full potential.

How Common is Asthma in Children?

- ✓ Around 1 in 11 children in the UK are receiving treatment for asthma.
- ✓ In a typical classroom of 30 pupils, it is likely that around 3 children will have asthma.
- ✓ Asthma is one of the leading causes of emergency hospital admissions in children and can result in missed school days when symptoms are not well controlled.

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a long-term condition that affects the airways, causing them to become inflamed and sensitive. When exposed to triggers such as pollen, dust, viral infections, exercise, cold weather, smoke or pets, the airways can narrow, making it difficult to breathe.

Although asthma cannot currently be cured, it can usually be managed effectively with the right treatment and support.

How Parents Can Help

- ✓ Ensure your child has their prescribed inhalers and spacers available.
- ✓ Check inhalers are in date and not empty.
- ✓ Provide school with an up-to-date asthma action plan.
- ✓ Attend regular asthma reviews with your GP practice or asthma nurse.
- ✓ Encourage your child to use their inhaler correctly and consistently.
- ✓ Inform school of any changes to your child's asthma treatment.

Could Your School Become an Asthma-Friendly School?

We are pleased to offer schools the opportunity to work towards becoming an Asthma-Friendly School.

By becoming Asthma Friendly, schools can help create a safer environment, improve attendance and support children to participate fully in school life.

Common Signs and Symptoms of Asthma

Children may experience:

- ✓ Wheezing (a whistling sound when breathing)
- ✓ Persistent coughing, particularly at night or early morning
- ✓ Shortness of breath
- ✓ Tightness in the chest
- ✓ Getting out of breath more quickly than their peers during play or exercise
- ✓ Frequent chest infections
- ✓ Coughing or wheezing during exercise

Signs That Asthma May Be Poorly Controlled

If your child is experiencing any of the following, their asthma may not be under good control:

- ✓ Needing their reliever (usually blue) inhaler more than three times per week.
- ✓ Waking during the night due to coughing, wheezing or breathlessness.
- ✓ Becoming breathless during normal activities.
- ✓ Missing school due to asthma symptoms.
- ✓ Frequent asthma attacks or urgent medical appointments.

The Effects of Uncontrolled Asthma

Poorly controlled asthma can have a significant impact on children, including:

- ✓ Increased risk of asthma attacks.
- ✓ Reduced participation in sport and physical activity.
- ✓ Tiredness due to disturbed sleep.
- ✓ Reduced concentration and learning in school.
- ✓ Increased school absences.
- ✓ Anxiety and reduced confidence.
- ✓ Greater likelihood of emergency hospital visits.

The good news is that, with the correct treatment, regular reviews and good inhaler techniques, most children can lead active and healthy lives.

Parents should speak with their GP or asthma nurse if they notice any of these symptoms.



Remember

No child should miss out on education, play or physical activity because of asthma. Working together, families, schools and healthcare professionals can help every child with asthma stay safe, healthy and ready to learn.

For further information about asthma, please speak to your child's GP, asthma nurse, school nurse or visit Asthma + Lung UK.