



Learning Together

# Ballymoney Model Integrated Primary School

## Management of Asthma Recommended Guidance from the Southern Health Trust



Date: August 2023

Date of Next Review: As required

# Management of Asthma

## Recommended Guidance from the Southern Health Trust

Asthma is a condition of the airways that cannot be cured but can be controlled. In response to a trigger the airways narrow as the muscles around them tighten, they become swollen, inflamed and produce mucus.

Signs and symptoms of an asthma attack are:

- coughing,
- shortness of breath,
- wheezing,
- tightness in the chest,
- being unusually quiet,
- difficulty speaking in full sentences and
- sometimes younger children will express feeling tight in the chest as a tummy ache.

Triggers include: sprays, chemicals and fumes, cigarette smoke, house dust mites, pollen and grass cuttings, viral infections weather and air quality, mould and damp, stress and emotion, exercise and dust from flour and grain.

### Exercise and Asthma

School staff should ensure:

- that fitness levels increase gradually – the blue inhaler should be used before warming up if exercise makes a pupil's asthma worse,
- that pupils warm up and down thoroughly at the start and end of the session,
- to try to avoid other triggers, e.g. newly cut grass
- that the location of pupils' reliever inhaler is known,
- if a pupil has symptoms while exercising they should stop, take their reliever inhaler and wait until they feel better before starting again and
- that they recognise and respect the pupil's limits.

School should:

- keep an asthma register,
- seek consent from parents/carers which should be updated regularly and
- record where and when an attack happened and how much medication was administered.

School staff need to:

- be aware of the asthma register and be able to check if a pupil is on it,
- be able to access the pupil's inhaler and ensure pupils have access to their reliever inhaler,
- be aware of pupil's triggers,
- plan for school visits,
- ensure good communication with parents/carers,
- know what to do in an emergency and
- attend awareness update sessions.

When dealing with an asthma attack, the member of staff should:

- stay calm,
- encourage the pupil to sit up and slightly forward,
- make sure the pupil takes the inhaler in line with their health plan and reassure the child.

Call 999 urgently if:

- the symptoms do not improve in 5 – 10 minutes,
- the pupil is too breathless or exhausted to speak,
- the pupil's lips are blue or if you are in any doubt,
- continue to give the pupil one puff of their blue reliever inhaler every minute until the ambulance arrives.

The school can help by:

- making sure asthma is identified on school health form,
- ensuring pupils have access to their reliever inhaler,
- being aware of pupil's triggers,
- planning for school visits,
- having good communication with parents/carers,
- knowing what to do in an emergency and
- attending regular training sessions.