

# St Andrew's N. S.



## *Asthma Policy*

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies.

Policy Ratified

March 2016

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## **Introduction**

St Andrew's National School recognises that asthma is a widespread, serious but controllable condition and welcomes all pupils with asthma to the school. Asthma affects up to one in four primary aged children, one in seven teenagers and one in ten adults. We in St Andrew's N.S. aim to ensure that pupils with asthma can and do participate fully in all aspects of school life, including art lessons, P.E., science, visits, outings or field trips and other out-of-hours school activities.

This policy was drawn up following whole staff training facilitated by the Asthma Society Ireland on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

It is important therefore for all staff members to be aware of asthma, its symptoms and triggers, and its management in a school environment. Asthma attacks involve the narrowing of airways making it difficult to breathe. Symptoms commonly include:

- difficulty breathing
- wheezy breathing
- dry and irritating cough
- tightness in the chest
- difficulty speaking

Those with asthma may require daily or additional medication (particularly after exercise).

Within the school context, this is achieved through:

- Ensuring as far as is possible, that children have access to asthma medication provided by their parents/guardians. **Parents are responsible for ensuring that asthma medication is in date and with the child.**
- Keeping a record in so far as is possible of all pupils with asthma and the medicines they take. It is the responsibility of parents to inform and update the school of this.
- Creating a whole school environment, including the physical, social, sporting and educational environment, that is favourable to all pupils including those with asthma.
- Helping all pupils to understand asthma as a medical condition.
- In so far as is possible ensure that all staff who come into contact with pupils with asthma know what to do in the event of an asthma attack. Parents should ensure that this information is conveyed to all coaches and teachers involved in E.C.A.
- Working in partnership with all interested parties within the school community: B.O.M., P.T.A. and staff.

## **Background**

This policy has been written with advice from the Asthma Society of Ireland and having researched best practice within other schools.

## **Asthma medicines**

On entry to the school or at any stage during the child's attendance in primary school, parents/guardians must indicate whether their child has asthma. They are also asked to complete indemnity forms regarding either the self administration of inhalers by their child(ren) or in cases of emergency that this is done by staff members. Parents are responsible for ensuring that the reliever inhalers and spacers if required of children are kept in the child's school or swimming bag or in the case of younger children in the teacher's care.

School staff are not required to administer asthma medicines to pupils (except in an emergency). All staff will let pupils take their own medicine when they need to.

## **Information on Asthma**

Parents of pupils who have asthma are encouraged to access the website of the Asthma Society of Ireland for tips on managing this condition.

## **Exercise and activity – PE and games**

Taking part in sports, games and activities is an essential part of school life for all pupils. All teachers know which children in their class have asthma. We encourage children as they mature, to remember this themselves and to take more control in identifying when to take their medication.

Pupils with asthma are encouraged to participate fully in all PE lessons. Teachers will endeavour to remind pupils, whose asthma is triggered by exercise, to take their reliever inhaler before the lesson, and to thoroughly warm up and cool down before and after the lesson respectively. This is particularly the case when pupils engage in swimming, track and field sports. Best practice suggests that in some cases a preventative dose of an inhaler may be used particularly before physical activity of a more strenuous nature.

## **Off site sport, swimming and Educational Visits**

**Pupils are required to take inhalers with them on out of school/off site activities.**

## **School environment**

The school does all that it can to ensure the school environment is favourable to pupils with asthma. In St Andrew's N.S. we have a definitive no-smoking policy both in the school building and grounds. As far as possible, the school does not use chemicals/materials in science and art lessons that are potential triggers for pupils with asthma. The E.C.A. Committee will also convey this to teachers and helpers in the area of the Visual Arts and Sciences in particular.

### **Asthma attacks**

St Andrew's National School endeavours to ensure in so far as is reasonably possible that all staff who come into contact with pupils with asthma know what to do in the event of an asthma attack.

In the case of an asthma attack school staff endeavour to follow the procedure outlined by the Asthma Society of Ireland. This procedure is visibly displayed in the school office and staffroom.

Please see Appendix 2

### **NOTE:**

**Parents must be contacted whenever their child suffers an asthma attack.**

### **Self-Evaluation and Review**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-yearly review cycle or as the need arises.

This policy was reviewed during a whole-staff meeting on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and approved by the school's Board of Management (BOM) during its meeting on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson BOM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 1**

**Consent form given to parents/guardians**

In order to prepare our staff in case of any child having an asthma attack in school, we would be very grateful if you could return the form below to the school office. We would like to include any child who has been diagnosed with asthma. We are aware that there are a number of children in the school who use an inhaler regularly at home as well as some who only need to use it occasionally. If staff are aware of who these children are it will facilitate us in the unlikely event of their having an attack in school.

My son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_ suffers from asthma  
(child's name )

My son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_ does not/has never suffered  
(child's name) from asthma.

Parent's name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(parent/guardian signature)

## **Appendix 2**

### **What to do in an Asthma Attack – the Five Step Rule**

#### **During an Asthma Attack - Follow the Five Step Rule**

1. Take two puffs of reliever inhaler (usually blue) immediately
2. Sit upright and stay calm
3. Take slow steady breaths
4. If there is no immediate improvement take one puff of reliever inhaler every minute (You can take up to 10 puffs in ten minutes - Children under 6 years can take up to 6 puffs in ten minutes)
5. Call 999 or 112 if symptoms do not improve after following steps 1 -4 OR if you are in worried

*If an ambulance does not arrive within 10 minutes repeat Step 4.*

**Don't** put your arm around me or lie me down - this will restrict my breathing.

**Don't** worry about giving me too much reliever - during an asthma attack extra puffs of reliever medication are safe.

**Do** use a spacer device if one is available.

**Do** listen to what I am saying - I have had attacks before.

If you are admitted to hospital or an accident and emergency department because of your asthma, take details of your treatment with you. Bring your asthma management plan if you have one to the hospital.

(Taken from the Asthma Society of Ireland's website)