

Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all pupils with asthma are encouraged and supported to participate safely and fully in school life.

Guidance

Asthma is a common respiratory condition that causes occasional breathing difficulties. It is caused by inflammation, swelling and narrowing of the airways, this can happen randomly or after exposure to a trigger. The main symptoms of asthma are a wheeze, breathlessness, a tight chest and coughing. These symptoms can sometimes worsen, this is known as an asthma attack. The signs of an asthma attack include:

- Persistent cough (when at rest)
- A wheezing sound coming from the chest (when at rest)
- Being unusually quiet
- Shortness of breath at rest, feeling tight in the chest
- Difficulty in breathing (fast and deep respiration)
- Nasal flaring
- Being unable to complete sentences
- Appearing exhausted
- A blue / white tinge around the lips
- Going blue

Common asthma triggers include exercise, infections like a cold or flu, smoke, pollution, cold air and allergens such as dust, animal fur and pollen.

Asthma is usually treated by using an inhaler, although other medications are sometimes prescribed. The main types of inhalers are reliever inhalers and preventor inhalers. Relievers are used when needed to quickly relieve asthma symptoms for a short time. This inhaler is usually a salbutamol inhaler and is blue in colour. Preventer inhalers are used every day to prevent asthma symptoms occurring.

Asthma medication

Pupils must have their reliever inhaler with them at all times. This inhaler must be in date and have sufficient dosage available. Pupils are advised to have a spare reliever to ensure they are never without if one has run out.

Any oral medication is either kept with Matron in a locked cupboard as per *Stowe School Medication Policy* for the lower school, or if the pupil has been assessed as competent by a member of the team and completed a self-medication form the pupil can administer their own medication. Sixth form students are deemed as competent without this assessment form being completed.

Boarding pupils can request a repeat prescription of their medication via their Matron or directly to the Stowe Health Centre once they are registered with Brackley Medical Centre. Sixth form students will be encouraged to order their own repeat prescriptions and will be supported to do so.

Staff must ensure that any asthmatic pupils leaving Stowe for matches or trips must have their reliever inhaler. If it is a residential trip the pupil must also take their preventer inhaler plus any other prescribed medication.

School Staff who have attended their Administration of Medicines training should also take an Emergency Salbutamol Asthma Pack in case a pupil's inhaler becomes lost or runs out whilst on the trip.

Record Keeping

When a pupil starts at Stowe School an asthma diagnosis is usually identified on the Health History Form which is completed by a parent or guardian prior to arrival. Detailed information is given on this form with the correct names and instructions for all medication and inhalers.

Parental consent is required for school staff to administer Salbutamol in the event of an emergency, this is on the Health History Form for all new pupils.

An asthma action plan will be devised by the house nurse and then uploaded onto iSams for school staff to access as necessary. A copy is sent to the pupil and parents.

Exercise and Activity

It is important that pupils are aware that exercise is important for good lung health and will help to improve asthma control. Pupils are encouraged to manage their asthma to enable them to be involved in all school activities.

Pupils must have their reliever inhaler with them at all times whilst exercising. Staff should all know of any asthmatic pupils they teach to ensure they can check pupils have their inhalers with them.

Any member of staff can ask for asthma training either through their House Nurse or via the Health Centre. Online education via Educare is also available for staff to complete.

School environment

Stowe School does all it can to ensure the school is favourable to pupils with asthma. There is a Smoking Policy which ensures all school buildings are smoke free. Risk Assessments are performed and followed for any potential asthma triggers and pupils would be encouraged to leave a room immediately if particular fumes triggered their asthma.

Asthma Attacks

Staff who come into contact with asthmatic pupils should know what to do in the event of an asthma attack. This is also identified on the pupil's asthma action plan, which can be found on iSams.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Employers

Employers have a responsibility to:

- Ensure the health and safety of their employees and anyone else taking part in school activities. This responsibility extends to those staff leading activities off site, therefore, employers need to ensure an appropriate asthma policy is in place and trips are adequately risk assessed.
- Make sure the asthma policy is effectively monitored and regularly reviewed and updated.
- Provide indemnity for teachers who volunteer to administer medicines to pupils with asthma.

School Staff

School staff have a responsibility to:

- Understand the Stowe School Asthma Policy.
- Attend a First Aid Training Course.
- Complete the Asthma Educare online training if they come into regular contact with asthmatic pupils.
- Know which pupils they come into contact with who have asthma.
- Know what to do in the event of an asthma attack.
- Ensure all asthmatic pupils have their reliever inhaler with them at all times.
- Allow and support pupils with asthma to have immediate access to their reliever inhaler. If a pupil experiences any asthma symptoms, allow them time to stop what they are doing, take their reliever inhaler and only return to their activity if symptoms are relieved and the pupil feels well enough to continue.
- Inform the Health Centre immediately if a pupil has an asthma attack and follow the advice given to them at the time of calling. A pupil should never be sent alone to the Health Centre whilst they are having an asthma attack or showing the symptoms of asthma. In an emergency it may not be safe to move the pupil.
- Be aware of the potential social problems that pupils with asthma may experience and use this knowledge, alongside the school's bullying policy, to help prevent and deal with any problems.

- Liaise with House if a pupil is falling behind on work due to asthma symptoms.

Medical Professionals

The team at the Health Centre have the following responsibilities:

- The house nurse and medical officer will see all new boarding pupils with asthma as soon as possible when they start at Stowe. The medical officer will conduct regular medication reviews.
- The house nurse will develop, review and update individual asthma action plans. This will be shared with the pupil, parents and house staff. It will be uploaded onto iSams for school staff to access. The asthma action plan will identify the child's medical condition, identify symptoms and triggers, list the medication needs and support needed in an emergency. The house nurse will ensure pupils with asthma know when they need to seek medical help with managing their asthma and understand what the different inhalers are used for.
- The Health Centre team will provide medical assistance if a pupil has an asthma attack or is suffering from asthma symptoms.
- The Health Centre team will maintain a register of pupils with asthma and place an alert on the isam record of each individual listed.
- The Health Centre team will store emergency asthma salbutamol packs to be used in the event of an asthma attack if a child, who is diagnosed with asthma, does not have access to their own inhaler and there is parental consent to do so.
- The senior nursing team will devise and update the school Asthma Policy. This process is overseen by the Medical Officer and will be in line with local and national guidance.

Pupils

All pupils have a responsibility to:

- Treat other pupils with and without asthma equally.
- Treat all medication with respect, and ensure it used in the way it is intended.
- Ensure a member of staff and the Health Centre are contacted if someone having an asthma attack.

Pupils with asthma have a responsibility to:

- Attend asthma reviews at the Health Centre as requested.
- Know how and when to use their asthma medication.
- Carry a reliever inhaler (usually blue salbutamol) on them at all times to treat the symptoms of asthma and for use in the event of an asthma attack. This inhaler should be in date and have sufficient dosage in it. It is advisable to have a spare inhaler.
- Request repeat prescriptions of asthma medication when needed. This can be via matron or directly from the health centre.
- Recognise the symptoms of an asthma attack and know how to get help from a member of staff.

- Request an urgent appointment at the Health Centre if they have used their reliever inhaler more than 3 times in a week, have asthma symptoms or are waking at night due to asthma symptoms.

Parents

Parents with an asthmatic child have a responsibility to:

- Complete the health history form before the pupil starts at Stowe school and give consent for the administration of Salbutamol in an emergency by school staff.
- Inform the school if an asthma diagnosis has been made and what medication is taken.
- Inform the Health Centre of any changes to the pupil's treatment plan or any problems with asthma when the pupil is not at school.
- Update the school after any Consultant or Hospital visits.
- Give consent for the pupil to have an annual influenza vaccination.
- Ensure the pupil is prepared for hay fever season, if hay fever is an asthma trigger, with the appropriate over the counter medications at school.
- Ensure the pupil has their prescribed medication and it is in date when they return to school after holidays and breaks from school.

The asthma policy is regularly reviewed, evaluated and updated. Updates are produced every year.

Sources of Reference:

<https://www.asthma.org.uk/>

<https://nhs.co.uk/conditions/asthma>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/childhood-asthma/>

<http://www.medicalconditionsatschool.org.uk/>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416468/emergency_inhalers_in_schools.pdf