

Asthma Emergency Procedures

Common signs of an asthma attack:

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

Do . . .

- + keep calm
- + encourage the pupil to sit up and slightly forward – do not hug them or lie them down
- + make sure the pupil takes one puff of their reliever inhaler (usually blue) immediately
 - preferably through a spacer
- + ensure tight clothing is loosened
- + reassure the pupil.

If there is no immediate improvement

- + Continue with reliever inhaler one puff every minute for 10 minutes.

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Call an ambulance urgently if any of the following:

- + the pupil's symptoms do not improve after 10 puffs
- + the pupil is too breathless or exhausted to talk
- + the pupil's lips are blue
- + you are in any doubt.

Ensure the pupil takes one puff of their reliever inhaler every minute until the ambulance arrives.

After a minor asthma attack

- + Minor attacks should not interrupt the involvement of a pupil with asthma in school. When the pupil feels better they can return to school activities.
- + The parents/carers must always be told if their child/young person has had an asthma attack.

Important things to remember in an asthma attack

- + Never leave a pupil having an asthma attack.
- + If the pupil does not have their inhaler and/or spacer with them, send another teacher or pupil to their classroom or assigned room to get their spare inhaler and/or spacer.
- + In an emergency situation school staff are required under common law, duty of care, to act like any reasonably prudent parent.
- + Reliever medicine is very safe. During an asthma attack do not worry about a pupil overdosing.
- + Send a pupil to get another teacher/adult if an ambulance needs to be called.
- + Contact the pupil's parents/carers immediately after calling the ambulance.
- + A member of staff should always accompany a pupil taken to hospital by ambulance and stay with them until their parent arrives.
- + Generally staff should not take pupils to hospital in their own car.

Do not cancel an ambulance once called, even if the pupil's condition appears to have improved.