

# **WESTFIELD COMMUNITY SCHOOL**



## **Emergency inhalers in school**

January 2026

## **Westfield Community School**

This school is an inclusive community that welcomes and supports pupils with medical conditions. This school provides all pupils with any medical condition the same opportunities as others at school.

### **Arrangements for the supply, storage, care and disposal of the inhalers**

Inhalers and spacers (enclosed plastic vessels which make it easier to deliver asthma medicine to the lungs) are bought from a pharmaceutical supplier, Sherwood Drive Pharmacy and are bought in 'threes' on an occasional basis by the school. Note that pharmacies are not required to provide inhalers or spacers free of charge to schools: the school must pay for them as a retail item.

The supplier requires a request signed by the head teacher on headed paper stating:

- the name of the school for which the product is required.
- the purpose for which that product is required.
- the total quantity required.

Schools will discuss with the community pharmacist the different plastic spacers available and what is most appropriate for the age-group in the school. Community pharmacists can also provide advice on use of the inhaler if and when necessary.

### **The emergency kit**

An emergency asthma inhaler kit includes:

- a salbutamol metered dose inhaler.
- plastic spacers compatible with the inhaler.
- instructions on using the inhaler and spacer and on cleaning and storing the inhaler.
- manufacturer's information.
- an administration list.

### **Guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools**

A list of children permitted to use the emergency inhaler as detailed in their risk assessments can be found in green folders in each classroom.

A record of administration (i.e. when the inhaler has been used), must be filled in on each occasion, using the given forms.

Emergency inhaler, spacers and forms are kept in the staffroom on each phase.

### **Salbutamol**

Salbutamol is a relatively safe medicine, particularly if inhaled, but all medicines can have some adverse effects. Those effects are well known, tend to be mild and temporary and are not likely to cause serious harm. The child may feel a bit shaky or may tremble, or they may say that they feel their heart is beating faster.

The main risk of allowing schools to hold a salbutamol inhaler for emergency use is that it may be administered inappropriately to a breathless child who does not have asthma. It is **essential** therefore that staff ensure **that the inhaler is only used by children who have asthma or who have been prescribed a reliever inhaler.**

Storage and care of the inhaler

**Mrs Pennington and Mrs Penman** have responsibility for ensuring that:

- on a regular basis the inhaler and spacers are present and in working order and the inhaler has sufficient number of doses available.
- that replacement inhalers and spacers are obtained when expiry dates approach.
- that staff understand that the plastic inhaler housing (which holds the canister) requires to be cleaned, dried and returned to storage following use, or that replacements are available if necessary.

The inhaler and spacer is not locked away. The inhaler is stored at the appropriate temperature (in line with manufacturer's guidelines), below 30C, protected from direct sunlight and extremes of temperature. The inhaler and spacers are kept separate from any child's inhaler. An inhaler is primed when first used (e.g. spray two puffs). As it can become blocked again when not used over a period of time, it is regularly primed by spraying two puffs. Staff understand that inhalers will be taken for offsite visits.

### **Guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools**

The inhaler and spacer can be reused, it must be cleaned after use. The inhaler canister is removed, and the plastic inhaler housing and cap is washed in warm running water, and left to dry in air in a clean, safe place. The canister is returned to the housing when it is dry, the cap replaced, and the inhaler returned to the designated storage place.

If there is any risk of contamination with blood (for example if the inhaler has been used without a spacer), it will not be re-used, it will be disposed of.

Please follow general RA given to class teachers at beginning of year to ensure that the procedure in the case of a mild/ severe attack is followed. A record is kept in each phase staffroom of the children that have required the emergency inhalers.

### **Disposal**

Manufacturers' guidelines usually recommend that spent inhalers are returned to the pharmacy to be recycled, rather than being thrown away.

**This will be reviewed annually.**