

THE USE OF EMERGENCY SALBUTAMOL INHALER IN SCHOOLS

Children should have their own reliever inhaler at school to treat symptoms and for use in the event of an asthma attack. If they are able to manage their asthma themselves, they should keep their inhaler on them, and if not, it should be easily accessible to them.

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 schools ensure that the inhaler is only used by children who have asthma or who have been prescribed a reliever inhaler, and for whom written parental consent has been given.

To obtain a salbutamol inhaler you will need a request signed by the head teacher (ideally on appropriately headed paper) stating: - the name of the school for which the product is required; - the purpose for which that product is required, and - the total quantity required. This can be taken to a pharmacy and an inhaler and spacer device can be purchased. Depending on the size of the school will depend on how many inhalers to purchase, a minimum of two spacers needs to be purchased.

An emergency asthma inhaler kit should include:

- a salbutamol metered dose inhaler.
- at least two plastic spacers compatible with the inhaler.
- instructions on using the inhaler and spacer.
- instructions on cleaning and storing the inhaler.
- manufacturer's information.
- a checklist of inhalers, identified by their batch number and expiry date, with monthly checks recorded.
- a note of the arrangements for replacing the inhaler and spacers a list of children (register) permitted to use the emergency inhaler as detailed in their individual healthcare plans.
- a record of administration (i.e., when the inhaler has been used).

Storage and care of the inhaler

On a monthly basis the school health officers need to check that the inhalers and spacers are in working order and the inhaler has sufficient medication and is not expired. Once an inhaler and spacer are used in an emergency, the spacer can be sent home with the child and the cap and inhaler plastic housing holding the cannister can be washed in warm soapy water and dried and the cannister returned. This can be used again but a new spacer will need to be available and used. However, if there is any risk of contamination with blood (for example if the inhaler has been used without a spacer), it should also not be re-used but disposed of.

The inhaler should be stored at the appropriate temperature (in line with manufacturer's guidelines), usually below 30C, protected from direct sunlight and extremes of temperature. The inhaler and spacers should be kept separate from any child's inhaler which is stored in a nearby location and the emergency inhaler should be clearly labelled to avoid confusion with a child's inhaler. (Removal of prime an inhaler on first use)

Disposal – back to pharmacy register as a lower tier waste carrier, as a spent inhaler counts as waste for disposal. Registration is free <https://www.gov.uk/waste-carrier-or-broker-registration>

Young people who can use an emergency salbutamol inhaler.

The emergency salbutamol inhaler should only be used by children: - who have been diagnosed with asthma and prescribed a reliever inhaler; - OR who have been prescribed a reliever inhaler; AND have written parental consent for use of the emergency inhaler. This information should be recorded in a child's individual healthcare plan.

A child may be prescribed an inhaler for their asthma which contains an alternative reliever medication to salbutamol (such as terbutaline). The salbutamol inhaler should still be used by these children if their own inhaler is not accessible – it will still help to relieve their asthma and could save their life.

Register

A register with name, photo, and consent for emergency inhaler to be used needs to be kept and updated annually. The register needs to be readily available to allow for it to be checked when the emergency salbutamol is needed. Appendix one.

Going to use the emergency salbutamol inhaler - check the register.

Responding to signs of an asthma attack

- Keep calm and reassure the child
- Encourage the child to sit up and slightly forward.
- Use the child's own inhaler – if not available, use the emergency inhaler
- Remain with child while inhaler and spacer are brought to them
- Immediately help the child to take two separate puffs of the salbutamol via the spacer immediately

- If there is no immediate improvement, continue to give two puffs every two minutes up to a maximum of 10 puffs, or until their symptoms improve. The inhaler should be shaken between puffs.
- Stay calm and reassure the child. Stay with the child until they feel better. The child can return to school activities when they feel better.
- If the child does not feel better or you are worried at ANYTIME before you have reached 10 puffs, CALL 999 FOR AN AMBULANCE
- If an ambulance does not arrive in 10 minutes give another 10 puffs in the same way
- The child's parents or carers should be contacted after the ambulance has been called.
- A member of staff should always accompany a child taken to hospital by ambulance and stay with them until a parent or carer arrives.

Consent form:

Use of emergency salbutamol inhaler

[Insert school name]

Child showing symptoms of asthma / having asthma attack

1. I can confirm that my child has been diagnosed with asthma / has been prescribed an inhaler [delete as appropriate].
2. My child has a working, in-date inhaler, clearly labelled with their name, which they will bring with them to school every day / be left at school.
3. In the event of my child displaying symptoms of asthma, and if their inhaler is not available or is unusable, I consent for my child to receive salbutamol from an emergency inhaler held by the school for such emergencies.

Person with parental responsibility sign.....

Date:

Name(print).....

Child's name.....

Child's date of birth.....

Class:

Parent's address and contact details:

.....

.....

Telephone.....

E-mail.....

Appendix 2

Use of salbutamol inhaler

Child's name:

Class:

Date:

Dear.....,

This letter is to notify you that..... has had problems with his / her breathing today. This happened when.....

- They did not have their own asthma inhaler with them, so a member of staff helped them to use the emergency asthma inhaler containing salbutamol.

They were given puffs.

- Their own asthma inhaler was not working, so a member of staff helped them to use the emergency asthma inhaler containing salbutamol.

They were given puffs.

Although they soon felt better, we would strongly advise that you have your child seen by your own doctor as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Health team

[insert title / school name]