



Keeping Your Child Safe at School

As a parent with a child suffering from severe asthma one of my biggest fears was that she had an exacerbation while she was at school. Unfortunately for us this did occur on more than one occasion and the school which she still attends were not prepared and did not know what to do in an emergency situation. This led me to challenge them on the policies and legislation that should be in place.

I understand that even the thought of delving into the depths of policy and legislation is mind blowing to say the least, so hopefully with this tool I can guide you as a parent/carer to ensure that the schools that your children attend are informed and prepared if your child has an asthma attack while they are in their care and they are aware of the severity of this condition.

Does your child's school have the correct policies in place for their asthma?

- ✓ Since 4th September 2014 all schools and academies are required by law to have in place a Medical Conditions Policy for children with asthma.
(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/638267/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf)
- ✓ Do not be afraid to ask/challenge the school that your child attends if they have this policy in place and if not it needs to be in place for your child and all other children with medical conditions. This is covered by Section 100 of the Children's and Families Act 2014
(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/section/100/enacted>)
- ✓ Arrange a meeting with the Head Teacher, Contact the Chair of Governors to discuss if the correct policies and legislation are in place. Ask to see what they have in place. If you are in doubt.
- ✓ Make contact with your local MP, they can be a voice for you and your child if you feel you are not being heard. My local MP was fantastic and luckily was still on the board of governors at the school my daughter attends. Usually after a few words from your MP the school are quick to respond as they do not want any form of negative publicity and they actually want your child to be safe when they are at school. You can find your local MP by simply googling 'Who is the local MP for my area?' (type the area you live in) and you will find all contact details for them here.
- ✓ Ask advice from your Local Education Authority (LEA)
(<http://schoolswebdirectory.co.uk/localauthorities.php>)
- ✓ Speak to your child's GP/School Nurse/Consultant/Asthma Nurse/Specialist Respiratory Nurse. They can help to get an Early Help Assessment (EHA) put in place to discuss your child's and your family's needs.
(<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Family/Support.aspx?nccredirect=1>)



- ✓ They can also arrange for the school that your child attends to receive the correct training to be able to manage your child's condition. As strange as it sounds schools need educating too. Remember they are not healthcare professionals they are teachers and although they know that they may have to manage many different kinds of medical conditions they are not trained to do so. As frustrating as this can be, try and be as helpful as you can to help them understand the severity of asthma. People who have not lived through what we have, have little or no knowledge whatsoever.

Some links to help you help you, your child and the school they attend

<https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/child/life/school/>

<https://www.asthma.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/successes/school-inhalers/>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/269469/health_needs_guidance_-_revised_may_2013_final.pdf

<https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/manage-your-asthma/young-people/>

Have a look at the web links, they more often than not have other links to other websites that may be of interest. Asthma.uk is a really good website and give lots of information and evidence that will definitely help. Join forums and ask advice from other parents/carers, it helps to know that you are not alone with your asthma journey. Help and advice is just a click or a phone call away.