

Tips for teachers: managing children's asthma

For parents, leaving their child at school for the first time is a big occasion – especially when their child has asthma. Every child should be able to enjoy **school** and join in on everything it offers, which is why Philips has compiled this advice for teachers. Helping them to recognize and to contribute to the successful management of a child's asthma, and to stop it getting in the way of them being happy at school



What is asthma?



Asthma is a potentially serious chronic disease that causes the narrowing and inflammation of the airways, making it hard for sufferers to breathe. Some **334 million** people around the world suffer from **asthma**, with the most common disease in children¹. Although there is currently no cure, proper use of the effective medicines on offer can relieve symptoms and cut the risk of asthma attacks



asthma, but by knowing which children in your class have been diagnosed, you can be prepared for any issues that may arise. Arrange a meeting with the parents to talk through their child's asthma action plan - this is a written, bespoke asthma management program that references the triggers that make a child's symptoms worse and explain clearly what to do if they experience those symptoms



Understand

Symptoms may differ from child to child, but there are a handful of common indicators that a child may be suffering from an asthma episode. These include:



wheezing and coughing

Difficulty completing physical activity

Difficulty breathing;



Drowsiness or tiredness



A tight chest, anxiety or soreness



of runny nose

Continuous high incidence



Communicate

guardians regularly will help you to act efficiently and appropriately in class. Key things to ask are:

Speaking with parents or



What **typically triggers** their child's asthma and





How you can let them know if their child has any

reliever inhaler throughout the day?

What are their **medication needs** and

what are their symptoms?

usage methods?

message)?

in an emergency?



How would they prefer to get **any updates** about their **child's asthma** (e.g. telephone, email, text

asthma symptoms at school or has used their



What to do/how to contact them



Symptoms may also affect a child's ability to pay attention and, when serious, restrict their attendance of school. Because of this, it's important to communicate

Encouragement

with parents to ensure children don't miss out on key stages of learning



Plan fun, **outdoor activities for everyone to enjoy**. As long as your pupil is taking the right precautions such as **regular**



medication and the air quality is satisfactory, activities such

as sports are encouraged for asthma sufferers

alerts that may affect children with asthma.

alienated from classmates



Keep allergens at bay. Chalk from blackboards, dust mites, pet-hair and odours from pens and paints can all trigger asthma

Keep classrooms **well ventilated** so fresh air can circulate the space. An air purifier is also an effective way of improving air quality indoors, as it **reduces irritants and allergens** that can trigger health problems. For air conditioned or heated rooms, it's important to **frequently check** the maintenance of the system in place. Proper air flow, filtration and

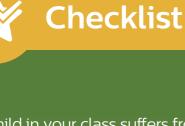
When planning outdoor activities, **check pollen count** or air quality

to alleviate **symptoms for sufferers**, whilst ensuring they are not

There are simple free apps that can be **downloaded on your phone** to check this, such as the Air Matters app. Try to plan alternative activities



control of humidity will help to ensure there won't be an indoor air problem



If a child in your class suffers from an asthma attack, it's important to act quickly and stay calm. Below are five tips to help you handle an attack in



the classroom:





Never leave a child without adult supervision until they are feeling better

Planning for emergencies is

important, so make sure that

a rescue inhaler is alwavs

easily accessible





Refer to the child's **asthma**

action plan immediately

steps taken above, seek emergency help

If symptoms persist and worsen despite the

For further information on asthma, head to Asthma.org.uk or contact your local doctor for advice.