

## PETS IN SCHOOL AND THE ASTHMATIC PUPIL

### Asthma Triggers

A trigger is something that irritates the airways (the tubes leading to the lungs), causing them to react. This sets off a process which leads to asthma symptoms being displayed and may even lead to a serious asthma attack.

These symptoms include:

- Dry cough
- Wheezing (a whistling noise when they breath out)
- A feeling of shortness of breath
- A feeling of chest tightness or 'squeezing' over the chest
- Younger pupils may say their tummy is sore.



Ideally, no child with asthma would be exposed to any of their triggers. Unfortunately, this is not always practical.

If there is a pet in the school that is known to be a recognised animal trigger for a certain pupil, following the advice below will help to prevent symptoms from occurring.

- Try to avoid having furry or feathery animals in the classroom.
- Any sessions with animals should ideally be held outside
- If an animal is brought into school, a risk assessment should be carried out and the risks to pupils with allergy/asthma should be considered.
- Try to have sessions with the animal in one room only. A school Hall is ideal as it is easier to ventilate and clean.
- Pupils with pet, fur and feather triggers for asthma or allergy should not go into the room
- The room must be well cleaned (vacuumed and damp dusted) before pupils with sensitivity are allowed to back in the room.
- If a pupil with a known animal trigger is likely to be exposed to the animal it is important that the pupil is given 2-4 puffs of Salbutamol (blue inhaler) **before exposure** to the animal to try and prevent new symptoms.