

SCHOOL TRIPS, ASTHMA TRIGGERS 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, especially on school trips. The following advice will help you to manage a pupil with asthma when exposed to possible triggers:

Chemicals/fumes

- As far as possible, pupils should try to avoid fumes in science, art and craft lessons that are known to trigger their asthma.
- They may need to leave the room until the fumes are no longer in the room

Mould/damp

- Classrooms should be well aired and ventilated.
- Any evidence of damp/mould within school should be acted on quickly.
- Where possible, autumn leaves falling from trees, forming piles should be kept away from pupil areas and regularly removed as the mould from these can be a trigger to asthma.

Grass and Pollens

- Pupils with asthma should be able to use their salbutamol regularly every 4 hours if the pollen count is known to be high or if they are having troublesome hay fever symptoms.
- Pupils may need to be given an option to do indoor PE if the pollen count is high.
- Where possible, grass cutting should be avoided during school hours or limited to late afternoons.

Aerosols/sprays

- Many children have asthma that can be triggered by strong odours and aerosols.
- Ensure changing rooms are well ventilated and encourage the use of roll on deodorants and unscented products.
- Consideration should be given to allowing pupils with this trigger to have alternative changing facilities

Changing Weather

- Pupils may need to use their blue inhaler before outside play depending on the weather.
- Commonly, cold, damp, weather can be a trigger. Thunderstorms can also trigger asthma attacks as large quantities of pollen are released into the air.