

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 has easy access to their reliever inhaler and their asthma management plan in case they develop symptoms.