

# Asthma Information Sheet

## Helping the Student with Asthma

- It is important to know which students have asthma in your classroom. Talk to the school nurse about the child's **Asthma Action Plan** before you need it. If the child does not have an **Asthma Action Plan** on file, speak to the school nurse who can contact the child's parent/guardian to develop one.
- Familiarize yourself with how to assist a child during an asthma attack, in the event that the school nurse is not available for assistance.
- Check with the school nurse to determine whether or not the child should use his/her quick relief inhaler before beginning physical activity/ sports/recess or before going out into the cold air.
- Attempt to reduce asthma triggers in the classroom.  
**Common asthma triggers** are:
  - ✓ chalk dust
  - ✓ furry or feathered pets
  - ✓ mold
  - ✓ cold or very humid air
  - ✓ dust, weeds, grass
  - ✓ strong odors (paints, dry erase markers, magic markers, perfume, glue/paste, chemicals)
- Become familiar with each child's **early signs or symptoms** of an asthma attack, such as:
  - ✓ coughing
  - ✓ shortness of breath
  - ✓ wheezing
  - ✓ tightness of chest
- Become familiar with the **danger signs and symptoms** of an asthma attack, such as:
  - ✓ all of the above and/or...
  - ✓ trouble breathing while talking or walking
  - ✓ using neck or stomach muscles to breathe
  - ✓ rapid, shallow breathing
  - ✓ child's lips or fingernails turn blue or grey
- **Take action early.** Send the child to school nurse if available. If the nurse is unavailable, refer to the child's Asthma Action Plan for steps to take:
  - ✓ have child perform Peak Flow Meter reading, if able
  - ✓ contact child's parent/guardian if there is no relief from using rescue inhaler or child exhibits danger symptoms
  - ✓ help the child use a quick relief inhaler
  - ✓ possibly call 911 for emergency treatment when the child exhibits danger symptoms or if the parent directs you to do so
- Develop a procedure for handling missed schoolwork
- Help the student with asthma feel more comfortable in the classroom setting. Encourage the student with asthma to participate fully in physical activity if his/her asthma is under control. Allow the student to engage in quiet activity if recovering from an asthma episode or respiratory infection or if his/her parent provides instructions to limit physical activity for a period of time.
- Know the possible side effects of asthma medications and how they may affect the student's performance in the classroom, such as headache, restlessness, nervousness, and trembling.

This information is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional.