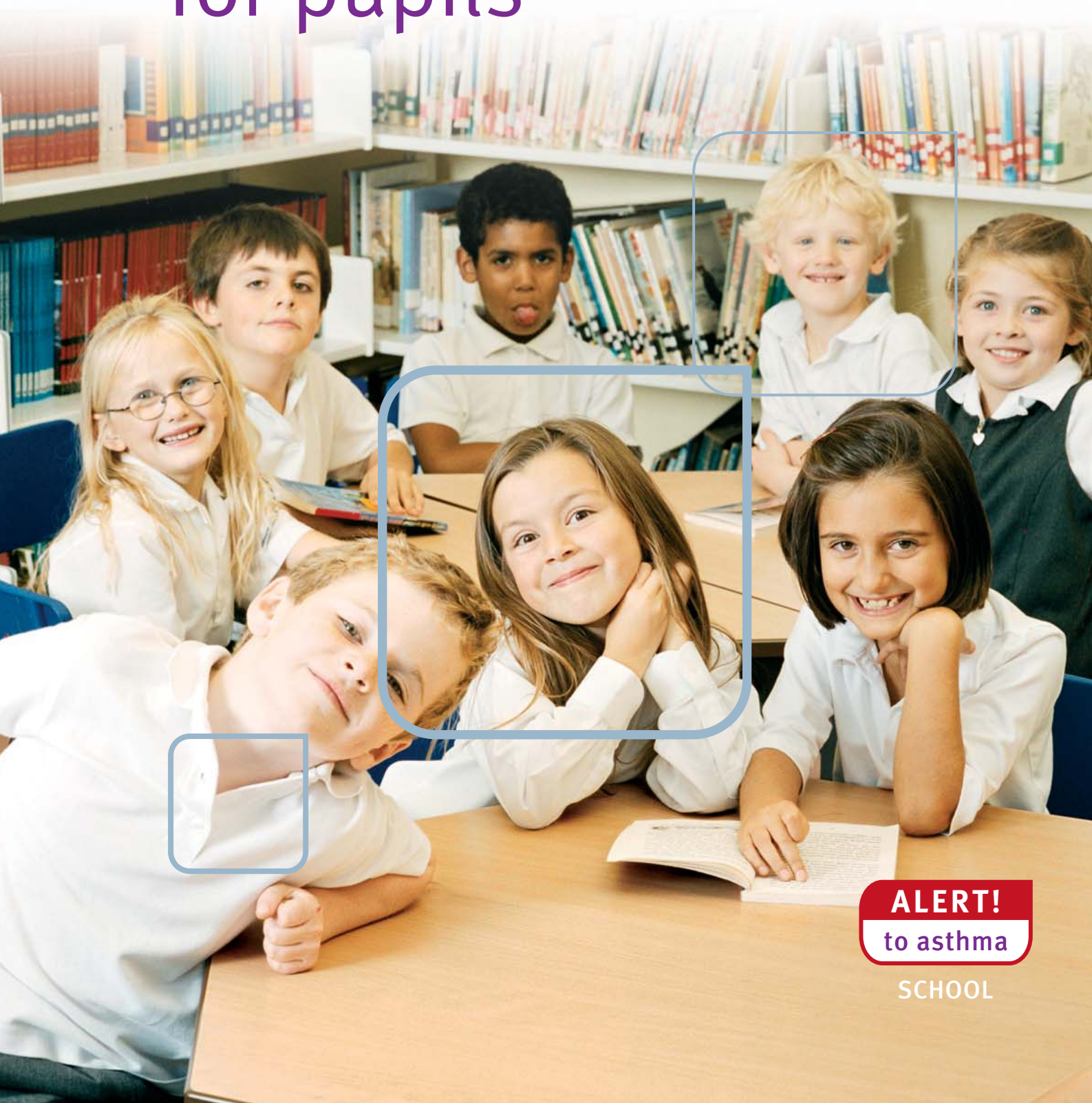


Asthma resources for pupils



ALERT!
to asthma

SCHOOL

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Introduction

All pupils should be taught about asthma. Many pupils in your classroom may well have experience of asthma: they may have asthma themselves, have a family member with asthma, or a friend may have the condition.

Explaining to your class what asthma is, its triggers, medicines and why it is important to get help if they see another pupil having an asthma attack will help them become asthma aware. This booklet introduces a few of the ways you can help your pupils become asthma aware.



How Asthma UK can help you

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How Asthma UK can help you

Asthma in your national curriculum

Asthma can be included in several areas of the national curriculum in England and Wales. These include:

Science: Key Stages 1 and 2 – Life processes and living things

In Key Stage 1, asthma, its causes and its treatments can be included in the sections on personal health and the role of drugs as medicines. In Key Stage 2 this can be extended to cover the effect that asthma has on the function of the lungs. It can also include the identification of ‘triggers’, both within the school and the wider environment.

Design & Technology: Key Stages 1 and 2 – Knowledge and Understanding

In both key stages, the area of products and applications can include a study of how different asthma inhalers work. The section on health and safety covers the control of risks within the environment.

See page 12
for classroom
and assembly
activities

Geography: Key Stages 1 and 2

In both key stages, thematic studies can include learning about asthma and its relationship to environment quality. In Key Stage 1, local studies of the area around the school could focus on air quality. In Key Stage 2, the study can cover the need to manage and sustain the environment in order to avoid pollution and other asthma triggers.

History: Key Stages 1 and 2


Studies of local history can incorporate sections that focus on the change in the local environment caused by changes in industry and transport.

PE: Key Stages 1 and 2

Children and young people should be encouraged to understand and adopt lifestyle choices that contribute to good health and well-being. PE teachers should be aware that pupils with asthma require access to all areas of the PE national curriculum.

In Scotland the processes of respiration are included in the science section of Environmental Studies in the 5–14 curriculum.

The respiratory system is also included in Northern Ireland’s curriculum. Work on asthma could be incorporated here.



1 in 10
children in the UK
has asthma

Hosting a speaker on asthma

Asthma UK has trained speakers who can visit your school and talk about asthma and the work of Asthma UK. There is no charge for speakers – all Asthma UK asks is that the school considers supporting us by making a donation or organising a fundraising activity.

‘Speak Up For Asthma’ volunteers also speak to community groups and voluntary organisations.

‘Speak Up For Asthma’ volunteers are available in many places in the UK. To see if there is one available in your area and to book a speaker, or for further information, contact Asthma UK’s Community Development & Volunteering team (020 7786 4923/5008; speaking@asthma.org.uk).



‘It is great to be involved in the community and help to improve the lives of people – including children – with asthma.’

DAKSHA KAMDAR, SPEAK UP FOR ASTHMA VOLUNTEER





Dylan loves sport. His asthma is triggered by exercise but he takes his medicines and knows how to keep his symptoms under control.

Get your school 'fit and active for asthma'

Asthma UK would like schools to take part in an exercise-based awareness-raising event to encourage all pupils to be physically active, while raising money for Asthma UK. The event can cover anything that gets all pupils (with and without asthma) out there and active.

Your school could:

- hold a mini marathon
- grab skipping ropes and do a sponsored skip
- put on sequins for a funky dance-a-thon
- get the trainers out for a good old sports day (with egg and spoon race of course!)
- think about 2012 and go for a mini-Olympics (has your school any potential 2012 stars?)
- come up with a brand new event – put on your thinking caps (anything that gets you up and out of your seats!).

One third of children with asthma miss out on PE or other sport about once a week because of their asthma, according to an online poll by Asthma UK. However, exercise is good for everyone including children and young people with asthma. With the right asthma management and asthma control, most children and young people should be able to participate in just about any activity they want to.

To help you organise an event Asthma UK will provide a pack containing all the information you need, along with Asthma UK sponsorship forms, balloons, stickers, posters, collecting tins and certificates.

Asthma UK is a charity funded through voluntary donations and your school's support would help to improve the lives of the 5.2 million people – including 1.1 million children – in the UK with asthma. By raising money you will help Asthma UK to understand the causes of asthma and free people from its effects.

For more information on mini marathons or other events please contact Asthma UK's Supporter & Information Team (020 7786 5000; info@asthma.org.uk).

Cover over 26 miles, while raising money for children with asthma each step of the way. If you would like your school to get active and take part in the Kick Asthma mini-marathon to raise vital funds to help children with asthma, contact Asthma UK's Supporter & Information Team for a fundraising pack (020 7786 5000; minimarathon@asthma.org.uk).



resources



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Jodhi's asthma is triggered by house-dust mites, exercise and some chemicals – including some used in science lessons

School Asthma Pack resources

There are two posters included in this pack. They also feature on pages 9 and 10 for easy reference.

What is asthma? A2 poster

Covers

- What is asthma?
- Symptoms
- Triggers
- What to do in an asthma attack

Use

The poster gives all pupils basic information about asthma, its symptoms and triggers. It is ideal for displaying in the classroom or on noticeboards throughout the school. See page 9.

Out There & Active – A2 poster

Covers

- Asthma symptoms
- Common triggers during PE
- Tips to keep asthma symptoms under control
- What to do in an asthma attack

Use

This is a useful tool to encourage children with asthma to take part in exercise and for classroom discussion. Ideal for displaying in school changing rooms, noticeboards outside the school gym or changing rooms and/or in the classroom or on noticeboards throughout the school. See page 10.

The poster can be used:

- to inform all pupils and teachers about asthma and exercise
- to inform/remind pupils whose asthma is triggered by exercise how to keep their asthma under control.
- to remind teachers and other adults supervising exercise activities about asthma, its triggers, how a pupil can manage their asthma while exercising, and what to do in an asthma attack.

There are two versions of this poster a Kick-Asthma branded version for primary schools and the version below for older pupils.



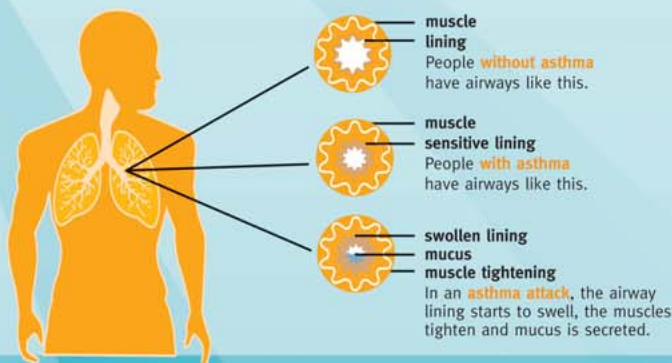
For further copies of either of the posters, use the form in the pack or contact Asthma UK's Supporter & Information Team (020 7786 5000; info@asthma.org.uk).

What is asthma?



Asthma is a condition that affects the airways

The airways are the small tubes that carry air in and out of the lungs. People with asthma have airways that are almost always red and sensitive (inflamed). When they come into contact with an asthma trigger their airways will become narrower, making it more difficult to breathe.



The usual symptoms of asthma are

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Tightness in the chest
- Shortness of breath

Not everyone will get all these symptoms. Some people will get them from time to time; a few will experience them all the time.

Common triggers



Colds and flu



Exercise



Cigarette smoke



Pollen



House-dust mite



Fur and feathers



Pollution



Emotions eg, stress



Some chemical fumes

What to do in an asthma attack

If you or one of your friends is having an asthma attack, keep calm and send someone to get an adult straight away. Ask others not to hug or crowd you.

- 1 Take two puffs of your reliever inhaler (usually blue)
- 2 Sit up and loosen tight clothing
- 3 If there is no immediate improvement during an attack, continue to take one puff of reliever inhaler every minute for five minutes, or until symptoms improve
- 4 If your symptoms do not improve within five to ten minutes – or if you are in doubt – call 999 or a doctor urgently
- 5 Continue to take one puff of your reliever inhaler every minute until help arrives.



KICK ASTHMA

Visit the Kick-A Crew and find out more about asthma at kickasthma.org.uk

To speak to an asthma nurse specialist about your asthma call 08457 01 02 03 or visit the Kick-A Health Centre (kickasthma.org.uk).



out there AND active

Exercise keeps you fit and healthy.

If you have asthma that is well controlled it should not stop most people getting out there and active.



Common triggers in PE are:



Cold air



Long distance running



Bleep fitness test



Chlorine in swimming pools



Dusty equipment



Pollen – including grass cuttings

Remember – everyone's triggers are different!

Asthma symptoms

- Coughing
- Tightness in the chest
- Wheezing
- Difficulty breathing

If you continue to have symptoms when exercising visit your doctor or asthma nurse.

Tips to keep your asthma symptoms under control

- Use your reliever inhaler immediately before starting to warm up
- Always warm up
- Try not to come into contact with things that trigger your asthma
- Always have your reliever inhaler available when you exercise
- If you have asthma symptoms when you exercise, stop, take your reliever inhaler and wait five minutes or until you feel better before starting again
- Always warm down – if you want advice on warming up or down ask your PE teacher.



'I always make sure that I take my inhaler before playing football and that I have it available in case I need it.'

PAUL SCHOLES
FOOTBALLER

What to do in an asthma attack

- 1 Take two puffs of your reliever inhaler (usually blue)
- 2 Sit up and loosen tight clothing
- 3 If there is no immediate improvement during an attack, continue to take one puff of reliever inhaler every minute for five minutes, or until symptoms improve
- 4 If your symptoms do not improve within five to ten minutes – or if you are in doubt – call 999 or a doctor urgently
- 5 Continue to take one puff of your reliever inhaler every minute until help arrives.



'Warming up and warming down are really important ways in which I keep my asthma under control when I'm exercising.'

PAULA RADCLIFFE
MARATHON WORLD CHAMPION

Visit the Kick-A Crew and find out more about asthma at kickasthma.org.uk

To speak to an asthma nurse specialist about your asthma call 08457 01 02 03 or visit the Kick-A Health Centre (kickasthma.org.uk).

KICK ASTHMA



Asthma UK, Summit House, 70 Wilson Street, London EC2A 2DB Registered charity number 802364 What do you think of this poster? Email: exercise@asthma.org.uk

It's lucky Woody keeps his spare inhaler in his classroom as he sometimes forgets to take his to school.

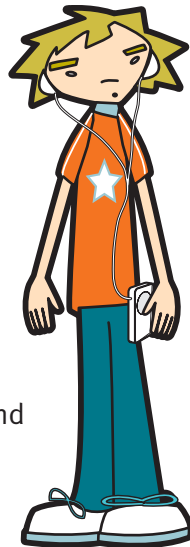
Kick-A website

Kickasthma.org.uk is Asthma UK's interactive website for children and young people with asthma.

Based around the fictional Kick-A City and its residents, the Kick-A Crew, the site helps to show children what it is like to live with asthma every day and how to keep symptoms under control, through a mixture of information, games and interactive environments.

Visitors to the Kick-A site can find out more about music-loving Skoot (pictured), rebel Charlie, fashion-conscious Simone, sporty Dylan and the rest of their mates, and explore their school, health centre and homes, discovering the links that reveal information about triggers and medicines.

The site also has a messageboard and problem page, where young people can write in for advice on how to deal with their asthma at school, and with their friends and family.





Resources



Activities

Background

This section is designed to help you plan activities for assembly or within the classroom to help your pupils to become asthma aware. It explains what asthma is, who it affects and how it affects them. These activities have not been linked to any of the national curricula.

- Activity 1: What is it like to have asthma?
- Activity 2: How many people have asthma?
- Activity 3: Asthma experiences
- Activity 4: Asthma triggers
- Activity 5: Suki's story

Activity 1 – What is it like to have asthma?

Ask your class to close their eyes and read the following text:

Imagine how you feel when you've had to run, cycle or swim really fast – maybe you've been in a race, had to run the whole length of the football pitch or cycled up a big hill. You will probably feel out of breath for a few minutes. Those few minutes give you an idea of what it often feels like for many people with asthma.

Imagine how you would feel if this feeling didn't go away after a few minutes or even got worse. Asthma is a very common condition and it is important that everyone tries to understand what it might feel like and even know a bit about it.

Activity 2 – How many people have asthma?

Work out how many children in your school it would take to represent the one in ten children in the UK with asthma. You can use this as a demonstration exercise in assembly. For example, if your school has 200 pupils ask 20 children to stand up. Explain that there are probably this many children in your school with asthma. It is a common condition that most of the time can be managed with help from your doctor or asthma nurse and the right asthma medicines.

This activity is a good precursor to having a staff member or Asthma UK speaker talk about the condition.



What does it feel like to have asthma?

The following are quotes from children who have asthma:

- 'Having an asthma attack is like someone is standing on my lungs.'
- 'When I am having an asthma attack it feels like a rope is being slowly tightened around my chest.'
- 'It feels like I am being squashed, it is scary because you can't get your breath.'

Asthma facts

- 1 in 10 children in the UK currently has asthma.
- 5.2 million people in the UK have asthma, including 1.1 million children.
- Asthma costs the NHS £889 million a year.
- Children whose parents smoke are 1.5 times more likely to develop asthma.



Connor finds his asthma gets worse from May to August when grass pollen is around.

Activities

Activity 3 – Asthma experiences

Is there a teacher at school with asthma, who might be prepared to talk about their experiences? Or contact Asthma UK and see if there is a Speak Up For Asthma speaker in your school's area (see page 5).

There is nothing to stop children and young people with asthma achieving their full potential. To demonstrate this there are many famous and successful people have asthma. Ask pupils to guess which of these famous people have asthma:

- World champion marathon runner Paula Radcliffe
- Manchester United footballers Paul Scholes and Louis Saha
- Film star and ex-*Buffy*, Sarah Michelle Geller
- *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* star and 'Tim' from *The Office*, Martin Freeman
- Nikki Sanderson, 'Candice' in *Coronation Street*
- Gethin Jenkins, Welsh rugby star.

ANSWER: They all have asthma.

Activity 4 – Asthma triggers

A trigger is something that irritates the airways of people with asthma and causes the symptoms of asthma. Everyone's asthma is different and people with asthma may have several triggers.

Have a think about triggers and how they might affect people with asthma.

- Furry and feathery animals – this might mean you can't have a pet or that you get asthma symptoms when you visit someone who does. How do you think that would make you feel?
- Pollen – this affects some people with asthma and those who have hay fever. How do you think you would feel if going outside on a warm summer's day with a high pollen count made you feel wheezy and out of breath?
- Tobacco smoke – you couldn't stay overnight at your friend's house because their parents smoke and it triggers your asthma.
- Exercise – if on a cold day you had to be careful about taking exercise and playing sports because the cold air triggered your asthma.

For more about triggers see
Page 8 Asthma Awareness for School Staff.

Resources

Activities

Activity 5 – Suki’s story

You could either read this story aloud or get some pupils to act out the story.

To make sure that the children understand the following story about a child at school who has asthma you could ask some questions first.

- **Can you remember what happens if someone has an asthma attack?**

The tubes that they breathe through get smaller and it is difficult to breathe. Sometimes people cough or have whistling noises called wheezing when they breathe.

- **What are the things that set off a person’s asthma called?**

They are called triggers.

- **What sort of things can trigger asthma?**

Cigarette smoke, colds and flu, things with strong fumes, cats, dogs and other animals, pollen and exercise.

- **What is an inhaler?**

It is a special pump that gives asthma medicine.



Suki’s story

Suki has asthma. She is 10 years old and she has just started at a new school.

Her asthma has been much worse over the past few weeks and she wishes she could stay at home. Recently, in technology lessons they’ve been making things with wood but the fumes from the wood glue trigger her asthma. She needs to go outside to take her inhaler during the lesson but she doesn’t want to make a fuss. By the end of the lesson she is really coughing and wheezing. Then a girl called Polly and some of the other kids start calling her names like ‘Wheezy’. Suki wishes she could go back to her old school – at least they didn’t tease her about her asthma.

One day Suki falls asleep during maths and some of the other kids laugh at her. But it wasn’t her fault, her asthma had been quite bad the night before and she hadn’t had much sleep. Suki was sent to see the school nurse and then sent home, which was very embarrassing. Her asthma was still bad and she was coughing a lot, which meant taking even more of her asthma medicine. Suki’s mum needed to take her to her asthma nurse for an asthma review.

Suki’s technology teacher, Mrs Evans was getting quite worried about her and decided to find out more about asthma. So she asked Suki to stay behind after the next lesson, and told her that she had been looking on the Asthma UK website and had found out lots of useful information about asthma.

Bex's asthma is mild. Her asthma is triggered by exercise. So she takes her inhaler immediately before exercising.



She said that she had not realised that the fumes from the wood glue was a trigger for Suki's asthma but now that she knows she would be able to do something about it. She also told Suki that if she needed to take her inhaler during lesson time then it was ok to do so. Mrs Evans had also found out that swimming is very good exercise for people with asthma and suggested Suki joined the swimming club. Suki decided that this was a good idea. She met lots of other children there and started to make some new friends. One of her new friends, AJ, also has asthma and Suki found out that AJ's asthma was made worse by the guinea pig that was kept in his classroom.

Mrs Evans also found out that there are over five million people in the UK who have asthma and that there are lots of children with asthma at her school – even some teachers have it. Mrs Evans decided to try and make things easier for people in school who have asthma. First she arranged for all children with asthma in school to have a *School Asthma Card* so that their parents could give the school lots of information about their child's asthma and what their child's triggers are. Then she started to think of other ways she could help people with asthma.

Can you think of some of the things she could do?

- Make sure all the teachers know about asthma, its triggers and treatments.
- Make it easier for children to carry their inhalers with them so they can take their medicine when they need to.
- Get teachers to talk about asthma in lessons.
- Make classrooms asthma-friendly by using pens, paints and glues that do not have fumes.
- Do not have pets at school.
- Use a damp cloth to wipe the blackboard – chalk dust can be a trigger.
- Make sure children who need to take their inhalers immediately before games or sport lessons do so. Exercise is a trigger for around 80% of people with asthma.
- Remind her class that if you have asthma to let her know.

On average, **3** children
in every classroom will have asthma



Where can I find out more?

Asthma UK is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the 5.2 million people – including 1.1 million children – in the UK with asthma.

Asthma UK **Adviseline**

Ask an asthma
nurse specialist

08457 01 02 03

asthma.org.uk/adviseline

Asthma UK **website**

Read the latest independent
advice and news on asthma

asthma.org.uk

Asthma UK **publications**

Request booklets, factfiles
and other materials with
independent, specialist
information on every
aspect of asthma

020 7786 5000

info@asthma.org.uk

Asthma UK **membership**

Become a member of
Asthma UK and receive
Asthma Magazine four
times a year

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