**Media Release**

**21/11/24**

**Schools in Gloucestershire Invited to Sign up for New Asthma Safety Initiative**

Schools across Gloucestershire are being encouraged to join the Asthma Friendly Schools (AFS) scheme.

The initiative involves taking steps to ensure the safety of children and young people living with asthma. Both primary and secondary schools can work towards achieving Asthma Friendly Status.

Asthma is the most common long-term medical condition in children with around 1 in 11 children and young people living with it in the UK. It is an inflammatory condition that affects the airways and although it can’t be cured, with the right support children can thrive.

AFS involves schools, public health and the NHS working together to ensure children and young people living with the condition have the same opportunities to live well and succeed at school as those who are not.

Carol Stonham, Clinical Lead for Children and Young People with Asthma at NHS Gloucestershire said: “Ultimately this is about saving lives but it’s also about reducing unnecessary hospital admissions and school absences.

Having asthma can really impact on children’s wellbeing as well as their health, influencing their ability to do well at school and be happy. But by having the right plans and protocols in place, we can make meaningful improvements.

Once a school signs up, our goal is for at least 85% of all staff to complete asthma training which will help them understand what asthma is, when and how to use an inhaler and what to do in an asthma emergency.”

To become accredited a school must take a number of steps. These include identifying an Asthma Champion, having an Asthma Policy setting out what action will be taken and making sure that asthma inhalers are kept either with the child or in a designated place.

The Asthma Champion’s role includes checking expiry dates on inhalers at least every six month and reminding parents to provide another inhaler before the old one expires. Every child with asthma will have a Personalised Asthma Action Plan (PAAP) which allows staff to make sure they get the right support for their condition.

An Asthma register must be in place and parents and carers will be contacted before the start of the academic year to ask about asthma. The school will also need an emergency medication kit and an emergency plan which can be put into action if needed on school trips, residentials or sports events.

Carol added: “The feedback shared with us by schools already taking part in AFS is that it’s not onerous at all because a lot of the policies and procedures are already in place, it’s just a case of formalising what’s already being done.

“The training is manageable and can be done over a number of sessions to fit in with people’s working lives.

“It’s such an important investment for schools, we really hope that more schools, including secondary schools come forward.”

**Ends**

**Notes to Editors**

* Watch the film about AFS here <https://www.nhsglos.nhs.uk/category/media/videos/>
* Please contact glicb.enquiries@nhs.net for images/interview requests relating to this release.