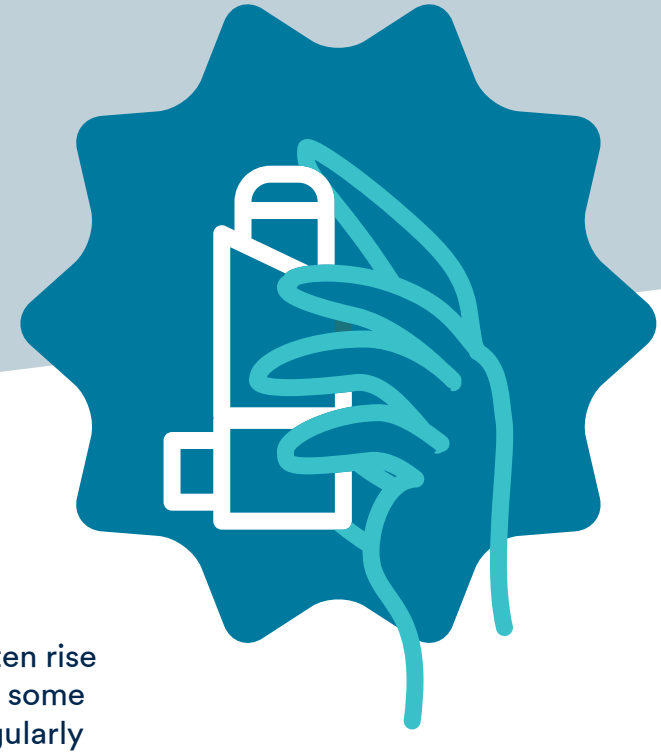
PLANES
Asthma Study

University of Sheffield

Schools Information Sheet

Aiming to improve attendance for pupils with asthma



What is the PLANES study?

Did you know that asthma and school absences often rise at the start of the school year? A key reason is that some children stop taking their preventer medication regularly over the summer holidays.

The PLANES study is a University of Sheffield pilot study testing whether simple reminders from schools can help families keep up with preventer medication during the summer. We are aiming to help schools like yours boost attendance and health outcomes for pupils with asthma.

This pilot study will help us understand whether the approach works smoothly in real school settings and whether a larger national study should follow. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is up to your school to decide, and you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

What will taking part involve?

If your school joins the study, it will be randomly allocated to one of two groups:

Intervention group

– Your school sends a series of reminders to parents/carers of children with asthma before and during the 2026 summer holidays. Our research team provides the communication and suggested schedule.
– Submits anonymised attendance records for the Autumn terms 2025 and 2026.
– Completes a brief survey so we can understand whether this study is workable.

Comparison group

– Your school continues as usual with no reminders sent during the study period.
– Submit anonymised records for the Autumn terms of 2025 and 2026.
– Completes a brief survey so we can understand whether this study is workable.

After randomisation and before the study begins, all participating schools will inform parents and carers that their school is taking part, using their usual communication channels. Only anonymised data will be used, and parents/carers will have the opportunity to opt out within two weeks of receiving this notification. They may also withdraw at any point before data collection takes place. The study team will provide schools with all the information needed to share this with parents and carers.

The study team will provide participating schools with an opt-out form/template that schools may use to record parent/carer opt-out requests. Parents/carers may submit this electronically or return the form directly to the school. Schools will not send the intervention to pupils whose parents/carers opt out within the two-week opt-out period. Schools will also exclude the records of pupils who have opted out or withdrawn before anonymised data are transferred to the research team. Additional guidance will be provided, including instructions on how to anonymise attendance data and how to respond to common enquiries from parents/carers about the study.



What data will we collect?

We want to collect school attendance data for all pupils in each class/ form. This will allow us to identify children with asthma and compare their attendance with other children without asthma in the same class/ form.

For children with asthma:

– School year
– Gender
– Confirmation of asthma diagnosis (as recorded by the school)
– Attendance records

For children without asthma:

– School year
– Gender
– Attendance records

No names, dates of birth, addresses, or other identifiable information will be collected. Data can be submitted in a simple electronic format, such as Excel or CSV. Each pupil record must be assigned a unique anonymised ID number to allow individual records to be tracked during analysis without revealing any personal information. The Unique Pupil Number (UPN) will not be shared with the research team.

Families can opt out of the study within two weeks of receiving the study notification or withdraw at any time before data collection. Opt-out or withdrawal requests can be made by contacting the school or by completing the opt-out form. This form is designed to make the process straightforward for parents/carers and to help schools record and manage opt-out requests effectively.



What are the benefits of taking part?

Help address asthma-related health issues at peak time for your school.
Contribute to research aiming to reduce asthma-related school absences nationally.
Receive financial recognition with a practical, low-admin approach.

Payment to schools

To recognise the time and administrative work involved:

Intervention group schools: £3,500
Comparison group schools: £2,500

Are there any disadvantages or risks in taking part?

The study involves minimal risk to schools, pupils, and families.

For Schools:

– Participation involves additional administrative work, with financial remuneration provided to recognise time and contribution.

For pupils, parents, and carers:

– Participation is low risk, as families are not asked to complete any research activities or share personal information with the research team.
– Schools will notify parents and carers about the study in advance and provide a clear opt-out option at any point before data collection begins.
– If parents or carers have any concerns, they can refer to their child's asthma action plan or seek advice from their GP or asthma nurse.

How will pupil data be used?

All data will be anonymised and used only for this research project. It will be stored securely on protected University of Sheffield servers and accessed only by authorised members of the research team. Data will be kept for ten years in line with university policy and then securely destroyed.

Findings may be shared in reports, academic journals, or conferences. No school, child, or parent will ever be identified.

Who is running the study?

The study is being conducted by the University of Sheffield as part of a PhD research project.

Data Controller: The University of Sheffield, responsible for ensuring your information is handled lawfully and securely.

Ethical Approval: Approved by the School of Medicine and Population Health Ethics Committee (reference number: 073439).

Contact

If you have questions or wish to report a concern:

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Thank you for considering taking part in the PLANES study