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Dear Principal,

Re: CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA IN BOARDING SCHOOLS

We bring you greetings from the Asthma Awareness and Care Group (AACG), a not-for-profit organisation that promotes asthma awareness and care in communities worldwide. Over the years, we have engaged in activities to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with asthma. Asthma-related deaths are preventable. We are keenly interested in ensuring that patients with asthma, including children, lead normal lives.

Recently, we conducted a study among health professionals assessing the appropriateness of boarding secondary schools for children with asthma. Childhood asthma often requires close monitoring by the child's parents or caregivers, and children in boarding schools tend to spend most of their time without their parents or caregivers. As such, we sought to obtain informed opinions about how to deal with the issue of children with asthma attending boarding schools in Nigeria.

As you will find in the accompanying article, our study highlights some important findings:

- While day schools may be preferred for children with asthma, most of our respondents believed that children with well-controlled asthma and self-efficacy to manage asthma should be allowed to attend boarding schools;
- School authorities, teachers, and schoolmates should be aware of and trained to respond to asthma emergencies;
- If a child has poorly-controlled asthma and the symptoms exceed the school's management capacity, recommend transfer to a day school for home management.

To support students with asthma, we recommend:

- Creating an asthma-friendly environment by reducing or eliminating common asthma triggers (including dust, pollen, mold, cold, air pollution, and strenuous physical activity);
- Providing a functional sick bay with asthma medications for relief and control of asthma;
- Ensuring well-trained health professionals are available round-the-clock and an efficient referral system is in place;
- Equipping children with asthma with the tools required to personally manage their condition, including optimal knowledge, necessary inhalers, and an asthma control diary.

With proper management and support, students with asthma can thrive academically and socially. There should be no stigmatisation. We suggest regular review and assessment of the implementation of these recommendations to ensure their effectiveness in supporting students with asthma

We hope you will implement these recommendations in the interest of your students, their parents/caregivers, your school, and our country at large.

With warmest regards,



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