



Asthma Policy

Purpose

To ensure students diagnosed with Asthma are supported at Auburn Primary School

Policy

The school will:

- ensure each student diagnosed with asthma has a written Asthma Action Plan and Student Health Support Plan
- ensure all staff with a duty of care for students are trained to assess and manage an asthma emergency and complete accredited training
- ensure those staff with a direct student wellbeing responsibility such as nurses, PE/sport teachers, first aid and school staff attending camp have completed an accredited Emergency Asthma Management (EAM) course at least every three years
- provide equipment to manage an asthma emergency in the form of an Asthma Emergency Kit

Definition

Asthma is a long term lung condition. People with asthma have sensitive airways in their lungs which react to triggers, causing a 'flare-up'. In a flare-up, the muscles around the airway squeeze tight, the airways swell and become narrow and there is more mucus. This makes it harder to breathe. An asthma flare-up can come on slowly (over hours, days or even weeks) or very quickly (over minutes). A sudden or severe asthma flare-up is sometimes called an asthma attack.

Symptoms of asthma can vary over time and often vary from person to person. The most common asthma symptoms are;

- breathlessness
- wheezing (a whistling noise from the chest)
- tight feeling in the chest
- a persistent cough.

Triggers may include the following; exercise, colds/flu, smoke, weather changes, dust and dust mites, mould, pollens, animals, chemicals, deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and deodorant sprays, foods and additives, certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories), emotions.

A detailed description of triggers can be found on the Asthma Foundation of Victoria website.

Individual Action Plans

Parents must provide the school with an Asthma Action Plan completed by the student's medical practitioner. The plan must outline the student's known triggers and the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack.

The Asthma Action Plan for Victorian schools is to be completed/reviewed annually for each student with asthma and contain

- the prescribed medication taken and when it is to be administered e.g.: - on a regular basis - as premedication to exercise - if the student is experiencing symptoms
- emergency contact details
- contact details of the student's medical/health practitioner

- details about deteriorating asthma including:- signs to recognise worsening symptoms - what to do during an attack - medication to be used.

Encourage participation in camps and special events

The school will ensure:

- parents provide enough medication (including preventer medication) for the student if they are going away overnight
- enough Asthma Emergency Kits are available for the camp or excursion needs
- that parents/guardians complete the Asthma Foundation's School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Form and the Department's *Confidential Medical Information for School Council Approved School Excursions* form.

Asthma Emergency Kits

The schools must provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits - one to keep at the school, and a mobile kit for activities such as excursions and camps.

Asthma Emergency Kits must contain:

- at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Asmol, or Ventolin
- at least 2 spacer devices (for single person use only) to assist with effective inhalation of the blue or blue/grey reliever medication (ensure spare spacers are available as replacements)
- clear written instructions on Asthma First Aid, including:
 - how to use the medication and spacer devices
 - steps to be taken in treating an asthma attack
- a record sheet/log for recording the details of a first aid incident, such as the number of puffs administered - record sheets can be downloaded from the Asthma Foundation of Victoria web site.

The First Aid Officer is responsible for maintaining the Asthma Emergency Kit/s, including:

- ensuring all contents are maintained and replaced when necessary
- regularly checking the expiry date on the canister of the blue or blue/grey reliever puffer and replacing it if expired or low on doses
- replacing spacers in the Asthma Emergency Kit after each use spacers are single-person use only. Once used, the spacer can be given to that student, or thrown away.
- previously used spacers should be disposed of.

Cleaning requirements

Asthma spacers are single-person use only. To avoid infection transmission via mucus, spacers and masks must only be used by the one student. They should be stored in a dustproof container.

Note: Blue or blue/grey reliever medication 'puffers' in the Asthma Emergency Kit may be used by more than one student, as long as they are used with a spacer. If the medication delivery device (e.g. puffer) comes into contact with someone's mouth it cannot be reused by anyone else and must be replaced.

Cleaning puffer after every use

Step	Action
1	Remove the metal canister from the puffer. Do not wash the canister.
2	Wash the plastic casing.
3	Rinse the mouthpiece through the top and bottom under running water for at least 30 seconds. Wash mouthpiece cover.
4	Air dry then reassemble.
5	Test the puffer to make sure no water remains in it, then return to the Asthma Emergency Kit.

Locations

Asthma Emergency Kits should be located strategically around the school and readily available in an asthma emergency. Mobile Asthma Emergency Kits are also required for:

- the office/administration area
- yard duty
- excursions/sports days/camps

Types of asthma attack

This table describes the symptoms of different types of asthma attacks. symptoms will vary from student to student.

Type	Symptoms
Mild/Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may have a cough • may have a wheeze • minor difficulty in breathing • able to talk in full sentences • alert, able to walk/move around • have normal skin colour.
Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cannot speak a full sentence in one breath • obvious difficulty in breathing • sitting hunched forward • tugging in of skin over the chest and throat • lethargic (children) • sore tummy (young children) • reliever medication is not lasting as long as usual.
Life-threatening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unable to speak, or 1-2 words per breath • drowsy/confused • collapsed, exhausted, unconscious • wheeze and cough may be absent • gasping for breath • discolouration (turning blue) • not responding to reliever medication.

Treating an asthma attack

This table describes how to treat a student:

- having an asthma attack
- having difficulty breathing for an unknown cause, even if they are not a known to have asthma.

Note: For a student who is not a known to have asthma, this treatment:

- could be lifesaving if the asthma has not previously been recognised
- would not be harmful if the cause of breathlessness was not asthma.

Warning: Immediately call an Triple Zero "000" and ask for an ambulance and state a student is having an asthma attack if:

- the student is not breathing
- the student is having a severe or life threatening attack
- the student is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- you are concerned
- at any time the student's condition suddenly worsens, or is not improving
- the student is known to have anaphylaxis – follow their Anaphylaxis Action Plan, then give asthma first aid.

Delay in treatment may increase the severity of the attack and ultimately risk the student's life.

First time asthma attack

If a student appears to be having difficulty breathing, but has not been diagnosed with asthma, the school staff should follow the school's first aid procedures.

This should include immediately:

- locating the administering reliever medication from the Asthma Emergency Kit
- after the first 4 doses of reliever medication call Triple Zero "000" for an ambulance
- continue giving 4 doses of reliever medication every 4 minutes whilst waiting for the ambulance to arrive.

Step	Action
1	Sit the person upright: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be calm and reassuring• do not leave them alone• seek assistance from another teacher (or reliable student) to locate the student's Asthma Action Plan and an Asthma Emergency Kit if required. If the student's action plan is not immediately available, use Asthma First Aid as described below..
2	Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• shake the blue or blue/grey reliever puffer• use a spacer if you have one• put 1 puff into the spacer. See: Asthma First Aid Kits within Related policies
3	Wait 4 minutes. If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever as above and wait 4 minutes.
4	If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero "000" and ask for an ambulance. Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack Keep giving 4 separate puffs, every 4 minutes until emergency assistance arrives.
5	If asthma is relieved after administering Asthma First Aid stop the treatment and observe the student. Notify the student's emergency contact person and record the incident.

Communication

Information is communicated to all school staff, students and parents about asthma and the information in this policy. Asthma information is displayed in the staff room, sickbay and areas where asthma attacks are likely to occur or be treated.

The school will regularly communicate with the student's parents about any health and education concerns, in particular the frequency and severity of the student's asthma symptoms and use of medication at school.

References

Department of Education and Training, School Policy and Advisory Guide – Asthma

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/conditionasthma.aspx>

Department of Education and Training, School Policy and Advisory Guide – Asthma Attacks: Treatment

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/asthmaattack.aspx>

Department of Education and Training, School Policy and Advisory Guide – Asthma Emergency Kits
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/asthmakits.aspx>

[Asthma Australia](#)

[Asthma, Chronic Illness Alliance](#)

[Asthma Australia](#)

Related School Policies:

APS First Aid Policy

APS Medication Policy

APS Privacy Policy

This policy was reviewed in June 2020, and will be reviewed yearly, or as required.