



# ASTHMA MANAGEMENT POLICY

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## RATIONALE

Asthma attacks involve the narrowing of airways making it difficult to breathe. Symptoms commonly include difficulty breathing, wheezy breathing, dry and irritating cough, tightness in the chest and difficulty speaking. Asthma is a chronic health condition affecting approximately 10% of Australian children and teenagers. Asthma is one of the most common reasons for child admissions to hospital and missed days of school. Asthma flare ups can commonly occur while students are at school as a result of a variety of triggers (Appendix 1).

## AIMS

- To ensure the school community (principals, staff, volunteers, contactors, parents and carers and students) are aware of their obligations and best practice management of asthma in the school setting.
- To provide the necessary information to effectively manage episodes of asthma within school.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### THE PRINCIPAL/FIRST AID OFFICER:

- 1.1 Provide staff with a copy of the school's asthma management policy and ensure staff are aware of asthma management strategies upon employment at the school.
- 1.2 Provide asthma education and first aid training for staff as required.
- 1.3 Provide parents and carers access to the school's asthma policy upon enrolment of their child.
- 1.4 Ensure any students with asthma provide an up-to-date Asthma Management Plan, with photo, along with any associated medications before starting school.
- 1.5 Where possible, ensure that all students with asthma have a current written Asthma Plan (must be updated at least annually).
- 1.6 Ensure adequate provision and maintenance of asthma emergency medications, called the Asthma Emergency Kits, (Appendix 2: Asthma Emergency Kits) including reliever medication and disposable spacers.
- 1.7 Promptly communicate to parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students attending the school
- 1.8 Identify and minimise, where possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students

### STAFF:

- 2.1 Alert the Principal / First Aid Officer if they have asthma, and if so, provide an Asthma Management Plan and relevant medication to the school.
- 2.2 Be aware of the school's asthma management policy, first aid procedure and the location of medications.
- 2.3 Be aware of students with asthma and where their medication and personal spacers are stored.
- 2.4 Identify and minimise, where possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students
- 2.5 Promptly communicate to the principal, parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students enrolled in the school.
- 2.6 Ensure action plans and medication is up to date and taken to any offsite excursions / camps.

### PARENTS AND CARERS:

- 3.1 Inform the school if their child has asthma upon enrolment and provide a signed written asthma plan completed by the student's medical practitioner. The plan must outline:
  - the prescribed medication taken by the student and when it is to be administered, for example as a pre-medication to exercise or on a regular basis.

- a recent photo
- emergency contact details
- the contact details of the student's medical practitioner
- the student's known triggers
- the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack.

3.2 Any associated medications and spacers to the school and ensure that it is updated annually.

3.3 Read the school's asthma management policy.

3.4 Communicate any changes to their child's asthma or any concerns about the health of their child.

## TREATMENT

If a student is:

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

School staff will endeavour to follow the Asthma First Aid procedures outlined in the table below. School staff may contact Triple Zero "000" at any time.

Step	Action
1.	Sit the person upright <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be calm and reassuring</li> <li>• Do not leave them alone</li> <li>• Seek assistance from another staff member or reliable student to locate the student's reliever, the Asthma Emergency Kit and Asthma Care Plan (if available).</li> <li>• If the student's action plan is not immediately available, use the Asthma First Aid as described in Steps 2 to 5.</li> </ul>
2.	Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shake the puffer</li> <li>• Use a spacer if you have one</li> <li>• Put 1 puff into the spacer</li> <li>• Take 4 breaths from the spacer</li> </ul> <b>Remember – Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths</b>
3.	Wait 4 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above (or give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler)</li> </ul>
4.	If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero "000" and ask for an ambulance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack</li> <li>• Keep giving 4 separate puffs every 4 minutes until emergency assistance arrives (or 1 dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort every 4 minutes – up to 3 doses of Symbicort)</li> </ul>
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

Staff will call Triple Zero "000" immediately if:

- the person is not breathing
- if the person's asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- if the person is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- if they are not sure if it is asthma
- if the person is known to have anaphylaxis.

## EPIDEMIC THUNDERSTORM ASTHMA

Malvern Valley Primary School will be prepared to act on the warnings and advice from the DET when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high.

## REFERENCES

School Policy Advisory Guide

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

Asthma Foundation – Victoria

<http://www.asthma.org.au/Resources/SchoolsandChildrensServices.aspx>

## APPENDIX

- Appendix 1: Triggers
- Appendix 2: Asthma Emergency Kit

## EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

**RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: 2021**

**TO BE REVIEWED: 2024**

### APPENDIX 1: Triggers

A trigger is something that sets off or starts asthma symptoms. Everyone with asthma has different triggers. For most people with asthma, triggers are only a problem when asthma is not well controlled with medication.

**Common asthma triggers include:**

- exercise
- smoke (cigarette smoke, wood smoke from open fires, burn-offs or bushfires)
- house dust mites
- pollens
- chemicals such as household cleaning products
- food chemicals/additives
- laughter or emotions, such as stress
- colds/flu
- weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air
- moulds
- animals such as cats and dogs
- deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)

### APPENDIX 2: Asthma Emergency Kit

Malvern Valley Primary School will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. One kit will be kept on school premises in the first aid room, and one will be a mobile kit for activities such as:

- yard duty
- camps and excursions.

The Asthma Emergency Kit will contain:

- at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Admol 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. The school will ensure spare spacers are available as replacements). Spacers will be stored in a dust proof container.
- 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 an asthma first aid incident, such as the number of puffs administered [see template record sheet in "additional resources"].

The First Aid Officer will monitor and maintain the Asthma Emergency Kits. They will:

- ensure all contents are maintained and replaced where necessary
- regularly check the expiry date on the canisters of the blue or blue/grey reliever puffers and place them if they have expired or a low on doses
- replace spacers in the Kits after each use (spacers are single-person use only)
- dispose of any previously used spaces.

The blue or blue/grey reliever medication in the Asthma Emergency Kits may be used by more than one student as long as they are used with a spacer. If the devices come into contact with someone's mouth, they will not be used again and will be replaced.

After each use of a blue or blue/grey reliever (with a spacer):

- remove the metal canister from the puffer (do not wash the canister)
- wash the plastic casing
- rinse the mouthpiece through the top and bottom under running water for at least 30 seconds
- wash the mouthpiece cover
- air dry then reassemble
- test the puffer to make sure no water remains in it, then return to the Asthma Emergency Kit.