

## PURPOSE

To ensure that Birmingham Primary School appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma. Birmingham Primary School recognises that 1 in 5 children can be affected by asthma and there is a responsibility to be prepared to provide treatment if required.

## OBJECTIVE

To explain to Birmingham Primary School parents/carers, staff and students the processes and procedures in place to support students diagnosed with asthma.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- all staff, including casual relief staff, contractors and volunteers
- all students who have been diagnosed with asthma or who may require emergency treatment for asthma and their parents/carers.

All school staff will be responsible for the implementation of the Asthma Policy. The First Aid Officer is responsible for checking that asthma medication kept in the sickbay is up-to-date and that all documentation is current. The student's parent/guardian is responsible for ensuring that the Asthma Management Plan is kept up-to-date (reminder to provide an up to date plan) and that all necessary medication and equipment is available at the school for their child to use.

Every student who suffers Asthma attending Birmingham Primary School should have a written Asthma Management Plan completed by their family doctor or paediatrician (Asthma Care Plan for Schools, available from school or Asthma Australia) and up dated annually in consultation with the student's parent/carer as well as anytime the plan changes.

### The school will:

- Require that students with asthma have a current Asthma Management Plan (as above) provided by their parents.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of students who experience asthma and what is known to trigger their asthma.
- Ensure that all staff know how to manage a student's asthma attack.
- Require asthma medication be taken to all school camps, sporting events and excursions.
- Encourage students with asthma to understand how to manage their asthma including recognising known triggers.
- Raise student and community awareness of asthma.

In extenuating circumstances parents/guardian may negotiate with the First Aid Officer for Staff to administer asthma medication with a nebuliser providing the parents/carer supply their own equipment and are responsible for its maintenance.

## POLICY

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 hard 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:

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
- persistent cough

Symptoms often occur at night, early in the morning or during/just after physical activity. If asthma is well controlled, a person should only have occasional asthma symptoms.

### 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
- colds/flu
- smoke (cigarette smoke, wood smoke from open fires, burn-offs or bushfires)
- weather changes
- dust and dust mites
- moulds
- pollens
- animals
- chemicals
- deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and deodorant sprays)
- foods and additives
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)
- emotions.

Reducing asthma triggers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mow school grounds out of hours</li> <li>• plant a low allergen garden - for a brochure see Asthma Foundation of Victoria</li> <li>• limit dust, for example having the carpets and curtains cleaned regularly and out of hours</li> <li>• examine the cleaning products used in the school and their potential impact on students with asthma</li> <li>• conduct maintenance that may require the use of chemicals, such as painting, during school holidays</li> <li>• turn on fans, air conditioning and heaters out of hours when being used for the first time after a long period of non-use.</li> </ul>
Providing an asthma first aid kit	Anyone with asthma can have a severe attack, even those with mild asthma. Schools should have at least two asthma emergency first aid kits.
Encouraging camps and special event participation	<p>The schools will ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parents provide enough medication for the student if they are going away overnight</li> <li>• enough asthma emergency kits are available for the camp or excursion needs</li> <li>• that parents/guardians to 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.</li> </ul>
Managing exercise induced asthma (EIA)	<p>If a student has diagnosed EIA schools should ensure that they allow adequate time for the following procedures; before, during and after exercise</p> <p>Before:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reliever medication to be taken by student 5-20 minutes before activity</li> <li>• student to undertake adequate warm up activity</li> </ul> <p>During:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if symptoms occur, student to stop activity, take reliever, only return to activity if symptom free</li> <li>• if symptoms reoccur, student to take reliever and cease activity</li> </ul> <p>After:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure cool down activity is undertaken</li> <li>• be alert for symptoms</li> </ul> <p>If a student has an asthma attack during exercise, follow their Asthma Action Plan if easily accessible, or commence first aid procedure</p>

## ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at Birmingham Primary School:

1. Parents/carers must provide the school with an Asthma Action Plan which has been 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
  - 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.
2. Birmingham Primary School will keep all Asthma Action Plans:
  - In the front office and in the sick bay
3. First Aid Officer may also work with parents/carers to develop a Student Health Support Plan which will include details on:
  - how the school will provide support for the student
  - identify specific strategies
  - allocate staff to assist the student

Any Student Health Support Plan will be developed in accordance with Birmingham Primary School's Healthcare Needs Policy.

4. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp, Birmingham Primary School parents/carers are required to provide any updated medical information.
5. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.
6. School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Action Plans (and Student Health Support Plans) once a year.
7. Staff to follow the procedures outlined in the attachment in an emergency situation.
8. When on yard duty teachers are to wear a fluoro vest and a back pack to use in emergency situations.
9. Regular training and updates will be provided for every staff member in recognising and responding appropriately to asthma

## STUDENT ASTHMA KIT

Student asthma kits will be stored in the sick bay.

- The school will provide a box for each child for the storage of their medication. Each box will contain the medication provided by the Parent/Carer with details of their condition, dosage and emergency numbers and Asthma Management Plan.
- Parents/Carer must provide the medication and ensure that it is labelled with the name of the drug, the dosage, frequency of use and the Child's name.
- Medication stored at school should be renewed when expiry date is reached. The First Aid Officer to be responsible for alerting parents to pending expiry date.

## ASTHMA EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

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.

### EMERGENCY PROCEDURE AS OUTLINED IN THE VICTORIAN SCHOOLS ASTHMA POLICY

- Sit the student down, remain calm and reassure the student.
- Without delay give 4 puffs (1 puff at a time) of a RELIEVER medication (Ventolin, Respolin or Bricanyl), preferably using a spacer. Ask the student to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff.
- Wait 4 minutes. If there is no improvement, give another 4 puffs (as before).
- If there is little or no improvement, or a sudden deterioration in condition, CALL AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000), state that the person is having an asthma attack. Keep giving 4 puffs every 4 minutes until the ambulance arrives.

### ASSESSMENT OF ASTHMA

Mild	Short of breath, wheeze, mild cough, able to speak in sentences
Moderate	Difficulty breathing, loud wheeze, persistent cough, able to speak in short sentences of 5 words or less.
Severe	Gasping for breath, distressed, pale and sweaty, blue lips, difficulty in speaking 2 words.

IF SEVERE call an ambulance by dialling 000, state that a person is having an asthma attack, follow emergency procedure below until ambulance arrives.

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

## ASTHMA EMERGENCY KIT

Birmingham Primary School will provide and maintain at least five Asthma Emergency Kits. 1 kit will be kept on school premises in the sick bay, 3 will be stored in the office in back packs and 1 will be a mobile kit for activities such as:

- camps and excursions.
- Yard duty

The Asthma Emergency Kit will contain:

- at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Asmol or Ventolin
- at least 2 spacer devices (cleaned after each use) to assist with effective inhalation of the blue or blue/grey reliever medication. Spacers will be stored in a dust proof container.

Birmingham Primary Schools 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

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.

## MANAGEMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Confidential medical information provided to Birmingham Primary School to support a student diagnosed with asthma will be:

- recorded on the student's file
- shared with all relevant staff so that they are able to properly support students diagnosed with asthma and respond appropriately if necessary.

## COMMUNICATION PLAN

This policy will be available on Birmingham Primary School website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about Birmingham Primary School Asthma Management procedures.

## EPIDEMIC THUNDERSTORM ASTHMA

Birmingham Primary School will be prepared to act on the warnings and advice from the Department of Education and Training when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high.



# Asthma First Aid

## 1 Sit the person upright

- Be calm and reassuring
- Do not leave them alone



## 2 Give 4 puffs of blue reliever puffer medication

- Use a spacer if there is one
  - **Shake** puffer
  - Put **1 puff** into spacer
  - Take **4 breaths** from spacer
- Repeat** until **4 puffs** have been taken

**Remember: Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths**



## 3 Wait 4 minutes

- If there is no improvement, give **4 more puffs** as above



## 4 If there is still no improvement call emergency assistance (DIAL 000)\*

- Say 'ambulance' and that someone is having an asthma attack
- Keep giving **4 puffs** every **4 minutes** until emergency assistance arrives



\*If calling Triple Zero (000) does not work on your mobile phone, try 112

### Call emergency assistance immediately (DIAL 000)

- 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 puffer is not available
- If you are not sure if it's asthma

Blue reliever medication is unlikely to harm, even if the person does not have asthma



**Asthma Australia**

To find out more contact your local Asthma Foundation  
**1800 ASTHMA** (1800 278 462) | [asthmaaustralia.org.au](http://asthmaaustralia.org.au)

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## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Asthma Australia: **Resources for Schools**
- Policy and Advisory Library:
  - **Asthma**
  - **Treating an Asthma Attack**

The policy supports the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Anaphylaxis Policy, the Drug Education Policy, the Excursion and Camp Policy and The First Aid Policy.

Asthma First Aid Kits

Parental Responsibility

Asthma Australia (asthmaaustralia.org.au)

Asthma Foundation – Resources for Schools and Children’s Services

(<https://www.asthma.org.au/Resources/SchoolsandChildrensServices.aspx>)

## REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was last updated on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and is scheduled for review in October 2023.