

## St Joseph's College Geelong Policy 1.6 Asthma Policy

### *Rationale*

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 exacerbations can commonly occur while attending schools, particularly in February and May

In order to meet the duty of care obligations specified by the School Policy and Advisory Guide (SPAG) and to ensure the health and wellbeing of all students attending, St Joseph's College recognises the importance of staff education and the implementation of an asthma policy. The school recognises the importance of involvement and engagement with parents and carers of students and the ability of students to self-manage their asthma where appropriate. Key points within the SPAG, relevant to an asthma management policy, specify that schools must:

- Obtain an Asthma Action/Care Plan (AAP) for all students diagnosed with asthma upon enrolment at the school and ensure they are updated at least annually
- Store medical information and medications appropriately
- Ensure that students feel safe and supported at school
- Support student healthcare needs
- Provide and maintain at least two asthma emergency kits, with an extra kit required for every 300 students in a large school
- Ensure that key staff (e.g. School Nurses, First Aid Officers, P.E. and Sport Teachers) undertake Emergency Asthma Management training and that all other staff with a duty of care for students attend a free asthma education session provided by The Asthma Foundation of Victoria

### *Objectives*

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

### *The principal/senior management will:*

- 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
- Provide asthma education and first aid training for staff as required
- Identify students with asthma during the enrolment process and advise parents they must provide the College with an Asthma Action/Care Plan completed and signed by the child's medical practitioner
- Where possible, ensure that all students with asthma have a current Asthma Action/Care Plan (must be updated at least annually)
- Ensure a School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Form is completed by parents/carers for off-site activities (Appendix Proforma A)
- Where possible, ensure the parents and carers of all students with asthma provide reliever medication and a spacer (and a face mask if required) at all times that their child attends the school
- Implement an asthma first aid procedure consistent with current national recommendations (see 'Treating an Asthma Attack' below')
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the asthma first aid procedure
- Ensure adequate provision and maintenance of asthma emergency kits for the school

- Ensure that each asthma emergency kit contains reliever medication (a blue/grey metered dose inhaler containing salbutamol), two spacer devices, instructions outlining the first aid procedure and a record form
- Ensure that reliever medications within the asthma emergency kits are replaced regularly and have not expired, and that spacers are replaced after each use
- Facilitate communication between management, staff, parents and carers and students regarding the school's asthma management policy and strategies
- Promptly communicate to parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students attending the school
- Identify and minimise, where possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students attending the school
- Ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in the school's activities safely and to their fullest abilities

*Staff will:*

- Ensure they are aware of the school's asthma management policy
- Ensure they are aware of the asthma first aid procedure
- Ensure that they are aware of students with asthma and where their medication and personal spacers are stored
- Ensure they attend asthma education and training sessions when required
- Ensure they are aware of where to access Asthma Action/Care Plans, School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Forms and asthma emergency kits
- Identify and minimise, where possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students attending the school
- Ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in the school's activities safely and to their fullest abilities
- Promptly communicate to the principal, parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students enrolled in the school

*Parents & carers will:*

- Inform the school if their child has asthma upon enrolment
- Read the school's asthma management policy
- Provide a signed Asthma Action/Care Plan to the school, and ensure that the plan is updated at least yearly
- Provide a School Camp or Excursion Medical Update form as required or when requested by the school
- Provide the school with their child's reliever medication along with a spacer (required for 'puffer' medication) for all times the child is attending the school, unless the child is carrying the medication and spacer for self-management purposes
- Ensure that if their child is self-managing their asthma correctly the child carries their reliever medication and spacer at all times
- Promptly communicate all medical and health information relevant to their child, to the principal and staff of the school
- Communicate any changes to their child's asthma or any concerns about the current health of their child

*Students will:*

- Immediately inform staff if they experience asthma symptoms
- Have their asthma medication and spacer with them at all times if they are self-managing asthma symptoms

*Asthma emergency kits*

An Asthma First Aid Kit should contain:

- Reliever medication
- Two spacer devices
- Record form
- Asthma First Aid instructions

It is recommended that spacers are single-person use only.

It is essential to have at least two spacers on hand for each first aid kit and that spacers are replaced each time they are used.

*Medical Asthma Action Plan Protocols*

The Registrar will advise the Office Manager of any student who is enrolled with any serious medical condition which requires a Medical Action Plan

The Office Manager will contact the parents of the student identified with a serious medical condition requesting a Medical Action Plan to be prepared by their medical practitioner. On return of this form from parents, the details of the plan are to be placed on record as follows:

- Hard copy on student file
- Hard copy stored in Reception in a clearly labelled folder
- Data recorded in College database - Student Medical Records
- Data recorded in SIMON – note added in student profile – ‘Display in Attendance Notes’ ticked
- Copy of plan recorded on College intranet – U Drive/Medical
- Relevant staff notified of Medical High Risk student condition and Action Plan

*Asthma Emergency Action Plan*

Taken from the Victorian Schools Asthma Policy for Asthma First Aid (Section 4.5.7.8 of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Victorian Government Schools’ Reference Guide)

Treating an asthma attack

This table describes how to treat a student:

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

**Note:** For a student who is not a known asthma sufferer, this treatment:

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

**Warning:** Immediately call an ambulance (**Dial 000**) and state a person is having an asthma attack if:

- the student is having difficulties breathing, and not known to have asthma
- the student is having a severe attack; or
- you are concerned
- at any time the student’s condition suddenly worsens

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

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 teacher (or reliable student) to locate the student's action plan and first aid kit if required.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Breathing is easier sitting rather than lying down.</p>
2	<p>Give medication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shake the blue reliever puffer</li> <li>• use a spacer if you have one</li> <li>• give 4 separate puffs into the spacer, shaking the puffer between each puff</li> <li>• ensure student takes 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff.</li> </ul> <p><b>Important:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a spacer is not available use the puffer on its own.</li> <li>• A Bricanyl Turbuhaler may be used if a puffer and spacer is unavailable</li> <li>• If the student's own blue reliever puffer is not readily available immediately get one from: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the asthma emergency first aid kit</li> <li>2. another student or staff member (only as a last resort and if the reliever medication is not prescribed) .</li> </ol> </li> <li>• All blue reliever puffers are safe, when used as directed. The student may experience harmless side effects such as shakiness, headache, a tremor or a 'racing' heart. \</li> </ul>
3	<p>Wait 4 minutes.</p> <p>If there is no improvement, repeat step 2</p>
4	<p>If there is still no improvement call an ambulance (000).</p> <p>Tell the operator the person is having an asthma attack</p> <p>Keep giving 4 puffs, getting the student to take 4 breaths per puff, every 4 minutes while you wait for emergency assistance</p>
5	<p>If asthma is relieved after administering the 4x4x4 procedure stop the treatment and observe the student. Notify the student's emergency contact person and record the incident.</p>