



that this document is a **template only** and needs to be customised for your school setting. It is important to work with relevant staff when developing or updating this policy to ensure the content reflects the circumstances of your school community. If you are concerned that you may be making changes to aspects of the template that are a DET or legal requirement, please contact the Operational Policy, School Engagement and Compliance Division (OPSEC) for assistance on:

03 7022 1888 or
pal.support@education.vic.gov.au

Reminder: The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) was launched in June 2020. When you are reviewing and updating your own local version of this template policy, make sure you update the links to Department policy at the same time. All Department policy for schools is now on PAL.

ASTHMA POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the [Whitfield District Primary School office on 03 5729 8286](#).

Please ensure that you insert information relevant to your school where prompted in yellow, and amend references to "Example School" so that they are replaced with your school name. The majority of the text in this policy applies to all Victorian Government schools, so minimal customisation for your school community is required. You are encouraged to change the font and text styles used in this template to reflect your school colours and include your school logo where possible.

All information highlighted in green is for instructional purposes only and should be removed from the final document

[NOTE: The Department covers the costs of a range of interpreting and translation services to support schools to communicate key information to parents with limited or no English language skills about their child's education. Schools must follow the Department's policy and guidance on using these services: [Interpreting and Translation Services](#). Translation of school policies are not covered by the Department funded service because they fall outside of the categories of work which are supported, as set out in the guidance chapter [Translation assignments](#). However, schools can consider the Department funded service for support in interpreting the information in this policy in a meeting or telephone call between the parent/carer and school. While it is not mandatory to include the below section on 'Help for non-English speakers' in this policy, it is important to ensure all families are aware of interpreting and translation services available to them through the school.]



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact [insert school contact details].

PURPOSE

To ensure that ~~Example School~~ [Whitfield District Primary School](#) appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

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OBJECTIVE

To explain to [Example School/Whitfield District 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.

POLICY

Asthma

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
- 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)

Asthma management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at ~~Example School~~ Whitfield District 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. Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan.
3. ~~Example School~~ Whitfield District Primary School will keep all Asthma Action Plans:
 - ~~[insert locations, e.g. front office, classroom for primary school students, the staffroom, sick bay. Depending on the physical lay-out of your school, it may be useful to keep the Asthma Care Plans in a number of locations so that they can be accessed quickly.]~~ on the school OHS noticeboard in the staffroom
4. School staff 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 ~~Example School~~ Whitfield District Primary School's Healthcare Needs Policy. ~~{School's should consider adopting the Healthcare Needs Template Policy at the same time as adopting this Asthma Template Policy}~~

5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, ~~Example School~~ Whitfield District Primary School parents/carers are required to provide any updated medical information.
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.
7. School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Action Plans (and Student Health Support Plans) once a year ~~{this can be more specific if your school has specific review periods that it follows, e.g. at the beginning of the school year} or as required.~~

Student asthma kit

All students diagnosed with asthma are required to have a student asthma kit at school which contains:

- their own prescribed reliever medication labelled with the student's name
- their spacer (if they use one)

Student asthma kits will be stored ~~[insert location, i.e. in their classroom, or other accessible location]~~ the cupboard under the sink in the Kid's Kitchen.

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~~Students will be required to keep their asthma kits with them while at school. [This might be more suitable in a secondary school or for upper primary school students].~~

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.

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 staff member or reliable student to locate the student’s reliever, the Asthma Emergency Kit and the student’s Asthma Action Plan (if available). • If the student’s action plan is not immediately available, use the Asthma First Aid as described in Steps 2 to 5.
2.	Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shake the puffer • Use a spacer if you have one • Put 1 puff into the spacer • Take 4 breaths from the spacer Remember – Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths
3.	Wait 4 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)
4.	If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero “000” and ask for an ambulance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack • 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)
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

Training for staff

~~Example School~~ Whitfield District Primary School will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

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Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
Group 1 General Staff	School staff with a direct teaching role with students affected by asthma or other school staff directed by the Principal after conducting a risk assessment.	Asthma first aid management for education staff (non-accredited) One hour online training.	Asthma Australia	Free to all schools	3 years
Group 2 Specific Staff	Staff working with high risk children with a history of severe asthma, or with direct student wellbeing responsibility, (including nurses, PE/sport teachers, first aid and school staff attending camp)	<i>Course in the management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace</i> 22556VIC (accredited)	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by Example School/Whitfield District Primary School	3 years

~~Example School/Whitfield District Primary School~~ will also conduct an annual briefing for staff on: ~~[It is not mandatory to conduct an annual briefing by schools may find it helpful to ensure staff know which students have asthma and are properly aware of asthma management procedures]~~ at the beginning of the school year.

- the procedures outlined in this policy
- the causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma ~~[schools can refer to the introductory information at the start of this policy]~~
- identities of the students diagnosed with asthma
- how to use a puffer and spacer
- the location of:
 - the Asthma Emergency Kits
 - asthma medication which has been provided by parents for student use.

~~Example School/Whitfield District Primary School~~ will also provide this policy to casual relief staff and volunteers who will be working with students, and may also provide a briefing if the Principal decides it is necessary depending on the nature of the work being performed.

Asthma Emergency Kit

~~Example School/Whitfield District Primary School~~ will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. One kit will be kept on school premises at ~~[insert location, i.e. first aid room/front office]~~ in the First Aid Kit in the technology storeroom and one will be a mobile kit for activities such as:

- yard duty
- camps and excursions.

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~~Example School~~ an additional kit for every 300 students. ~~[If your school has additional kits, list the locations where they will be stored]~~

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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 (~~Example School~~Whitfield District Primary 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”]~~.

~~[Insert staff member, i.e. the school nurse/your first aid officer]~~Jane Andrews (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.

Management of confidential medical information

Confidential medical information provided to ~~Example School~~Whitfield District 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 ~~Example School~~Whitfield District Primary School’s website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about ~~Example School~~Whitfield District Primary School’s asthma management procedures.

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

~~Example School~~Whitfield District 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.

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COMMUNICATION

~~This Communication section is not mandatory and can be deleted. However, for consistency with your other policies you may wish to retain it and/or include it in a spreadsheet listing all your school's policies and outlining the communication method your school uses next to each policy. You can adapt our consolidated spreadsheet of all policies for this purpose — refer to [Communicating our Policies](#)~~

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~~Please delete any of the options below that you do not intend to use noting that the first two methods are strongly recommended. It is important to give careful consideration as to the most effective method of ensuring your school community are aware of and understand the requirements under this policy.~~

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

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- ~~Available publicly on our school's website (or insert other online parent/carer/student communication method)~~
- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

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FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Asthma Australia: [Resources for schools](#)
- Policy and Advisory Library:
 - [Asthma](#)
 - [Treating an asthma attack](#)
- ~~Insert links to related local policies, i.e. Health Care Needs~~[Health Care Needs Policy](#)

Field Code Changed

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POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	February 2024 insert date
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2025 insert date — noting that the recommended minimum review cycle for this policy is 1 year

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