

# Dimboola Memorial Secondary College

## ASTHMA POLICY



### Rationale:

Asthma is a chronic health condition affecting approximately 10% of Australian children and teenagers<sup>1</sup>. Asthma is one of the most common reasons for child admissions to hospital and missed days of school<sup>1</sup>. 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, **Dimboola Memorial Secondary 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 a written asthma plan for all students diagnosed with asthma upon enrolment at the school and ensure they are updated at least annually
- Complete a Health Support Plan for students with an identified health care need
- Store medical information and medications appropriately
- Ensure that students feel safe and supported at school
- 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 (EAM) 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 or appropriately trained personnel.

### Scope

- To ensure the whole school community (principals, staff, volunteers, 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 the school

### Aims:

- To manage asthma and asthma sufferers as effectively and efficiently as possible at school.

### Implementation:

- 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.
- Children and adults with mild asthma rarely require medication; however severe asthma sufferers may require daily or additional medication (particularly after exercise).
- Professional development will be provided for all staff on the nature, prevention and treatment of asthma attacks. Such information will also be displayed on the staffroom wall.

### Developing an asthma care plan

The Asthma Foundation Victoria's Asthma Care Plan for Schools should be:

- completed by the student's medical/health practitioner in consultation with the parents/guardians
- provided annually by the:
  - doctor to the parents/guardian

- parents/guardians to the school.

The plan must include:

- the prescribed medication taken:
  - on a regular basis
  - as premedication to exercise
  - if the student is experiencing symptoms.
- emergency contact details
- business 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
- an asthma first aid section and should:
  - specify no less than 4 separate puffs of blue reliever medication, with 4 breaths taken per puff every 4 minutes, using a spacer if possible.

**Note:** It is recommended that if the plan has less than the required number of puffs per minute period it should be sent back to the parent/guardian and doctor for review.

- Appropriate asthma plan proformas are available at [www.asthma.org.au](http://www.asthma.org.au)
- Asthma plans will be attached to the student's records for reference.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their children have an adequate supply of appropriate asthma medication (including a spacer) with them at school at all times.
- All school staff with a duty of care responsibility for the wellbeing of students should be trained in being able to manage an asthma emergency appropriately. Training should be conducted at least every three years.

The Asthma Foundation of Victoria provides a free one hour training session to educate school staff on how to manage asthma in the school setting including how to:

- manage asthma in the school setting
- assess and manage an asthma emergency.

The Asthma Foundation also has Asthma First Aid posters available to schools for free which should be displayed in the:

- staff room
- sick room
- areas where asthma attacks are likely to occur or be treated.

The school will provide, and have staff trained in the administering of, reliever puffers (blue canister) such as Ventolin, Airomir, Asmol or Bricanyl and spacer devices in all first-aid kits, including kits on excursions and camps. Clear written instructions on how to use these medications and devices will be included in each first aid kit, along with steps to be taken to treat severe asthma attacks. Kits will contain 70% alcohol swabs to clean devices after use.

- The delegated first aid staff member will be responsible for checking reliever puffer expiry dates.
- All devices used for the delivery of asthma medication will be cleaned appropriately after each use.
- Care must be provided immediately for any student who develops signs of an asthma attack.
- Children suffering asthma attacks should be treated in accordance with their asthma plan.
- If no plan is available children are to be sat down, reassured, administered 4 puffs of a shaken reliever puffer (blue canister) delivered via a spacer if necessary – inhaling 4 deep breaths per puff, wait 4 minutes, if necessary administer 4 more puffs and repeat the cycle. An ambulance must be called if there is no improvement after the second 4-minute wait period, or if it is the child's first known attack. Parents must be contacted whenever their child suffers an asthma attack.
- Our school will register as an asthma friendly school – [www.asthmafriendlyschools.org.au](http://www.asthmafriendlyschools.org.au)

#### **Evaluation:**

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

**This policy was last ratified by School Council**

**June 2016**

## Asthma First Aid

Follow the written first aid instructions on the student's Asthma Action/Care Plan.

If no specific and signed instructions are available, the instructions are unclear, or the person does not have an Asthma Action/Care Plan, **begin the first aid procedure immediately (as authorised by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development).**

- **Call emergency assistance to attend (000) IF:**
  - the person's asthma symptoms are severe
  - the person suddenly stops breathing
  - the person's asthma symptoms continue to worsen
  - there is no Asthma Action/Care Plan for the person
  - blue/grey reliever medication is not available
  - you are unsure what is causing the breathing difficulty

### Recognising an asthma attack

Mild	Moderate	Severe
Talk in sentences	Shortened sentences	Few words per breath
Cough	Persistent cough	Persistent cough
Soft wheeze	Loud wheeze	Wheeze may be absent
Minor difficulty breathing	Difficulty breathing	Gasping for breath/distress
Tightness in chest		Pale, sweaty, blue lips
Young children may complain of a "sore tummy"		Muscle exertion

# 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**



To find out more contact your local Asthma Foundation  
**1800 645 130** | [asthmaaustralia.org.au](http://asthmaaustralia.org.au)

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