

ASTHMA POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Pakenham Consolidated School on 5941 1511 or email Pakenham.cs@education.vic.gov.au

PURPOSE

To ensure that Pakenham Consolidated School appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

OBJECTIVE

To explain to Pakenham Consolidated 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 or prescribed a reliever medication for a respiratory illness.

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)
- colds/flu
- weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air

- house dust mites
- pollens
- chemicals such as household cleaning products
- food chemicals/additives
- laughter or emotions, such as stress
- 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 Pakenham Consolidated 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. Pakenham Consolidated School will keep all Asthma Action Plans:
 - In the First Aid Room, Asthma Medication Filing Cabinet under the relevant student's name along with their prescribed, supplied reliever medication and spacer / mask.
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 Pakenham Consolidated School's Healthcare Needs Policy.

5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, Pakenham Consolidated 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) preferably at the beginning of the school year.

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 (and mask – if they use one).

At Pakenham Consolidated School, students' asthma kits are stored in the First Aid Room, Asthma Medication Filing Cabinet and are readily accessible to all Staff when required by the presenting student.




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.

First Aid for Asthma

1	<p>Sit the person comfortably upright. Be calm and reassuring. Don't leave the person alone.</p>	
2	<p>Give 4 puffs of a blue/grey reliever (e.g. Ventolin, Asmol or Airomir) Use a spacer, if available. Give 1 puff at a time with 4 breaths after each puff Use the person's own inhaler if possible. If not, use first aid kit inhaler or borrow one.</p>	OR
3	<p>Wait 4 minutes. If the person still cannot breathe normally, give 4 more puffs.</p>	
4	<p>If the person still cannot breathe normally, CALL AN AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000) Say that someone is having an asthma attack. Keep giving reliever. Give 4 puffs every 4 minutes until the ambulance arrives. Children: 4 puffs each time is a safe dose. Adults: For a severe attack you can give up to 6–8 puffs every 4 minutes</p>	
HOW TO USE INHALER	<p>WITH SPACER</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemble spacer • Remove puffer cap and shake well • Insert puffer upright into spacer • Place mouthpiece between teeth and seal lips around it • Press once firmly on puffer to fire one puff into spacer • Take 4 breaths in and out of spacer • Slip spacer out of mouth • Repeat 1 puff at a time until 4 puffs taken – remember to shake the puffer before each puff • Replace cap 	<p>WITHOUT SPACER</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove cap and shake well • Breathe out away from puffer • Place mouthpiece between teeth and seal lips around it • Press once firmly on puffer while breathing in slowly and deeply • Slip puffer out of mouth • Hold breath for 4 seconds or as long as comfortable • Breathe out slowly away from puffer • Repeat 1 puff at a time until 4 puffs taken – remember to shake the puffer before each puff • Replace cap
	<p>BRICANYL OR SYMBICORT</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unscrew cover and remove • Hold inhaler upright and twist grip around and then back • Breathe out away from inhaler • Place mouthpiece between teeth and seal lips around it • Breathe in forcefully and deeply • Slip inhaler out of mouth • Breathe out slowly away from inhaler • Repeat to take a second dose – remember to twist the grip both ways to reload before each dose • Replace cover 	

Not Sure if it's Asthma?

CALL AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000)

If a person stays conscious and their main problem seems to be breathing, follow the asthma first aid steps. Asthma reliever medicine is unlikely to harm them even if they do not have asthma.

For more information on asthma visit:
Asthma Foundations – www.asthmaaustralia.org.au
National Asthma Council Australia – www.nationalasthma.org.au

Severe Allergic Reactions

CALL AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY (DIAL 000)

Follow the person's Action Plan for Anaphylaxis if available. If the person has known severe allergies and seems to be having a severe allergic reaction, use their adrenaline autoinjector (e.g. EpiPen, Anapen) before giving asthma reliever medicine.

National Asthma Council Australia
Leading the attack against asthma

Although all care has been taken, this chart is a general guide only which is not intended to be a substitute for individual medical advice/treatment. The National Asthma Council Australia expressly disclaims all responsibility (including for negligence) for any loss, damage or personal injury resulting from reliance on the information contained. © National Asthma Council Australia 2011.

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 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 Symbiocort 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

Pakenham Consolidated School will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

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	Asthma first aid management for education staff (non-accredited)	Asthma Australia	Free to all schools	3 years

	conducting a risk assessment.	One hour online training.			
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 Asthma Awareness 10760NAT OR Course in the management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace 22556VIC (accredited)</i>	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid for by the school	3 years

Pakenham Consolidated School will also conduct a general or personal briefing for staff on:

- the procedures outlined in this policy
- the causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma
- 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.

Pakenham Consolidated 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

All Pakenham Consolidated School First Aid Kits contain an Emergency Asthma First Aid Kit for use on camps and excursions.

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The Asthma Emergency Kit will contain:

- at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Ventolin, Zempreon, Asmol
- at least 2 disposable spacer devices (single person use) to assist with effective inhalation of the blue or blue/grey reliever medication
- 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
- Staff dispensing asthma medication for an asthma first aid incident will bring it to the attention of the rostered First Aid Officer for appropriate recording.

First Aid Coordinator 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 replace them if they have expired or a low on doses
- replace single person use spacers in the Kits after each use
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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 disposable 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 Pakenham Consolidated 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 provide better care should the need arise and support students diagnosed with asthma..

Communication plan

This policy will be available on Pakenham Consolidated School’s website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about Pakenham Consolidated School’s asthma management procedures.

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Pakenham Consolidated 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.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Asthma Australia: [Resources for schools](#)
- Policy and Advisory Library:
 - [Asthma](#)
 - [Treating an asthma attack](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2023
Approved by	Katrina Stewart - Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2024