

## ASTHMA POLICY



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact 9428 8955.

### PURPOSE:

To ensure that Melbourne Girls' College appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

### OBJECTIVE:

To explain to Melbourne Girls' College 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
- colds/flu
- weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air
- moulds
- animals such as cats and dogs

- chemicals such as household cleaning products
- food chemicals/additives
- laughter or emotions, such as stress
- deodorants (including perfumes, aftershave, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)

### **Asthma management**

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at Melbourne Girls' College:

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. Melbourne Girls' College will keep all Asthma Action Plans:
  - in the First Aid room.
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 Melbourne Girls' College Healthcare Needs Policy. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, the 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.

### **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 in first aid room.

OR (where appropriate)

Students will be required to keep their asthma kits with them while at school.

### **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"> <li>• Be calm and reassuring</li> <li>• Do not leave them alone</li> <li>• 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).</li> <li>• If the student's action plan is not immediately available, use the Asthma First Aid as described in Steps 2 to 5.</li> </ul>
2.	Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shake the puffer</li> <li>• Use a spacer if you have one</li> <li>• Put 1 puff into the spacer</li> <li>• Take 4 breaths from the spacer</li> </ul> <b>Remember – Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths</b>
3.	Wait 4 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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)</li> </ul>
4.	If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero "000" and ask for an ambulance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack</li> <li>• 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)</li> </ul>
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

Melbourne Girls' College will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
<b>Group 1 General Staff</b>	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
<b>Group 2 Specific Staff</b>	Staff working with high risk children with a history of severe asthma,	<i>Course in Asthma Awareness</i> <i>10760NAT</i>	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by Melbourne Girls' College	3 years

	or with direct student wellbeing responsibility, (including nurses, PE/sport teachers, first aid and school staff attending camp)	<i>OR</i> <i>Course in the management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace 22556VIC</i> (accredited)			
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Melbourne Girls' College will also conduct an annual 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.

Melbourne Girls' College 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**

Melbourne Girls' College will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. One kit will be kept on school premises in the first aid room, and one in the front office. Mobile kits will be available for activities such as:

- yard duty
- camps and excursions.

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 Melbourne Girls' College 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

Christine Wallace and Michelle Denahy 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.
- The poster **Asthma First Aid** will be displayed wherever appropriate including in the sick room, staff room, central office, library and the physical education department.
  
- Each year, students with asthma must provide the school with information about their asthma.
- At the beginning of each school year parents/carers will be requested to complete standard notification forms.
- Parents/carers will be requested to notify the school if there are any changes to these notification forms.
- All **Student Asthma Records** will be kept in the central office and a copy of each student's written Asthma Action Plan will be kept in the first aid room and the physical education department.
- Students are able to bring appropriate asthma medications to school provided:
  - Parent/carer has completed and returned the standard notification forms
  - Medications are properly labelled.

### Management of confidential medical information

Confidential medical information provided to Melbourne Girls' College to support a student diagnosed with asthma will be:

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

### Communication plan

This policy will be available on Melbourne Girls' College website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about Melbourne Girls' College asthma management procedures.

### Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Melbourne Girls' College will be prepared to act on the warnings and advice from the Department of Education when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high.

- Students should carry their blue reliever puffer (**Airomir, Asmol, Bricanyl or Ventolin**) at all times.
- Students shall be encouraged to take their blue reliever puffer (**Airomir, Asmol, Bricanyl or Ventolin**) immediately should symptoms develop.
- Parents/carers will be notified of their responsibility to ensure their child has adequate supply of appropriate medication.
- In addition to the medication they carry with them, students are able to keep a blue reliever puffer (**Airomir, Asmol, Bricanyl or Ventolin**) in the sick room provided:
  - It is properly labelled with the name of the student, name of medication and the dose and frequency required
  - The school nurse or authorised staff member checks expiry dates
  - The school nurse or authorised staff member notifies parent/carer when the medication needs replacing.

- A large volume spacer (to assist with the delivery of blue reliever puffer (**Airomir, Asmol, Bricanyl or Ventolin**) during an acute asthma attack), and blue reliever puffer shall be kept in the school First Aid Kit/Asthma First Aid Kit, sick room and physical education department.

### For every school sporting day, excursion or camp:

- A minimum of one staff member capable of managing an acute asthma attack shall be present.
- Parents/carers will be notified of their responsibility to ensure that their child has an adequate supply of appropriate medication.
- Students shall be encouraged to continue taking their usual medications and to always carry their blue reliever puffer (**Airomir, Asmol, Bricanyl or Ventolin**).
- A large volume spacer and blue reliever puffer shall be carried in the offsite school First Aid Kit/Asthma First Aid Kit.
- A copy of the Asthma First Aid steps will be carried in the offsite school First Aid Kit/Asthma First Aid Kit.

### In addition, for every school camp:

- Parents/carers will be requested to update their child's **Student Asthma Records**.
- A copy of **Student Asthma Records** will be kept in a central location and this information will be known and easily accessible to the staff responsible for each student with asthma.
- Catering staff will be provided with a record of students known to have food allergies or have their asthma triggered by food or food additives.

### School Indoor Environment:

- Classrooms with carpets will be vacuumed.
- Ceiling fans and heating vents will be cleaned regularly.
- Low allergy/irritant cleaning agents shall be used for cleaning.
- During the winter months cleaners shall check regularly for and remove mould.
- No smoking is allowed within the school grounds.

### School Outdoor Environment

- A maintenance activity such as incinerator burns, lawn mowing, and weed and insect sprays shall be carried out during out of school hours.
- A low allergen garden shall be investigated for the school's grounds.
- On high pollen days students with an allergy to pollens shall have the option of remaining indoors.
- Throughout winter students with asthma will have the option of remaining indoors on very cold days.

### Psychological and educational well-being:

- Students with asthma will be encouraged to participate in all school activities.
- Students whose asthma is particularly troublesome or have experienced a recent flare-up may be exempt from sporting activities for the required period of time.
- Staff responsible for Physical Education will know and understand the steps involved in managing exercise-induced asthma, including pre-medicating, warming-up and the treatment of an acute asthma attack.

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- For staff > MGC Intranet > One Drive > Curriculum > School Documents
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders on our school Compass
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

### FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

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

### REVIEW PROCESS:

Policy last reviewed	June 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Recommended minimum review cycle for this policy is 1 year June 2025