

# Asthma Management Policy

## Audience: School Community

### Purpose

This policy will outline the procedures to:

- Provide, as far as practicable, a safe and supportive environment in which students who may suffer from asthma can participate equally in all aspects of their schooling
- Ensure St Paul's Anglican Grammar School supports students diagnosed with asthma and responds to the needs of students without a diagnosis and who experience breathing difficulties (suspected asthma attack)
- Raise awareness about asthma and the School's Asthma Management Policy in the School community
- Engage with parents/carers of students at risk of asthma in assessing risks, developing risk minimisation strategies and management strategies for the student
- Ensure that all staff have adequate knowledge about asthma and the School's policy and procedures in responding to an asthma attack.

### Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, including casual relief staff 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 of the airways (the passage that transports air into our lungs). People suffering from this condition have sensitive airways. These airways become inflamed (also known as a flare-up) when they are exposed to triggers. When the airways become inflamed, the narrowing airways cause significant, persistent, and troublesome symptoms. This often causes breathing difficulties, as it is equivalent to breathing through a very thin tube. A flare-up can come on slowly over hours, days, or even weeks, or quickly over minutes.

#### Signs and Symptoms

The most common symptoms of asthma may include, but are not limited to:

- Persistent cough – irrespective of sound it makes
- Wheezing – high pitch whistling sound made by narrowing of airways
- Breathing difficulties – sometimes the signs of airways tightening do not result in any sounds (silent asthma)
- Tightening of chest / Chest pain.

Symptoms vary from person to person.

#### 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
- Colds/flu

- Smoke (cigarette smoke, wood smoke from open fires, burn-offs or bushfires)
- Weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air
- Dust and dust mites
- Moulds
- Pollens
- Animals
- Chemicals
- Deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and deodorant sprays)
- Foods and additives
- Certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)
- Laughter or emotions such as stress.

A detailed description of triggers can be found on the Asthma Australia website (<https://asthma.org.au/triggers/>)

## Asthma Management

The below information describes how the School will manage students diagnosed with Asthma. The School will ensure that:

- All students enrolled at the School, detail any medical conditions, including Asthma. This will form part of the enrolment process
- Parents/carers of students diagnosed with asthma provide the School with an Asthma Action Plan, completed by a medical practitioner. The plan must outline:
  - A photo of the student
  - 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.
- Asthma Action Plans are located in Student Services/First Aid at each campus. Summary pages of each student diagnosed with Asthma will be displayed in staff rooms at each campus
- Parents/carers notify the School and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan if a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change
- A Student Health Support Plan is developed, in consultation with parents/carers, which details how the school will provide support for the student, identify specific strategies and allocate staff to assist the student
- A copy of the Asthma Action Plan and Student Health Support Plan will be added to the student's electronic profile in Synergetic and Consent2Go
- Regular communication occurs with the student's parents/carers about the student's health and the School works with parents/carers to review Asthma Action Plans and Student Health Support Plans once a year
- Confidential medical information provided to St Paul's Anglican Grammar School to support a student diagnosed with asthma will be recorded on the student's file and shared with all relevant staff.

## Asthma Action Plan

The School will ensure that all students enrolled at the School will be required to detail any known medical conditions. This will form part of the enrolment process.

Parents/carers of students diagnosed with asthma must provide the school with an [Asthma Action Plan](#) completed by the student's medical practitioner. The plan must outline the student's known triggers and the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack.

Parents/carers and the student's medical practitioner should annually complete or review each student's Asthma Action Plan.

Asthma action plans can take many forms and schools should accept them from medical practitioners where they contain the following information:

- the prescribed medication taken and when it is to be administered (for example, on a regular basis, as premedication to exercise or it if the student is experiencing symptoms)
- emergency contact details
- contact details of the student's medical or health practitioner
- details about deteriorating asthma including signs to recognise worsening symptoms, what to do during an attack or medication to be used.

## **Student Health Support Plan**

An individual [Student Health Support Plan](#) for students diagnosed with asthma will be developed in consultation with the student's parents/carers. The Student Health Support Plan will be in place as soon as practicable after a student enrolls at the School, and where possible, before the student's first day.

The Student Health Support Plan includes details on how the School will provide support, identify specific strategies and allocate staff to assist the student.

## **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 with the student's name
- their spacer.

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

## **Asthma Emergency Kits**

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School will provide and maintain Asthma Emergency Kits. Each campus will have at least two Asthma Emergency Kits, one to keep at the School and one to take as a mobile kit for activities such as excursions and camps. Additional kits will be provided and maintained for every 300 students.

Asthma Emergency Kits will contain:

- At least one blue or blue-grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Asmol, or Ventolin
- At least 2 spacer devices (for single person use only) to assist students to inhale the blue or blue-grey reliever medication (ensure spare spacers are available as replacements)
- Clear written instructions on asthma first aid, including how to use the medication and spacer devices, and steps to be taken in treating an asthma attack
- A record sheet or log for recording the details of a first aid incident, such as the number of puffs administered.

The School Nurse/First Aid Officer will be responsible for maintaining the Asthma Emergency Kits, including:

- Ensuring all contents are maintained and replaced when necessary
- Regularly checking the expiry date on the canister of the blue or blue-grey reliever puffer and replacing it if expired or low on doses
- Replacing spacers in the asthma emergency kit after each use (spacers are single person use only). Once used, the spacer can be given to that student or thrown away
- Previously used spacers should be disposed of.

Blue or blue/grey reliever medication 'puffers' in the Asthma Emergency Kit may be used by more than one student, as long as they are used with a spacer. If the medication delivery device (for example, puffer) comes into contact with someone's mouth it cannot be reused by anyone else and must 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.

Asthma Emergency Kits are located strategically around the school and readily available in an asthma emergency. Mobile Asthma Emergency Kits are available for:

- Student Services/First Aid
- Yard duty
- Excursions and sports days
- Camps

## Prevention Strategies

The School has considered risk minimisation and prevention strategies for all attendees in-school and out-of-school settings, which include (but are not limited to) the following:

- During classroom activities (including class rotations, specialist and elective classes)
- Between classes and other breaks
- Before and after school
- Special events including incursions, sports, cultural days, fetes or class parties, excursions and camps

To reduce asthma triggers the school will:

- Mow school grounds out of hours
- Plant a low allergen garden
- Limit dust, for example, having the carpets and curtains cleaned regularly and out of hours
- Examine the cleaning products used in the school and their potential impact on students with asthma
- Conduct maintenance that may require the use of chemicals, such as painting, during school holidays
- Turn on fans, air conditioning and heaters out of hours when being used for the first time after a long period of non-use.

## Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Thunderstorm asthma is a form of asthma that is triggered by an uncommon combination of high pollen (usually during last Spring to early Summer) and a certain kind of thunderstorm. Anyone can be affected, even if they don't have a history of asthma.

People at increased risk of thunderstorm asthma have a history of asthma, have unrecognised asthma, have hay fever (allergic rhinitis), particularly seasonal hay fever, or are allergic to grass pollen.

People experiencing asthma symptoms even if for the first time should not ignore it, and should seek medical advice as soon as possible. An asthma flare-up can vary in severity and can be life threatening. If there are signs that a person's condition is deteriorating, urgent care should be sought. Call Triple Zero (000).

The School will be prepared and follow advice when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high, including:

- act on advice and warnings associated with a potential thunderstorm asthma activity, and implement a communication strategy to inform the school community and parents or carers
- implement procedures to avoid exposure, such as staying indoors with windows and doors closed

- implement emergency response procedures and follow individual asthma action plans as needed.

## Managing Exercise Induced Bronchoconstriction (EIA)

If a student has diagnosed EIA, the School will ensure that they allow adequate time for the following procedures before, during and after exercise.

### Before:

- blue or blue/grey reliever medication to be taken by student 15 minutes before exercise or activity (if indicated on the students' Asthma Action Plan)
- student to undertake adequate warm up activity

### During:

- if symptoms occur, student to stop activity, take blue or blue/grey reliever medication, only return to activity if symptom free
- if symptoms reoccur, student to take blue or blue/grey reliever medication and cease activity for the rest of the day. This is known as 'two strikes and out'

### After:

- ensure cool down activity is undertaken
- be alert for symptoms

If a student has an asthma attack during, or after exercise or activity, follow their Asthma Action Plan if easily accessible, or commence asthma first aid. Always notify parents or carers of any incidents or medication usage.

## Emergency Response

If a student is having an asthma attack or is having difficulty breathing, even if they are not known to have asthma, staff are to follow the Asthma First Aid procedures detailed below.

Call Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance immediately if the person:

- is not breathing
- suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- is unsure if it is asthma
- **has a known allergy to food, insects or medication and has SUDDEN BREATHING DIFFICULTY, GIVE ADRENALINE AUTOINJECTOR FIRST (if available), even if there are no skin changes, then use a reliever**

### 1. Sit the person upright

- 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 in the following steps

### 2. Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer

- Shake puffer
- Put 1 puff into spacer
- Take 4 breaths from spacer
- Repeat until 4 puffs have been taken

If a spacer is not handy in an emergency, take 1 puff while taking 1 slow, deep breath and hold breath for as long as comfortable. Repeat until all puffs are given

### 3. Wait 4 minutes

- If breathing does not return to normal, give 4 more separate puffs of reliever as above

4. If breathing does not return to normal, call Triple Zero (000)
  - Say 'ambulance' and that someone is having an asthma attack
  - Keep giving 4 separate puffs every 4 minutes until emergency assistance arrives

If calling Triple Zero (000) does not connect on your mobile phone, try 112

5. If asthma is relieved after administering Asthma First Aid, stop the treatment
  - Observe the student
  - Notify the student's family member or emergency contact
  - Record the incident via the School's online Incident Report
  - Debrief with staff and students as required

After an asthma attack has taken place that has involved a student in the School's care and supervision, the following review process must take place:

- Any medication is replaced if required
- The student's Asthma Action Plan should be reviewed in consultation with the student's parents
- The School's Asthma Management Policy should be reviewed to ensure that it adequately responds to asthma attacks.

## Communication Plan

The School will ensure that a communication plan is developed to provide information to all school staff, students and parents/carers about asthma and the School's Asthma Management Policy.

In addition to the advice stated in this policy the following methods of communication will be employed:

- The School community is regularly reminded about asthma and the strategies in place to respond to an asthma flare-up or attack during normal school activities and during off-site activities including on excursions, school camps and at special events conducted, organised or attended by the School. Methods of communication used include updates in The Grammarian and MyStPauls, notes to parents, reminders at parent information sessions and at staff briefings. This policy will be available on the St Paul's Anglican Grammar School website or provided upon request.
- All staff, including casual relief staff and volunteers are made aware of this policy and the School's procedures for asthma management
- Summary pages of each student diagnosed with Asthma will be displayed in staff rooms at each campus. A copy of the Asthma Action Plan and Student Health Support Plan will be added to the student's electronic profile in Synergetic and Consent2Go
- The School Nurse/First Aid Officer regularly communicates with parents about the student's asthma or any changes in health, in particular, the frequency and severity of the student's asthma symptoms and use of medication at school. The School Nurse/First Aid Officer advises parents of the need to obtain new or updated Asthma Action Plans for students as needed
- If required, the School will consult parents of asthmatic students in advance to discuss plans for appropriate management of asthma during excursions and school camps. The School will ensure that parents/carers provide enough medication (including preventer medication) for the student if they are going away overnight and that there are enough Asthma Emergency Kits available for the camp or excursion needs

## Staff Training

The School will provide training for all staff who have students under their care, authority or supervision. Face-to-face accredited training in asthma management will occur every 3 years along with an annual refresher.



Staff who do not have a student facing role are required to undertake an online non-accredited training module in asthma first aid management. This training should occur every 3 years.

An accurate record of who has completed training and the date it was completed will be kept.

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School 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 and where their medication is located
- How to use a puffer and spacer
- The School's general first aid and emergency response procedures
- The location of, and access to, reliever medication that has been provided by parents/carers or the Asthma Emergency Kits

## **Responsibilities of individuals**

**Heads of School** 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 (at least every 3 years) along with an annual briefing/refresher.
- Provide parents and carers with a copy of the school's asthma policy upon enrolment of their child
- Identify students with asthma during the enrolment process and provide parents and carers with a written asthma plan to be completed and signed by the child's medical practitioner.
- Where possible, ensure that all students with asthma have a current written asthma plan (must be updated at least annually).
- Display current asthma plans in the office/sick bay area and staffrooms of each campus. At the Junior Schools the plans are also to be displayed in the student's main classroom.
- Ensure Consent2Go is updated by parents/carers before off-site activities, 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 their child attends the School.
- Implement an asthma first aid procedure consistent with current national recommendations and ensure all staff are aware of the asthma first aid procedure.
- Ensure adequate provision and maintenance of asthma emergency kits for the school and that each asthma emergency kit contains reliever medication, 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.
- Ensure that staff at Junior and Secondary level carry asthma emergency kits while on yard duty.
- 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.
- Ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way.
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in all activities safely and to their fullest abilities.

**Staff** will:

- Be aware of the school's asthma management policy.
- Be aware of the asthma first aid procedure.
- Be aware of students with asthma and where their medication and personal spacers are stored.
- Participate in Health Support Plan completion as required.

- Attend asthma education and training sessions when required.
- Be aware of where to access written asthma plans, School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Forms, and asthma emergency kits.
- Identify and minimise, where possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students.
- Ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way.
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in activities safely and to their fullest abilities.
- Promptly communicate to the Head of School, 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.
- Participate and sign student Health Support Plans as required.
- Provide a signed written asthma plan to the school, and ensure that it is updated at least yearly.
- Provide a School Camp or Excursion Medical Update on Consent2Go as required.
- 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 Head of School and staff of the school.
- Communicate any changes to their child's asthma or any concerns about the health of their child.

**Students will:**

- Immediately inform staff if they experience asthma symptoms.
- Inform staff if they have self-administered any asthma medication.
- Carry asthma medication and a spacer with them at all times (if self-managing their asthma).

## Related Polices and Procedures

- Anaphylaxis Policy
- First Aid Policy

## Policy History and Schedule

**Version 3**

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