



Hughesdale Primary School

Asthma Policy

Last review:
June 2023

Due for next review:
June 2024

Included on website:
 Yes No

Authorised (Principal):



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact our Business Manager or Assistant Principal.

PURPOSE

To ensure that Hughesdale Primary School appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

OBJECTIVE

To explain to Hughesdale 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 that 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 and flu
- weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air
- moulds
- animals such as cats and dogs
- deodorants (including perfumes, aftershaves, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories).

Asthma management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at Hughesdale Primary School:

- Parents/carers must provide the school with an [Asthma Care Plan](#) that 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.
- Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Care Plan.
- Hughesdale Primary School will keep all Asthma Care Plans in the following locations:
 - front office
 - classroom
 - first aid room
 - specialist classrooms and gymnasium office.
- School staff may also work with parents/carers to develop a Student Health Support Plan that will include details on:
 - how the school will provide support for the student
 - specific strategies
 - staff allocated to assist the student.

Any Student Health Support Plan will be developed in accordance with Hughesdale Primary School's *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.
- If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parents/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Care Plan.
- School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Care 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 that 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 their bags and in the first aid room.

Asthma emergency response plan

School staff will endeavour to follow the Asthma First Aid procedures outlined in the table below 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 may contact Triple Zero (000) at any time.

Step	Action
1.	Sit the student 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 (see below) and the student's Asthma Care 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. <p>Remember: Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths.</p>
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.
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).
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 student is not breathing
- if the student's asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- if the student is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available

- if they are not sure if it is asthma
- if the student is known to have anaphylaxis.

Training for staff

Hughesdale Primary School will arrange for the following staff to receive *Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies* training (22556VIC) every three years:

- staff working with high-risk children with a history of severe asthma, or with direct student wellbeing responsibility (including first aiders/nurses, PE/sport teachers, specialist teachers and school staff attending camp)
- school staff with a direct teaching role with students affected by asthma, or other school staff responsible for wellbeing of students.

Hughesdale Primary School will also provide casual relief staff with asthma information related to the class being taught 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

Hughesdale Primary School 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 will be a mobile kit for activities such as camps and excursions.

The asthma emergency kit will contain:

- at least one blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Ventolin
- at least two spacer devices (for single-person use only) in dust-proof containers to assist with effective inhalation of the blue or blue/grey reliever medication (Hughesdale Primary School will ensure spare spacers are available as replacements)
- 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

The primary first aid officer will monitor and maintain the asthma emergency kits. The attendant will:

- ensure all contents are maintained and replaced as 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 are 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 Hughesdale 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 can properly support students diagnosed with asthma and respond appropriately if necessary.

Communication plan

This policy will be available on Hughesdale Primary School's website so that parents/carers and other members of the school community can easily access information about Hughesdale Primary School's asthma management procedures.

Epidemic thunderstorm asthma

Hughesdale Primary School will be prepared to act on the warnings and advice from the Victorian Department of Education when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high.

COMMUNICATION

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

- available publicly on our school's website
- included in staff induction processes and staff training
- included in staff handbook/manual
- discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- hard copy available from school administration upon request.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Asthma Australia: [Resources for schools](#)
 - Victorian Department of Education School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Asthma](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2023
Next scheduled review date	June 2024
Review cycle	The recommended minimum review cycle for this policy is yearly