



## ASTHMA MANAGEMENT POLICY

### 1. RATIONALE

St Hilda's is committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive environment for all students. For students with asthma, additional support, understanding and management is required to ensure the appropriate care is given.

### 2. SCOPE

- To raise awareness about asthma in the School community.
- To engage with parents/carers of each student with asthma to assess risks and the development of risk minimisation strategies for the student.
- To ensure that staff have knowledge about asthma and the School's guidelines within this policy.

### 3. BACKGROUND

One in nine people in Australia has asthma. It affects people of all ages. Asthma cannot be cured, but for most people it can be well controlled by following a management plan.

Asthma is one of the most common reasons for school absenteeism and hospital admission in school aged children.

Asthma flare-ups must be identified quickly and treated correctly to ensure the best outcome for the person affected. Teachers and staff must be aware of the symptoms, triggers and best practice management of asthma so they can assist their students with asthma while at school.

St Hilda's is an Asthma Friendly School. Asthma Friendly Schools are recognised by Asthma Australia for taking extra measures to ensure the safest possible environment is provided for students with asthma.

### 4. DEFINITIONS

**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. These things make it harder 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 may vary but most commonly are breathlessness, tight feeling in chest, wheezing and/or persistent coughing.

**Trigger** is something that may cause an asthma flare-up. Examples are (but not limited to) exercise, cold weather, viral, pollen or dust.

**Asthma Action Plan** is a personalised written plan to help a person with asthma and/or their carer take early action to prevent or reduce the severity of an asthma attack. The asthma action plan may be based on symptoms and/or peak flow measurements.

**Asthma preventer** is a puffer used regularly to reduce inflammation, sensitivity and excess mucus, as well as relax tight airway muscles.

**Asthma reliever** is a puffer used to provide fast acting medication that give quick relief of asthma symptoms. They relax the muscle around the outside of the airway to open it up. They start to work within minutes and last for up to four hours.

**Spacer** is a device that makes using an inhaler easier and up to 50% more effective. It attaches to the inhaler on one end and to a mouthpiece or mask on the other end.

## 5. LEGISLATION

Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 (WA)

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Poisons Act 1964 (WA)

Poisons Regulations 1965 (WA)

School Education Act 1999 (WA)

School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)

## 6. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Supportive Schools Environment Policy

Medical Policy

Excursion and Incursion Policy – Junior School

## 7. GUIDELINES

### 7.1 Students

- Are supported to self-manage their asthma in line with their age and stage of development.
- To advise staff of asthma symptoms.
- To have asthma reliever and spacer available when undertaking activities at school.

### 7.2 Parents/Carers

- Provide an Asthma Action Plan, signed by the treating doctor. To be updated every three years or confirmed no changes.
- Provide their child's medication, within current date and in the original labelled container. A spacer, and mask as required, should also be supplied.
- To give permission for administration of Ventolin/reliever medication.
- To replace expired medications.
- Alert staff of any changes in their child's asthma management.

### 7.3 Nursing Staff

- Provide appropriate treatment as per Asthma Australia guidelines.
- Document any asthma flare-up and advise parents/carers as a matter of priority.
- Review documentation regularly to ensure compliance with procedures.
- Ensure all parents of students identified with asthma provide a current Asthma Action Plan and medication.
- Display Asthma First Aid posters in key locations around the School.

### 7.4 Staff

- Are aware of the School's Asthma Management Policy.
- Know the students with asthma in their care.
- Know where the asthma emergency kits or duty bum bags are located in the School.

- Know how to implement asthma first aid treatment in the event of an asthma flare-up (as per attached generic Asthma First Aid plan).
- Access students' written Asthma Action Plans as required from the School database.
- Know asthma triggers and how to recognise asthma symptoms.
- Know that use of a spacer with a puffer is more effective than puffer alone.
- Know that asthma puffers have an expiry date and ensure that a staff member has the responsibility for checking generic asthma puffers regularly.
- Always inform the School Nurse of an asthma incident and send for review if required.
- Attend asthma education three yearly or update with e-training.

#### **7.5 School**

- Meet all legal, regulatory and policy requirements related to health care planning and asthma management.
- Maintain a central record of students' health care needs, including asthma, and review regularly.
- Induct new staff in asthma policies and procedures including asthma training and information for all staff.
- Review policies and practices on an annual basis or as need arises.

#### **8. BREACH**

If you breach this policy, you may be subject to disciplinary actions.

**Responsibility:** Dean of Student Wellbeing, Head of Junior School, Registered Nurse  
**Review Date:** November 2018  
**Next Review Date:** November 2019

# Asthma First Aid

## 1 Sit the person upright

- Be calm and reassuring
- Do not leave them alone



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

- 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

OR give 2 separate doses of a Bricanyl inhaler (age 6 & over) or a Symbicort inhaler (over 12)



## 3 Wait 4 minutes

- If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above

OR give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler



## 4 If there is still no improvement call emergency assistance - Dial 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

OR give 1 dose of a Bricanyl or Symbicort every 4 minutes - up to 3 more doses of Symbicort



Call emergency assistance immediately – Dial Triple Zero (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 reliever is not available

If you are not sure if it's asthma

If the person is known to have Anaphylaxis- follow their Anaphylaxis Action Plan, then give Asthma First Aid

Blue/grey reliever medication is unlikely to harm, even if the person does not have asthma



Contact your local Asthma Foundation

1800 ASTHMA Helpline (1800 278 462) [asthmaaustralia.org.au](http://asthmaaustralia.org.au)

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