

School Policy

Asthma Policy

Purpose

- To ensure that Avenues Education appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.
- To explain to Avenues Education 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
- chemicals such as household cleaning products
- food chemicals/additives
- laughter or emotions, such as stress
- colds/flu
- weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air
- 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 is supported by an Avenues Education teacher:

1. For direct work between the student and Avenues Education Teacher, parents/carers must provide the school with an [Asthma Care 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 Care Plan.
3. Avenues Education Teachers will keep a copy of the student's asthma care plan on COMPASS. Teachers will perform a risk assessment to the suitability of any teaching or learning activity. Teachers will have a copy of the student's asthma care plan when working with a student in the community or on educational outings.
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 Avenues Education's Healthcare Needs Policy.

5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend an excursion, 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 Care Plan.

Student Asthma Kit

All students diagnosed with asthma are required to have their asthma medication with them. This may contain:

- their own prescribed reliever medication
- their spacer (if they use one)

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"> • 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 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 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 Symbicort 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 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

Staff Training

Avenues Education will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
General Staff	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), or One hour face-to-face or online training.	The Asthma Foundation of Victoria	Free to all schools	3 years

Avenues Education will ensure all staff have an awareness of this policy, and may also provide a briefing if the Principal decides it is necessary depending on the nature of the work being performed.

Management of confidential medical information

Confidential medical information provided to Avenues Education to support a student diagnosed with asthma will be:

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

Communication Plan

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

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Avenues Education 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 Foundation Victoria: [Resources for schools](#)
- School Policy and Advisory Guide:
 - [Asthma](#)
 - [Asthma Attacks: Treatment](#)
 - [Asthma Emergency Kits](#)

Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's annual review cycle.

This policy was last updated in May 2020 and is scheduled for review in May 2021.