



ASTHMA POLICY

Brunswick South Primary School

Policy	Review	Responsible for
Implementation Date	Date	Review
February 2023	February 2026	Policy Subcommittee

Purpose

To ensure that Brunswick South Primary School (BSPS) appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma. This policy outlines the processes and procedures which are in place to support these students and their families.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all students who have been diagnosed with asthma or who may require emergency treatment for asthma and their parents / carers
- all staff, including casual relief staff, contractors and volunteers.

This policy does not relate to the operations of the Outside School Hours Care program.

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 enrolls at BPS or a current student is diagnosed with asthma:

1. Parents / carers must provide the school annually with an Asthma Care Plan (see sample under Further information and resources) 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
2. Parents / carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Care Plan.
3. BPS will keep all Asthma Care Plans in the relevant Learning Areas, and the Sick Bay.
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 BPS's Healthcare Needs Policy.

5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, their parents / carers are required to provide any updated medical information to the school. The school takes first aid bags on camps and excursions, and these include the relevant student's asthma kit.
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent / carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Care Plan.
7. School staff will work with parents / carers to review Asthma Care Plans (and Student Health Support Plans) once a year, generally at the beginning of the school 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 the Sick Bay.

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.	<p>Sit the person upright</p> <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 two to five.
2.	<p>Give four separate puffs of blue or blue / grey reliever puffer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shake the puffer • Use a spacer if you have one • Put one puff into the spacer • Take four breaths from the spacer <p>Remember – Shake, one puff, four breaths</p>
3.	<p>Wait four minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is no improvement, give four more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above (or give one more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler)
4.	<p>If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero '000' and ask for an ambulance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack • Keep giving four separate puffs every four minutes until emergency assistance arrives (or one dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort every four minutes – up to three doses of Symbicort)
5.	<p>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</p>

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

BSPS will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
Group One 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) One hour face-to-face or online training.	The Asthma Foundation of Victoria	Free to all schools	Three years
Group Two Specific Staff	Staff working with high risk children with a history of severe asthma, or with direct student wellbeing responsibility, (including nurses, PE / sport teachers, first aid and designated school	<i>Course in Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace 22282VIC</i> (accredited) OR <i>Course in Emergency Asthma Management 10392NAT</i>	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by BSPS	Three years

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
	staff attending camp)	(accredited)			

BSPS 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.

BSPS will also provide this policy to casual relief staff and volunteers who will be working with students. The School may also provide a briefing if the principal decides it is necessary (depending on the nature of the work being performed).

Asthma Emergency Kit

BSPS will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. One kit will be kept on school premises in the sick bay and one will be a mobile kit for activities such as:

- yard duty
- special events held at school
- camps and excursions.

The Asthma Emergency Kit will contain:

- at least one blue or blue / grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Admol or Ventolin
- at least two spacer devices (for single person use only) to assist with effective inhalation of the blue or blue / grey reliever medication (BSPS 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.

The front office staff 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.

Asthma emergency kits will be checked by BSPS front office staff on an annual basis.

Management of confidential medical information

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

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

Communication with Parents / Carers

BSPS staff will regularly communicate with the student's parents / carers about the student's successes, development, changes and any health and education concerns. In particular the frequency and severity

of the student's asthma symptoms and use of medication at school.

Communication plan

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

In addition, it will be promoted in the school's family booklet.

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

BSPS 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:**
<https://www.asthmaaustralia.org.au/vic/education-and-training/for-victorian-schools/victorian-schools-resources/school-resources>
- **Department of Education School Policy and Advisory Guide:**
 - **Asthma**
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/conditionasthma.aspx>
 - **Asthma Attacks: Treatment**
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/asthmaattack.aspx>
 - **Asthma Emergency Kits**
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/asthmakits.aspx>
- **Sample Asthma Care Plan**
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Documents/AsthmaCarePlan.pdf>

Related School Policies

- Camping policy
- Excursion policy
- First Aid policy
- Health Care Needs policy
- Medication policy