



# ASTHMA POLICY

## PURPOSE

To ensure that Mount Waverley Secondary College appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma and comply with the school's policy advisory guide for asthma as published by the Department

## OBJECTIVE

Mount Waverley Secondary College acknowledges that the management of a student with asthma is a partnership between the college, the staff, the student, the student's parents/carers and the student's medical practitioner.

Mount Waverley Secondary College aims to:

- explain to Mount Waverley Secondary College parents/carers, staff and students the processes and procedures in place to support students diagnosed with asthma.
- Identify the students diagnosed with asthma and have the medical information for all students received prior to the start of each college year
- Raise awareness about asthma and the College's Asthma Management Policy in the college community
- Ensure that staff have knowledge about asthma and the college's policy and procedures in responding to an asthma flare up or asthma attack and are trained appropriately and in accordance with the Schools Policy Advisory Guidelines

## 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.

## DEFINITIONS

- **Asthma Emergency Kits (AEK's):**
- **Asthma Flare up**
- **Asthma Attack**
- **Exercise Induced Bronchoconstriction (EIB)**
- **Preventer medication**
- A specific first aid kit for asthma designed to be portable in an emergency
- Worsening of asthma symptoms
- A sudden or severe asthma flare-up
- is a narrowing of the airways in the lungs that is triggered by strenuous exercise
- Preventer medications reduce inflammation, excess mucus, redness and sensitivity in the airways of the lungs. When taken regularly, preventer medications reduce the risk of a student having an asthma flare-up



- **Reliever medication:**
  - **Spacers:**
  - **Thunderstorm Asthma:**
  - **Triggers:**
- or attack. Importantly, preventer medications are not used in Asthma First Aid.
- Reliever medications work quickly to relax the muscles that have tightened around the airways, enabling the airways to open, making it easier to breathe. Blue/grey reliever medications are used to treat an asthma emergency through the national Asthma First Aid procedure.
  - A plastic container with a mouthpiece (or mask for very young children) at one end and a hole for the inhaler at the other. The medicine is 'fired' from the puffer into the spacer and inhaled.
  - A form of asthma that is triggered by an uncommon combination of high pollen (usually during late Spring to early Summer) and a certain kind of thunderstorm
  - The mechanism by which a person's asthma symptoms may start

## 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 Mount Waverley Secondary College:

1. Parents/carers must provide the school with an Asthma Action 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. Mount Waverley Secondary College will keep all Asthma Action Plans:
  - In the First Aid Office
  - Plans will be pinned to the students compass profile for access by college staff.
3. 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 Mount Waverley Secondary College's Healthcare Needs Policy.

4. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.
5. The student's Individual Asthma Action Plan will be reviewed, in consultation with the student's parents in all the following circumstances:
  - annually
  - If the student's medical condition, in so far as it relates to asthma changes; and



- As soon as practicable after the student has an asthma flare up or asthma attack at school
- 6. It is the responsibility of the parents to:
  - Provide the appropriate coloured Asthma Action Plan;
  - Inform the college in writing if their child's medical condition changes and if relevant, provide an updated Asthma Action Plan
  - Provide an up to date photo for the Asthma Action Plan when that plan is provided to the college and when it is reviewed; and
  - Provide the college with the appropriate medication set out in the plan (eg: Ventolin)

Asthma Action Plans for Victorian Schools are available at <https://asthma.org.au/what-we-do/asthma-in-schools/school-resources/>

#### ASTHMA AND SCHOOL CAMPS

If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, Mount Waverley Secondary College parents/carers are required to:

- provide any updated medical information.
- Provide enough medication (including preventer medication) for the student if they are going away overnight

A specific School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Form can be downloaded from the Asthma Australia website at [https://asthma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/About\\_Asthma/Schools/Camp-Plan\\_2019\\_v3.pdf](https://asthma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/About_Asthma/Schools/Camp-Plan_2019_v3.pdf)

#### 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)

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

Students may also keep a supplementary Asthma Kit in the First Aid Office

#### 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
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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 as described in Steps 2 to 5.
2. Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer:
  - 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
  - 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.
  - 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 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

### **First-time Asthma Attacks**

If a student has a severe or life-threatening asthma attack, but has not been previously diagnosed with asthma, the school staff should follow the school's first aid procedures.

This should include immediately;



- Locating the administering reliever medication from Yellow Emergency Response Kits or from the Asthma Emergency Kits in the First Aid Kits.
- after the first 4 doses of reliever medication call Triple Zero “000” for an ambulance
- Continue giving 4 doses of reliever medication every 4 minutes whilst waiting for the ambulance to arrive.

### Post incident support

An asthma attack can be a very traumatic experience for the student, others witnessing the reaction, and parents. In the event of an asthma attack, students and school staff may benefit from post incident counselling or school psychologist.

### Review

After an asthma attack has occurred it is important that the following review processes take place.

- 1. • Any medication and/or spacers are replaced if required
- 2. • The student’s individual asthma action plan is reviewed in consultation with the students’ parents
- 3. • The College Asthma Policy is reviewed to ensure that it adequately responds to asthma attached by student who are in the care of School staff

### Training for staff

Mount Waverley Secondary College will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
<b>Group 1 General Staff</b>	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.	Asthma Australia	Free to all schools	3 years
<b>Group 2 Specific Staff</b>	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 school staff attending camp)	<i>Course in Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace 22282VIC</i> (accredited)  OR  <i>Course in Emergency</i>	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by Mount Waverley Secondary College	3 years



		<i>Asthma Management</i> <i>10392NAT</i>  (accredited)			
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\*Staff who undertake the online training must provide a copy of their certificate to the college to be stored with the staff training records in the Nurses office.

NOTE: First Aid training courses are not recognised as evidence of accredited training in Asthma.

### **Asthma Emergency Kit**

Mount Waverley Secondary College will provide and maintain Asthma Emergency Kits.

Kits will be kept on school premises in the First Aid Offices and the following locations:

#### Junior Campus

Technology

Food Tech (in Emergency Response Kit)

Science

#### Senior Campus

MS Office First Aid Kit

SS Office First Aid Kit

Hall

PE First Aid Kits

Food Tech (in Emergency Response Kit)

Technology (in Woodwork Area)

First Aid Kits for camps and excursions will contain Asthma Emergency Kits and additional kits will be provided depending on the event

The Asthma Emergency Kit will contain:

- at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Asmol or Ventolin
- at least 2 spacer devices (for single person use only) to assist with effective inhalation of the blue or blue/grey reliever medication (Mount Waverley Secondary College 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



- A record sheet/log for recording the details of an asthma first aid incident, such as the number of puffs administered.

The college nurses 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.

### **Management of confidential medical information**

Confidential medical information provided to Mount Waverley Secondary College 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 plan**

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

Staff can access policy through COMPASS > Community > Staff documentation

### **Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma**

Mount Waverley Secondary College 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.

### **RELATED LEGISLATION AND REFERENCE MATERIAL**

- School Policy Advisory Guide, Department of Education and Training  
<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/asthma/policy>
- [Asthma Guidelines for Australian Schools](#)
- Asthma Australia: [Resources for schools](#)

### **REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION**

This policy was last updated August 2021 and is scheduled for review in August 2024.