



# ASTHMA POLICY

BLACKBURN LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL  
FLORENCE STREET BLACKBURN 3130

## PURPOSE

To ensure that Blackburn Lake Primary School (BLPS) appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma and those who may require emergency treatment for cases undiagnosed.

## OBJECTIVE

To explain to BLPS 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), external providers 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 created. 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 BLPS:

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. Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan.
3. BLPS will keep all Asthma Action Plans:
  - First Aid room, student classrooms (displayed), and in Casual Relief Teaching Folders
4. If a student suffers from severe asthma, 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
5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp, BLPS parents/carers are required to provide any updates to medical information to that which exists on file prior to the activity.
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan as soon as possible.
7. School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Action 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 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 student's classroom and generic spacers and Ventolin will be stored in the First Aid Room.

### 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 follow the Asthma First Aid procedures outlined in the table below. As with all medical illnesses or accidents, staff may contact Triple Zero "000" at any time they feel it is appropriate.

Step	Action
1.	Sit the person upright <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be calm and reassuring</li><li>• Do not leave them alone</li><li>• 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).</li><li>• If the student's action plan is not immediately available, use the Asthma First Aid as described in Steps 2 to 5.</li></ul>
2.	Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shake the puffer</li><li>• Use a spacer if you have one</li><li>• Put 1 puff into the spacer</li><li>• Take 4 breaths from the spacer</li></ul> <b>Remember – 1 puff, 4 breaths and repeat 4 times</b>
3.	Wait 4 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above</li></ul>
4.	If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero "000" and ask for an ambulance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack</li><li>• 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)</li></ul>
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
- if they feel the need to do so for any other reason

## Training for staff

BLPS will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
<b>Group 1 General Staff</b>	All school staff	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

BLPS 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.

This policy will be available to all CRT staff, volunteers and external providers via the school website.

## **Asthma Emergency Kit**

BLPS will provide and maintain Asthma Emergency Kits kept on school premises in the first aid room and mobile kits for activities such as camps and excursions.

The Asthma Emergency Kit and mobile kits will contain:

- at least 1 blue or 'reliever' medication such as Airomir, Admol or Ventolin (these are generally blue or blue/grey)
- at least 2 spacer devices (for single person use only) to assist with effective inhalation of the blue or blue/grey 'reliever' medication. BLPS will ensure spare spacers are available as replacements. Spacers will be stored in a dust proof containers.
- 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 designated BLPS First Aid officer 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 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 spacers.

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 spacer comes into contact with someone's mouth, it will not be used again until sterilised unless in exceptional circumstances.

After each use of a blue or blue/grey reliever with a spacer and if circumstances allow:

- 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 BLPS 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 BLPS website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about BLPS asthma management procedures.

### **Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma**

BLPS 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 Australia: [Resources for schools](#)
- Policy and Advisory Library:
  - [Asthma](#)
  - [Treating an asthma attack](#)

### **REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION**

This policy was last updated on May 2021 and is scheduled for review in May 2022.