

# ASTHMA POLICY

## PURPOSE

To ensure that Wellington Secondary College appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

## OBJECTIVE

To explain to Wellington Secondary College 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

For each student diagnosed with asthma, Wellington Secondary College must have a written:

- Asthma Action Plan provided by the student's parents or carers
- Student Health Support Plan

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at Wellington 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. Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan.
3. Wellington Secondary College will keep all Asthma Action Plans in the First Aid room.
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
5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, Wellington Secondary College 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 Action Plan.
7. School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Action Plans once a year.

Wellington Secondary College also undertake the following actions:

- ensure that staff are provided with training to assess and manage an asthma emergency. Refer to the 'Staff training' section below for further information
- ensure those staff with a direct student wellbeing responsibility such as nurses, physical education or sport teachers, first aid and school staff attending camp have completed an accredited Emergency Asthma Management (EAM) course at least every 3 years
- follow advice and warnings from the Department associated with a potential thunderstorm asthma event
- provide and maintain an asthma emergency kit with the equipment required for managing an asthma attack

## STUDENT ASTHMA KIT

Where an enrolled student is diagnosed with asthma, the child is required to bring their own prescribed reliever medication. This should be stored in their asthma kit with a copy of their Asthma Action Plan and their spacer.

The student's personal spacer should be washed monthly or cleaned as required:

- wash the spacer in warm soapy water
- do not rinse the spacer
- leave it to air dry
- wipe the mouthpiece before use

The student's spacer should be replaced if contaminated with blood or vomit. Students will be required to keep their asthma kits with them while at school.

## ASTHMA ATTACK

**IMPORTANT** — if a student is experiencing an asthma attack.

Immediately call '000' and ask for an ambulance and state a student is having an asthma attack if:

- the student is not breathing
- the student is having a severe or life threatening attack
- the student is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- you are concerned
- at any time the student's condition suddenly worsens, or is not improving
- the student is known to have anaphylaxis – follow their Anaphylaxis Action Plan, then give asthma first aid

Where a student is diagnosed with asthma, the student is required to bring their own prescribed reliever medication to school. This should be stored in their asthma kit with a copy of their Asthma Action Plan and their spacer.

## STRATEGIES

### COMMUNICATION

Wellington Secondary College will provide information to all school staff, students and parents or carers about asthma and the School's Asthma Policy.

First Aid staff will regularly communicate with the student's parents or carers about the student's asthma or any changes in health. In particular, the frequency and severity of the student's asthma symptoms and use of medication at school.

### ASTHMA EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Procedures that Wellington Secondary College have developed for an emergency response to a severe or life threatening asthma attack for all in-school and out-of-school activities.

If a student is:

- having an asthma attack
- having 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"> <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.	<p>Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer:</p> <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> <p><b>Remember – Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths</b></p>
3.	<p>Wait 4 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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)</li> </ul>
4.	<p>If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero “000” and ask for an ambulance.</p> <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.	<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

### INDIVIDUAL ASTHMA ACTION PLANS (FOR EACH STUDENT DIAGNOSED WITH ASTHMA)

Parents or carers must provide the school with an Asthma Action Plan completed by the student’s medical practitioner. The plan must outline the student’s known triggers and the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack.

Parents or carers and the student’s general practitioner (GP) should annually complete or review each student’s Asthma Action Plan. The Asthma Action Plan should contain:

- the prescribed medication taken and when it is to be administered (for example, on a regular basis, as premedication to exercise or it if the student is experiencing symptoms)
- emergency contact details
- contact details of the student’s medical or health practitioner
- details about deteriorating asthma including signs to recognise worsening symptoms, what to do during an attack or medication to be used

Visit [Asthma Australia](#) for the Asthma Action Plans for Victorian Schools.

## STUDENT HEALTH SUPPORT PLAN

Wellington Secondary College will have an individual plan for each student diagnosed with asthma, developed in consultation with the student's parents or carers. These plans include the Individual Asthma Action Plan.

The Student Health Support Plan includes details on how the school will provide support, identify specific strategies and allocate staff to assist the student.

## ANNUAL ASTHMA BRIEFING FOR ALL STAFF

Wellington Secondary College will conduct an annual asthma briefing at the beginning of the school year on:

- the school's Asthma policy
- [causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma](#)
- the identities of students diagnosed with asthma and where their medication is located
- how to use a puffer and spacer
- the school's general first aid and emergency response procedures
- the location of, and access to, reliever medication that has been provided by parents or carers or the asthma emergency kits

## REDUCING ASTHMA TRIGGERS

To reduce asthma triggers Wellington Secondary College will:

- mow school grounds out of hours
- plant a low allergen garden
- limit dust, for example, having the carpets and curtains cleaned regularly and out of hours
- examine the cleaning products used in the school and their potential impact on students with asthma
- conduct maintenance that may require the use of chemicals, such as painting, during school holidays
- turn on fans, air conditioning and heaters out of hours when being used for the first time after a long period of non-use

## ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN CAMPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Wellington Secondary College will ensure:

- parents or carers provide enough medication (including preventer medication) for the student if they are going away overnight
- enough asthma emergency kits are available for the camp or excursion needs
- that parents or carers complete the [Asthma Australia's School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Form](#) and the Department's [Confidential Medical Form for Excursions](#).

## MANAGING EXERCISE INDUCED BRONCHOCONSTRICTION

If a student has Exercise Induced Bronchoconstriction (EIB), Wellington Secondary College will ensure that they allow adequate time for the following procedures before, during and after exercise.

## BEFORE:

- blue or blue-grey reliever medication to be taken by student 15 minutes before exercise or activity (if indicated on the students' Asthma Action Plan)
- student to undertake adequate warm up activity

## DURING:

- if symptoms occur, student to stop activity, take blue or blue-grey reliever medication, only return to activity if symptom free
- if symptoms reoccur, student to take blue or blue-grey reliever medication and cease activity for the rest of the day. This is known as 'two strikes and out'

## AFTER:

- ensure cool down activity is undertaken
- be alert for symptoms

If a student has an asthma attack during, or after exercise or activity, follow their Asthma Action Plan if easily accessible, or commence asthma first aid. Always notify parents or carers of any incidents or medication usage.

## STAFF TRAINING

### GENERAL SCHOOL STAFF TRAINING

All Wellington Secondary College staff undertake non-accredited training in asthma first aid management for education staff through Asthma Australia. Staff renew this asthma education session at least every 3 years.

### TARGETED SCHOOL STAFF TRAINING

The following Wellington Secondary College staff undertake accredited training in asthma management by a Registered Training Organisation:

- staff working with high-risk children with a history of severe asthma
- staff with a direct student wellbeing responsibility such as nurses, first aid and camp organisers
- staff in high-risk teaching areas, such as physical education or sports teachers, home economics or cooking teachers

The following accredited asthma management courses are recognised for Victorian schools:

- 22282VIC Course in Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace
- 10760NAT Course in Asthma Management

## TRAINING FOR STAFF

Wellington 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 Asthma Awareness 10760NAT</i> (accredited)	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by Wellington Secondary College	3 years

Wellington Secondary College will brief staff where possible 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.

Wellington Secondary College will also provide this policy to casual relief staff and volunteers who will be working with students, and may also provide a briefing if the principal decides it is necessary depending on the nature of the work being performed.

## ASTHMA EMERGENCY KITS

Wellington Secondary College provides and maintains a number of asthma emergency kits:

- to keep at the school
- to take as mobile kits for activities such as excursions and camps

## CONTENTS

Asthma emergency kits 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 students to inhale the blue or blue-grey reliever medication (ensure spare spacers are available as replacements)
- clear written instructions on asthma first aid, including how to use the medication and spacer devices, and steps to be taken in treating an asthma attack (see the Guidance tab for further information)
- a record sheet or log for recording the details of a first aid incident, such as the number of puffs administered. Record sheets can be downloaded from the Asthma Australia website

Schools are not required to provide a nebuliser for students. If a student is prescribed a nebuliser, they should bring their own to school. Parents or carers can obtain information on the use of nebulisers from the manufacturer (all nebulisers are labelled with the manufacturer's name)

## REGULAR CHECKS

The First Aid department is responsible for maintaining the asthma emergency kits, including:

- ensuring all contents are maintained and replaced when necessary
- regularly checking the expiry date on the canister of the blue or blue-grey reliever puffer and replacing it if expired or low on doses
- replacing spacers in the asthma emergency kit after each use (spacers are single person use only). Once used, the spacer can be given to that student or thrown away
- previously used spacers should be disposed of

## CLEANING REQUIREMENTS

Asthma spacers are single person use only. To avoid infection transmission via mucus, spacers and masks are only used by the 1 student. They are stored in a dustproof container.

Blue or blue-grey reliever medication 'puffers' in the asthma emergency kit may be used by more than 1 student, as long as they are used with a spacer. If the medication delivery device (for example, puffer) comes into contact with someone's mouth it cannot be reused by anyone else and must 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.

## MANAGEMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL INFORMATION

Confidential medical information provided to Wellington 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 Wellington Secondary College's website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about Wellington Secondary College's asthma management procedures.

## EPIDEMIC THUNDERSTORM ASTHMA

Wellington 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 including:

- act on advice and warnings from the Department's Emergency Management Division associated with a potential thunderstorm asthma activity, and implement a communication strategy to inform the school community and parents or carers
- implement procedures to avoid exposure, such as staying indoors with windows and doors closed
- implement emergency response procedures and follow individual Asthma Action Plans as needed

## LOCATIONS

Asthma emergency kits are located strategically around the college and readily available in an asthma emergency. Mobile asthma emergency kits are also required for:

- the office or administration area
- yard duty
- excursions or sports days
- camps

## ASTHMA EMERGENCY KIT

Wellington Secondary College maintains Asthma Emergency Kits in the following locations:

- Junior School
- Middle School
- Senior School
- R Block
- K Block
- Southern Gym Store Room
- Sport Store Room (near hard courts)
- Evacuation Bag
- Inclusion
- Science block

## STORING MEDICATION

The principal (or their nominee) will put in place arrangements so that medication is stored:

- securely to minimise risk to others
- in a place only accessible by staff who are responsible for administering the medication
- away from a classroom (unless quick access is required)
- away from first aid kits
- according to packet instructions, particularly in relation to temperature

For most students, Wellington Secondary College will store student medication in the First Aid room.

The principal may decide, in consultation with parents/carers and/or on the advice of a student's treating medical/health practitioner:

- that the student's medication should be stored securely in the student's classroom if quick access might be required
- to allow the student to carry their own medication with them, preferably in the original packaging if:
  - the medication does not have special storage requirements, such as refrigeration
  - doing so does not create potentially unsafe access to the medication by other students

## DEFINITIONS

### ***ASTHMA ACTION PLAN***

A plan completed by a student's medical practitioner which outlines the student's known triggers and the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack.

### ***BLUE-GREY RELIEVER MEDICATION***

This is usually Airomir, Asmol, or Ventolin.

### ***NEBULISER***

A machine that converts liquid medicine into a fine mist that can then be inhaled.

### ***PUFFER***

A pressurised metered dose inhaler (pMDI). The medicine contained in the inhaler is in a fine mist. When you press the canister, this mist is released, and you breathe in to deliver the medicine to your airways.

### ***SPACER***

A holding chamber device that makes it easier to take asthma medication from the type of puffer. A spacer can also make it easier to coordinate breathing in and pressing your puffer.

## RELATED POLICIES

- [Decision Making Responsibilities for Students](#)
- [Camps and Excursions Policy](#)
- [Health Care Needs Policy](#)

## REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

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