

# MELBOURNE HIGH SCHOOL

## ASTHMA POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school on 98260711

### PURPOSE

To ensure that Melbourne High School appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma

### OBJECTIVE

To explain to Melbourne High School parents/carers, staff and students the processes and procedures in place to support students diagnosed with asthma.

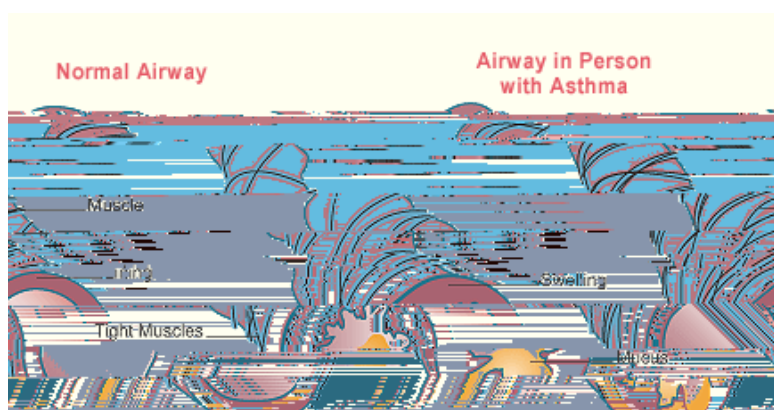
### SCOPE

This policy applies to

### 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.



Three main factors cause the airways to become narrow:

- f* Inflammation– the inside lining of the airway becomes red and swollen
- f* Extra mucous- more than usual amounts of mucus may be produced
- f* Muscle spasm– the muscle around the airways constrict

- 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 student's signature, name, ID number, date of birth, sex, race, religion, ethnicity, and other identifying information

Figure 1 Photo of the Emergency Asthma Kits on the Emergency Management Wall in the Health Centre

### **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



- 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 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.

### Management of confidential medical information

Confidential medical information provided to Melbourne High School 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.

### Cleaning of Reliever Medication (Ventolin)

The reliever medication (Ventolin) in the First Aid Kits and 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 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.

The School Nurse is responsible for completing these cleaning protocols.

### Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Grass pollen season, which is generally from October through December however, it can begin as early as September, brings a seasonal increase in Asthma and Allergic Rhinitis (Hayfever).

Melbourne High School 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.

Epidemic thunderstorm asthma is thought to be triggered by a unique combination of high grass pollen levels and a certain type of thunderstorm (high temperatures, humidity