



Policy Title	Asthma Management Policy		
Date approved	16/05/2017	Review Date:	May 2020
Revision No:		Revision Date:	

Definition:

"Asthma is a disease of the airways, the small tubes which carry air in and out of the lungs. When you have asthma symptoms the muscles in the airways tighten and the lining of the airways swells and produces sticky mucus. These changes cause the airways to become narrow, so that there is less space for the air to flow into an out of your lungs" (National Asthma Council 2011)

Symptoms of asthma may include, but are not limited to: **See Appendix A**

- shortness of breath
- wheezing (a whistling noise from the chest).
- tightness in the chest
- a dry, irritating, persistent cough.

Symptoms vary from person to person.

Triggers:

- exercise
- colds/flu
- smoke (cigarette smoke, wood smoke from open fires, burn-offs or bushfires)
- weather changes – Thunderstorm Asthma (**Anyone can be affected, even if you don't have a history of asthma**). **See following link - <https://www.asthmaaustralia.org.au/vic/about-asthma/resources/onair/2017/feb/thunderstorm-asthma>**
- dust and dust mites
- moulds
- pollens
- animals
- chemicals
- deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and deodorant sprays)
- foods and additives

The key to asthma management in schools is to identify the students at risk, be aware of the potential asthma triggers and by having an asthma emergency management kit available with staff trained in the management of an asthma attack and in particular the use of asthma reliever medication.

Rationale:

Students at Reservoir High School have the right to feel safe and well and to know they will be attended to with due care when an asthma attack occurs.

Reservoir High School will:

- provide, a safe and supportive environment in which students who may be at risk of an asthma attack can participate equally in all aspects of learning.
- raise awareness about asthma generally as well as the Asthma Management Policy in the School's community.
- engage with parents/carer's of students diagnosed with asthma in assessing risks and developing asthma action plans as part of the School's overall student health support plans.
- ensure all staff with a duty of care for students who have not completed First Aid (HLTAID003) & CPR (HLTAID001) are trained to assess and manage an asthma emergency and complete

the free one-hour Asthma Education session at least every three years (this can be face-to-face or online).

- ensure those staff with a direct student wellbeing responsibility such as nurses, PE/sport teachers, first aid and camp organisers have completed the Emergency Asthma Management (EAM) course at least every three years. Information for this course can be found on the Asthma Foundation Victoria Website. Please see web address below:
<https://www.asthmaaustralia.org.au/vic/education-and-training/for-victorian-schools/asthma-in-victorian-schools>
- provide equipment to manage an asthma emergency in the asthma first aid kits.

Implementation:

Asthma Management Plans

The Asthma Foundation Victoria's School Action Plan should be completed by the student's medical/health professional in consultation with the parents/carers. The Plan should be provided to the parents by the medical professional and then provided to Reservoir High School by the parents/carers

The Plan must include the prescribed medication taken:

- on a regular basis
- as premedication to exercise
- if the student is experiencing symptoms

Details about deteriorating asthma including:

- signs to recognise worsening symptoms
- what to do during an attack
- medication to be used

The plan must also include:

- emergency contact details
- business and after hours contact details of the student's medical professional

An asthma first aid section which should specify the use of at least 4 separate puffs of a blue reliever medication with 4 breaths taken per puff every 4 minutes, using a spacer if possible.

Staff Training

All Reservoir High School staff have a duty of care for the wellbeing of students. All staff will be trained in the management of an asthma emergency. Training should be conducted at least every three years. This can be face-to-face or online.

Ensure that staff with a direct student wellbeing responsibility such as nurses, PE/sport teachers, first aid and camp organisers have completed the Emergency Asthma Management (EAM) course at least every three years.

Strategically place Asthma First Aid posters around the school. e.g. staffroom, First Aid Room, Gym.

Asthma First Aid Kits

Reservoir High School will provide and maintain at least 3 asthma emergency management kits.

The asthma emergency first aid kit is to contain:

- a blue/grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Asmol or Ventolin

- at least two spacer devices to assist with effective inhalation of the reliever medication
- clear written instructions on how to use these medications and devices and the steps to be taken in treating severe asthma attack
- a record sheet/log for recording the details of a first aid incident, such as the number of puffs administered.

A nominated staff member will be responsible for maintaining the emergency asthma first aid kits.

Note: Asthma spacers are single use only. To avoid infection transmission via mucus, spacers and masks must only be used by the one person. The reliever puffers may be used by more than one person as long as they have been used with a spacer.

Communication with parents/guardians

It is imperative that students' health support plans are both current and accurate, dated and signed by a medical practitioner. Regular communication with the student's parents/caregivers is essential to ascertain the frequency and severity of the student's asthma symptoms and use of medication at school. It is the parents/caregivers responsibility to ensure that Reservoir High School has current information on outside school incidents, medical treatment or changes to medications.

Students who provide the Assistant Principal with written parental/carers permission, supported by approval of the Principal, may carry an asthma inhaler with them.

Encouraging camps and special event participation

Reservoir High School will ensure that:

- parents/caregivers will provide sufficient medication for the student if they are going away overnight
- asthma emergency kits are available for the camp or excursion needs
- parents/caregivers complete the Asthma Foundation's School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Form and the Department's Confidential Medical Information for School Council Approved School Excursions form.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed in three years unless circumstances require an earlier revision.

Further information can be found at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/conditionasthma.aspx>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/asthma.aspx>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/asthmaattack.aspx>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/healthcareneeds.aspx>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/health/Pages/anaphylaxis.aspx>

APPENDIX A

RECOGNISE signs of an asthma flare-up or attack

If a student is experiencing any of these signs, start asthma first aid. Do not wait until asthma is severe.

Mild/moderate

- Minor difficulty breathing
- Able to talk in full sentences
- Able to walk/move around
- May have cough or wheeze

Commence Asthma First Aid

Severe

- Obvious difficulty breathing
- Cannot speak a full sentence in one breath
- Tugging in of the skin between ribs or at base of neck
- May have cough or wheeze
- Reliever medication not lasting as long as usual

**Call Ambulance on 000
Commence Asthma First Aid**

Life threatening

- Gasping for breath
- Unable to speak or 1-2 words per breath
- Confused or exhausted
- Turning blue
- Collapsing
- May no longer have wheeze or cough
- Not responding to reliever medication

**Call Ambulance on 000
Commence Asthma First Aid**