



ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN THE BRIGIDINE
TRADITION



ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

The Hazard – Asthma Management

More than 600,000 Victorians have asthma, of which one in four are children and one in seven are teenagers. It is one of the most common reasons for school absenteeism and hospital admission in school aged children.

Asthma attacks must be identified quickly and treated correctly to ensure the best outcome for students affected. Teachers and staff must be aware of the symptoms, triggers and best practice management of asthma so that they can assist their asthmatic students while at College.

If you think a student may be having a serious asthma attack, call an ambulance and give the student reliever medication in accordance with the student's Asthma Action Plan or the Asthma First Aid Plan.

St Joseph's College's Policy

St. Joseph's College is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all our students and complying with the Department of Education and Training's Asthma Guidelines as amended by the Department from time to time (Guidelines).

It is our policy that:

- each student must have a written Asthma Action Plan and a Student Health Support Plan
- we provide, as far as practicable, a safe and supportive environment in which students diagnosed with asthma can participate equally in all aspects of the student's schooling
- we adopt the recommendations of the Guidelines where relevant to the College
- Asthma Emergency Kits and other reliever medication are purchased, stored and maintained in accordance with the Guidelines and the College's particular circumstances
- strategies are in place to communicate with and advise staff, students and parents/carers and to raise awareness about asthma and the College Asthma Management Policy in the college community
- the Principal and other College staff work together with parents/carers of each student diagnosed with asthma to assess risks and develop risk minimisation strategies for the student
- staff are appropriately trained and have knowledge about asthma and the College's asthma prevention strategies and policies and procedures in responding to an asthma attack.

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

Main Causes of Asthma

A wide range of factors can trigger someone's asthma, and triggers differ between individuals. Triggers of asthma can be:

- exercise
- colds/flu
- smoke (cigarette smoke, wood smoke from open fires, burn-offs or bushfires)
- weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air
- house dust mites
- moulds
- pollens
- animals such as cats and dogs
- chemicals such as household cleaning products
- deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)
- food chemicals / additives
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)
- emotions such as stress and laughter.

The most common asthma triggers for students are exercise, colds and flus and cigarette smoke.

The best way to reduce an asthma flare-up/attack occurring is to avoid / reduce, where possible, certain triggers and manage exposure to other triggers.

Exercise induced bronchoconstriction (EIB)

Children with asthma can and should participate in physical activity. Exercise induced asthma can be managed effectively with relievers and preventers (or both) and should not stop children with asthma participating in activities unless they are already unwell.

Thunderstorm asthma

Thunderstorm asthma is 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. Anyone can be affected, even if they don't have a history of asthma.

People at increased risk have:

- a history of asthma
- unrecognised asthma
- hay fever (allergic rhinitis), particularly seasonal hay fever
- allergies to grass pollen

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

Signs and Symptoms

The most common symptoms of asthma are:

- wheezing – a continuous, high-pitched sound coming from the chest while breathing
- shortness of breath – a feeling of not being able to get enough air
- a feeling of tightness in the chest
- persistent coughing – alongside other symptoms.

The table below from the Guidelines describes the symptoms of different types of asthma attacks. Symptoms will vary from student to student.

Type	Symptoms
Mild / Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• may have a cough• may have a wheeze• minor difficulty in breathing
Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cannot speak a full sentence in one breath• may have a cough• may have a wheeze• obvious difficulty in breathing.• Sitting hunched forward• Lethargic (children)• Tugging in of skin over the chest and throat• Sore tummy (young children)
Life-threatening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• unable to speak or 1-2 words more than a few words per breath• being very distressed and anxious• collapsed, exhausted, unconscious• wheeze and cough may be absent• gasping for breath• pale and sweaty• may have blue lips discolouration• sucking in of skin over ribs/throat• drowsy/confused.

Recognising Symptoms of Poorly Controlled Asthma

The following symptoms may indicate that a student's asthma is poorly controlled, however symptoms will vary from student to student:

- frequent absenteeism from College due to asthma
- students regularly use their reliever medication more than two times per week to ease asthma symptoms
- tiredness/poor concentration
- student is unable to exercise or play sport due to asthma.

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

If a staff member believes that a student may have poorly controlled asthma, they should notify an Asthma Supervisor, LM, House Leader or the Principal, who will inform the parents/carers and may advise them to seek medical advice.

Key Definitions

Asthma

Asthma is a disease of the airways. Asthma is a long-term (chronic) disease. Asthma symptoms can be triggered by different things for different people. Common triggers include colds and flu, allergies and cigarette smoke.

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 harder 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**.

In this policy, the terms asthma attack and asthma flare-up are both used.

Asthma Action Plan

Also known as Asthma Care Plans and Asthma Management Plans, the Asthma Action Plan lists the student's prescribed asthma medication as well as the signs and symptoms students show when they are experiencing an asthma attack, including treatment for the attack. This plan is one of the requirements of the student's Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan.

To assist staff in identifying asthma signs and symptoms, including their severity and action to be taken, the National Asthma Council of Australia and Asthma Australia have developed preferred Action Plans for use in schools. These are designed to complement, rather than replace, the student's Asthma Action Plan. It is our preference that the Asthma Foundation's Action Plans are used by students.

If a student presents with a different Asthma Action Plan, the **First aid officer** in consultation with the student's parents/carers can transcribe the information on to the specific Asthma Action Plan for Schools. This Action Plan must be signed by the parent of the student for authenticity and the original Asthma Action Plan provided by the parent must be kept in the student's file.

Asthma Emergency Kit (AEK)

A specific first aid kit for asthma designed to be portable in an emergency.

Asthma Emergency Kits can be purchased from Asthma Australia or the Asthma Foundation and reliever medication is available from pharmacies.

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

Asthma Education Session

An education session delivered by the National Asthma Council or another asthma peak body designed to educate staff on the basics of asthma. This can be a face-to-face session or online training.

Asthma Management Training Course

This means:

- a course in asthma management training that is accredited as either a:
- VET accredited course in accordance with Part 3 of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Cth) that includes a competency check in the administration of a pressure metered dose inhaler (puffer) and spacer device, or
- course in asthma management training accredited under Chapter 4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority that includes a competency check in the administration of a pressure metered dose inhaler (puffer) and spacer device
- any other course including an online course, approved by the Department for the purpose of these Guidelines.

Communication Plan

A plan developed by the school which provides information to all school staff, students and parents about asthma and the school's asthma management policy.

Diagnosed with Asthma

In relation to a student, means a student who has been diagnosed by a medical practitioner as having a medical condition that relates to asthma and is at high risk of having an asthma episode at school.

Exercise Induced Bronchoconstriction (EIB)

EIB (formerly known as exercise induced asthma) is a temporary narrowing of the lower airways, occurring after vigorous exercise. While EIB can occur without asthma, up to 90 per cent of people with asthma experience EIB.

Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan

An individual plan for each student at risk of asthma, developed in consultation with the student's parents. The Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan includes the Asthma Action Plan which describes the student's triggers, symptoms, and the emergency response to administer the student's reliever medication should the student display symptoms of an asthma attack.

Reliever Medication

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

Medication, approved for use by the Commonwealth Government Therapeutic Goods Administration, which can be used to treat a person experiencing an asthma attack. These may include Salbutamol, Bricanyl and Symbicort.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Principal

Section 9 of the Guidelines sets out the suggested role and responsibilities of the Principal. The Principal will:

- ensure that the College develops, implements and routinely reviews this policy in accordance with the Guidelines
- actively seek information to identify students with severe life-threatening asthma or those who have been diagnosed with asthma, either at enrolment or at the time of diagnosis (whichever is earlier)
- ensure that parents/carers provide an Asthma Action Plan which has been signed by the student's medical practitioner and that contains an up-to-date photograph of the student
- ensure that an Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan is developed in consultation with the student's parents/carers for any student that has been diagnosed by a medical practitioner with asthma, where the College has been notified of that diagnosis
- ensure that students' Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plans are communicated to staff
- ensure that parents/carers provide the College with reliever medication and a spacer device, if reliever is a puffer, for their child that is not out-of-date and replacement reliever medication when requested to do so
- ensure that an appropriate Communication Plan is developed
- ensure that there are procedures in place for providing information to college volunteers and casual relief staff about students diagnosed with asthma and their role in responding to a student having an asthma attack in their care
- ensure that relevant college staff have successfully completed approved asthma training and that their accreditation is current
- ensure that there are sufficient numbers of trained staff available to supervise students diagnosed with asthma while they are under the care or supervision of the College, including excursions, yard duty, camps and special event days
- ensure that all college staff are briefed at least annually by Asthma Supervisor or another appropriately trained staff member
- allocate time, such as during staff meetings, to discuss, practise and review this policy
- encourage ongoing communication between parents/carers and college staff about the current status of the student's asthma, the College's policies and their implementation
- ensure that the student's Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan and this policy are reviewed as required
- ensure that the **Risk Management Checklist** for asthma is completed annually

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

- arrange to purchase and maintain an appropriate number of Asthma Emergency Kits for general use to be part of the College's first aid kit.

Roles and Responsibilities:

College Asthma Supervisors

College Asthma Supervisors will:

- have current asthma management training and ensure that they have a higher level of knowledge relating to asthma management, in particular in the correct use of a puffer and spacer
- lead the annual asthma college briefing
- conduct regular reviews of the reliever medications to ensure they are not out-of-date
- inform casual relief teachers, specialist teachers and volunteers about this policy, the names of any students diagnosed with asthma, the location of each student's **Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan** and reliever medication and each individual person's responsibility in managing an incident
- brief all volunteers, casual relief staff and new college staff of the College's Communication Plan and their role in responding to a student having an asthma attack in their care.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Staff

Section 9 of the Guidelines sets out the suggested role and responsibilities of staff. The College staff will:

- know and understand the requirements of this policy
- know the identity of students who are diagnosed with asthma and know their face
- understand the causes, symptoms, and treatment of asthma
- obtain regular in how to recognise and respond to an asthma attack, including administering reliever medication
- know where to find a copy of each student's Asthma Action Plan quickly, and follow it in the event of an asthma flare-up/attack
- know the College's general first aid and emergency response procedures, and understand their role in relation to responding to a severe or life-threatening asthma attack
- know where students' reliever medication and the Asthma Emergency Kits for general use are kept
- know and follow the prevention and risk minimisation strategies in the student's Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan
- plan ahead for special class activities (e.g. cooking, art and science classes), or special occasions (e.g. excursions, incursions, sport days, camp, cultural days, fetes and parties), either at the college, or away from the college
- be aware of the possibility of hidden triggers in art supplies, traces of triggers when using items such as paint cleaning chemicals in art or food additives in cooking classes, or students being at

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

risk of an asthma attack when they experience extreme emotions induced at college (e.g. stress during exams)

- raise student awareness about asthma and the importance of their role in fostering a college environment that is safe and supportive for their peers.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Parents/Carers

Section 9 of the Guidelines sets out the suggested role and responsibilities of parents/carers of students diagnosed with asthma.

Parents/carers of students diagnosed with asthma will:

- inform the College in writing, either at enrolment or diagnosis, of the student's asthma
- obtain and provide the College with an Asthma Action Plan from the student's medical practitioner that details their condition, and any medications to be administered, and other emergency procedures
- inform college staff in writing of any changes to the student's medical condition and if necessary, provide an updated Asthma Action Plan
- provide the College with an up-to-date photo for the student's Asthma Action Plan and when the plan is reviewed
- meet with and assist the College to develop the student's Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan, including risk management strategies
- provide the College with reliever medication and spacer device, where the medication is administered by a puffer, that are current and not expired
- replace the student's reliever medication as needed, before their expiry date or when used
- assist college staff in planning and preparation for the student prior to camps, field trips, incursions, excursions or special events (e.g. class parties, cultural days, fetes or sport days)
- inform college staff in writing of any changes to the student's emergency contact details
- participate in reviews of the student's Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff must follow the asthma management requirements set out in this policy.

Signage

Copies of the Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan and Asthma Action Plan for each student with asthma are displayed in various locations around the College.

Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plans

Identification of Students at Risk

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

Parents/carers are requested to notify the College of all student medical conditions including asthma. Refer to our **Medical Records (Student) Policy**.

Students who are identified as having asthma are considered high risk. For each of these students an **Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan** should be developed and regularly reviewed and updated.

St. Joseph's College maintains a complete and up-to-date list of students identifying as being diagnosed with asthma. It is the responsibility of **Front Office staff** to keep this list up-to-date. The list is kept at **Front Office and in Staff Room**.

Key Definitions

Refer to **Asthma Management**.

Preparing an Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan

Where the College has been notified of a student diagnosed with asthma, the Principal will be responsible for ensuring that an Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan is developed in consultation with the student's parents/carers, for any student who has been diagnosed by a medical practitioner as having asthma.

The Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan should be in place as soon as practicable after the student is enrolled, and where possible before their first day at the college.

Plan Contents

Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plans must include the following:

- information about the student's medical condition that relates to asthma and the potential for a severe/life-threatening asthma attack, including the type of triggers the student has (based on a written diagnosis from a medical practitioner)
- strategies to minimise the risk of exposure to known and notified triggers while the student is under the care or supervision of the College
- the name of the person(s) responsible for implementing the strategies
- information on where the student's medication will be stored
- the student's emergency contact details
- a completed Asthma Action Plan signed by a medical practitioner.

Review of Plan

The student's Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan will be reviewed, in consultation with the student's parents/carers:

- annually, and as applicable
- if the student's medical condition, insofar as it relates to asthma, changes

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

- as soon as practicable after the student has a severe/life-threatening asthma attack at college
- when the student is to participate in an off-site activity, or at a special event conducted, organised or attended by the College.

Responsibilities in Relation to Plan

All College staff are expected to know and follow the prevention and risk minimisation strategies in each student's Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to:

- ensure that the student's Individual Risk Minimisation Plan is developed in consultation with the student's parents/carers for any student that has been diagnosed by a medical practitioner with asthma, where the College has been notified of that diagnosis
- communicate Individual Risk Minimisation Plans to staff.
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers of students diagnosed with asthma to:
 - provide the Asthma Action Plans signed by the medical practitioner
 - inform the College in writing if their child's medical condition, insofar as it relates to asthma, 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 school and when it is reviewed
- provide the school with asthma reliever medication that is current and not expired for their child
- meet with and assist the College to develop the student's Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan
- participate in reviews of the student's Individual Risk Minimisation Plan.

Location of Plan

A copy of each student's Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan is stored with the student's Asthma Action Plan.

At the College

Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plans are kept at **Front Office, Operoo (CareMonkey) and in SIMON.**

Individual Asthma Action Plans are kept at **Front Office, Operoo (CareMonkey) and SIMON.**

Copies of the Individual Asthma Action Plans are also kept at the following locations:

Examples of Asthma Action Plans are available from the National Asthma Council Australia and Asthma Australia.

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

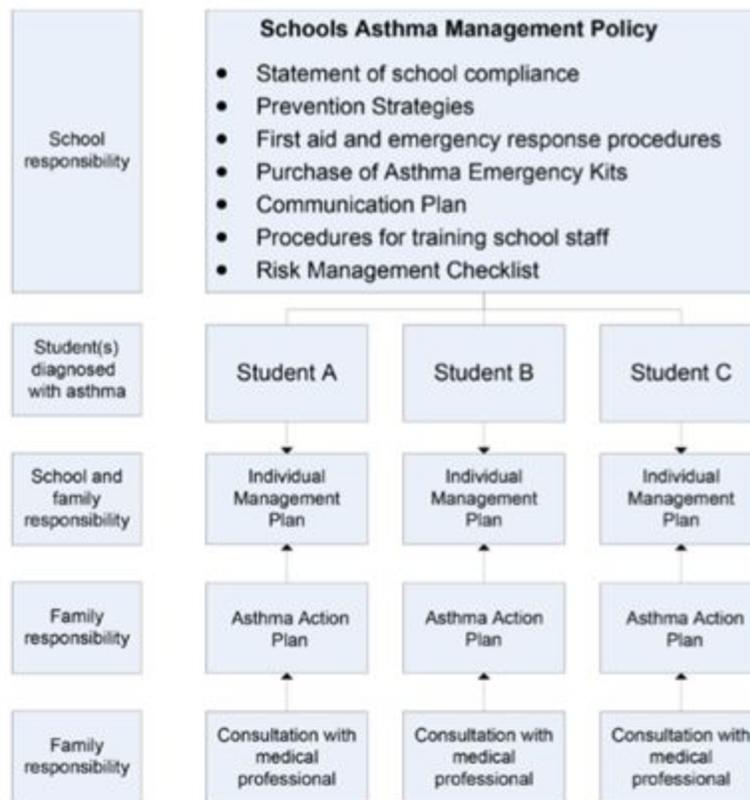
During off-site college settings (e.g. excursions, college camps, special events attended by the college)

A copy of the Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan and Asthma Action Plan for each student with asthma must be easily accessible during field trips, excursions, camps and other out-of-college settings.

Either the supervising teacher or an identified staff member with current asthma training (refer to Asthma Training and Briefings) will have a copy of the Plans with them at all times. All attending staff must be aware of their exact location.

Interactions between the Plan and this Policy

The relationship between the College's **Asthma Management Policy** and each student's Individual Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan is represented by the below diagram from the Guidelines (Figure 7.1), including the responsibilities of the Principal and the student's family.



Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

- staff training and supervision
- maintenance of medical records
- implementation of prevention strategies
- effective incident notification procedures
- effective communication procedures with the student's parents/carers
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

Discipline for Breach of Policy

Where a staff member breaches this policy St. Joseph's College may take disciplinary action.

Related Policies:

Student Duty of Care (Summary)

Management of Students at Risk of Anaphylaxis

Allergy Awareness

Bites and Stings

Critical Incident (Emergency Situations) Response

First Aid

Medication Administration

Needles and Syringes

Medical Records (Student)

Disability Discrimination