

Asthma Policy

1. Preamble

Mount Ridley P-12 College students and staff have the right to basic first aid in the case of experiencing an asthma attack.

2. Rationale

Students at Mount Ridley P-12 College have the right to feel safe and well, and know that they will be attended to with due care when an asthma attack occurs.

3. Guiding Principles

Mount Ridley P-12 College aims:

- To administer first aid to students when in need in a competent and timely manner;
- To communicate student's health problems to parents when considered necessary;
- To provide supplies and facilities to cater for the administering of first aid related to treating asthma attacks
- To ensure all staff with a duty of care for students are trained to assess and manage an asthma emergency and complete the free one-hour Asthma Education session at least every three years
- To act on advice and warnings from the Department Education and Training's Emergency Management Division associated with a potential thunderstorm asthma activity; and
- To ensure those staff with a direct student wellbeing responsibility such as nurses, PE/sport teachers, first aid and school staff attending camp have completed an accredited Emergency Asthma Management (EAM) course at least every three years

4. Implementation

The College will ensure that an effective asthma first aid management plan is implemented. It will include the following:

- Every student with **asthma** attending the school should have a written Asthma Action Plan, completed by their treating doctor or paediatrician, in consultation with the student's parent/carer. This should be attached to the student's enrolment records and updated annually or more frequently if the student's asthma changes significantly. Students with a documented asthma management plan, will be required to ensure that they have access to Ventolin and a spacer at all times.
 - Where a student has an Asthma Action Plan, the first aid procedures are to be followed immediately. If no Asthma Action Plan is available the steps outlined below should be taken immediately.
 - If the student's own blue reliever puffer is not readily available, one should be obtained from the asthma emergency kit or borrowed from another student or staff member and given without delay. It does not matter if a different brand of reliever medication is used.
- A simple 'warm up period' and premedication, as recommended by the treating doctor, will be provided at least 5-10 minutes before exercise along with 'cool down' period after the exercise as a preventative.
- As suggested by the Victorian Asthma Foundation students whose asthma has been unstable or are unwell, will be recommended to avoid exercise until their asthma stabilises.
- If a student develops exercise induced asthma, they will be asked to immediately cease the activity, rest and take reliever medication. If all symptoms disappear they may be able to resume their exercise activity. However, if symptoms persist, worsen, or reappear, the appropriate Asthma First Aid treatment plan will be put into operation.
- In situations where students attend an overnight school activity, accompanying staff will take the appropriate number of asthma emergency kits, including the child's specific medication.

- Where a student does not have an Asthma Action Plan, the following four step Asthma First Aid Plan will be put into effect:

Step 1 Sit the student upright and give reassurance. Do not leave the student alone.

Step 2 Without delay give 4 separate puffs of a blue reliever medication (*Airomir, Asmol, Epaq or Ventolin*). The medication is best given one puff at a time via a spacer device. If a spacer device is not available, simply use the puffer on its own. Ask the person to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff of medication.

Step 3 Wait 4 minutes. If there is little or no improvement repeat steps 2 and 3.

Step 4 If there is still little or no improvement; call an ambulance immediately (dial 000). State clearly that a student is having 'breathing difficulties.' Continuously repeat steps 2 and 3 while waiting for the ambulance. If at any time the student's condition suddenly worsens, or you are concerned, call an ambulance immediately. Contact the student's parent/carer and doctor immediately, after calling the ambulance. The incident should be recorded if the 4 Step Asthma First Aid Plan is used. Even if the student has a complete recovery from the asthma attack do not leave them alone.

- Blue reliever puffers are safe. An overdose cannot be given by following the instructions outlined. However, it is important to note that the student may experience harmless side effects such as shakiness, tremor or a 'racing' heart.

- Where a student suffers from an asthma attack, the parent/guardian will be informed.

5. Evaluation

As part of the College's review cycle this policy will be reviewed every three years or when changes are made to DET guidelines.

Date policy ratified: 15.03.2022

Date of next review: 2025