ASTHMA POLICY

Location

All Coburg High School policies are located under the 'community tab' on Compass, sub-section 'School Documentation' and then 'Policies.

Language Opportunities

Purpose

To ensure that Coburg High School appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

Objective

To explain to Coburg High School 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 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	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)
laughter or emotions, such as stress	certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)
food chemicals/additives	

Asthma management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrols at Coburg High School:

1. Parents/carers must provide the school with an Asthma Action Plan (including photo) which has been completed by the student's medical practitioner. The plan must outline:
    a. 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
    b. emergency contact details
    c. the contact details of the student's medical practitioner
    d. the student's known triggers
    e. the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack.
2. Parents/carers/medical practitioners need to make the student aware of this plan and help the student learn to manage their asthma, including recognising known triggers.
3. Coburg High School will keep all Asthma Action Plans received pinned to Compass on the Student Profile. They will also be kept in the First Aid room.
4. Some students with severe or high risk asthma may also require a Student Health Support Plan which will include details on:
    a. how the school will provide support for the student
    b. identifying specific strategies
    c. allocating staff to assist the student

    Any Student Health Support Plan will be developed in accordance with Coburg High School's Healthcare Needs Policy.
5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, Coburg High School parents/carers are required to document this on excursion/camp documentation, provide any updated medical information to the school and ensure their child attends with medication
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parents/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan. Parents/carers must also provide updated medication in the event that it is due to expire.
7. School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Action Plans (and Student Health Support Plans) once a year and check expiry dates of medication.

Student asthma kit (for those with an asthma diagnosis)

All students diagnosed with asthma are required to have a student asthma kit at school which contains:

- their own prescribed reliever medication labelled with the student's name
- their spacer
- their Asthma Action Plan

Student asthma kits will be stored in First Aid however students with asthma should also have their own asthma kit available to them at all times at school and during all school activities (for example in backpack or pencil case)

Parents may provide a nebuliser pump and be prepared to administer this for their child's use when:

- The treating doctor verifies that medication can only be delivered effectively through a nebuliser.
- Parents provide their own nebuliser, mask, bowl and tubing and are responsible for this equipment

In extenuating circumstances parents/carers may negotiate with the Principal or First Aid Coordinator for Staff to administer asthma medication with a nebuliser providing the parents/guardian supply their own equipment and are responsible for its maintenance.

Student asthma kit (for those without an asthma diagnosis)

Salbutamol, also known as Ventolin, Asmol or Airomir, is available over the counter from a pharmacy without a need for a prescription from a GP. In cases where students carry asthma medication without an Asthma Action Plan, the following still needs to occur:

- Families should complete a Medication Authority Form, which includes parental consent for the student to carry the medication and/or the school to store medication on a student's behalf.
- The medication should be declared on camp and excursion forms
- The medication must only be used for intended purposes

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	Action
1.	Sit the person upright ● Be calm and reassuring ● Do not leave them alone ● 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). ● If the student's action plan is not immediately available, use the Asthma First Aid as described in Steps 2 to 5.
2.	Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: ● Shake the puffer ● Use a spacer if you have one ● Put 1 puff into the spacer ● Take 4 breaths from the spacer **Remember – Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths**
3.	Wait 4 minutes ● If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above (or give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbiocort inhaler)
4.	If there is still no improvement, call Triple Zero "000" and ask for an ambulance. ● Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack ● 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)
5.	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

Staff will call Triple Zero "000" immediately if:

- the person is not breathing
- the person's asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- the person is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available

- they are not sure if it is asthma
- the person is known to have anaphylaxis

Training for staff

Coburg High School will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
Group 1 **General Staff**	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 online training.	Asthma Australia	Free to all schools	3 years
Group 2 **Specific Staff**	School First Aid officer Staff working with high risk children with a history of severe asthma	*Course in Asthma Awareness 10760NAT* *OR* *Course in the management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace 22556VIC* (accredited)	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by Coburg High School	3 years

Coburg High School will also conduct an annual briefing for staff on asthma management processes at CHS, including

- the procedures outlined in this policy
- the causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma
- how to use a puffer and spacer
- the location of the Asthma Emergency Kits

Asthma Emergency Kit

Coburg High School will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. These kits are in red bags and stored in First Aid. One kit will be kept on school premises in the First Aid room and others will be mobile kits for activities such as:

- yard duty
- camps and excursions.

The Asthma Emergency Kit will contain:

- at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Admol or Ventolin

- at least 2 spacer devices (for single person use only) to assist with effective inhalation of the blue or blue/grey reliever medication (Coburg High School will ensure spare spacers are available as replacements). Spacers will be stored in a dust proof container.
- clear written instructions on Asthma First Aid, including:
    - how to use the medication and spacer devices
    - steps to be taken in treating an asthma attack
- A record sheet/log for recording the details of an asthma first aid incident, such as the number of puffs administered

The school's First Aid officer will monitor and maintain the Asthma Emergency Kits. They will:

- ensure all contents are maintained and replaced where necessary
- regularly check the expiry date on the canisters of the blue or blue/grey reliever puffers and place them if they have expired or are low on doses
- replace spacers in the kits after each use (spacers are single-person use only)
- dispose of any previously used spacers.

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 Coburg 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.

Communication plan

This policy will be available on Coburg High School's website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about Coburg High School's asthma management procedures.

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Coburg 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.

Further Information and Resources

- Asthma Australia: Resources for schools
- Policy and Advisory Library:
    - Asthma
    - Treating an asthma attack
- Other CHS policies available on Compass under School Documentation relating to student health needs

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	2026
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2027