

Thomastown West Primary School Asthma Policy 2024 - 2028

Thomastown West Primary School motto is **Together Working on Pathways to Success**. At Thomastown West Primary School, we want every child to achieve their full potential and we know that parents share this goal. There is a clear link between health and educational achievement.



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Thomastown West Primary School on 03 9465 4317 or thomastown.west.ps@education.vic.gov.au.

PURPOSE

In order to meet the duty of care, obligations specified in the School Policy and Advisory Guide (SPAG) and to ensure the health and wellbeing of all students attending, Thomastown West Primary School recognises the importance of staff education and the implementation of an asthma policy. The school recognises the importance of involvement and engagement with parents and carers of students and the ability of students to self-manage their asthma where appropriate.

Key points within the SPAG, relevant to an asthma management policy, specify that the schools must:

- Obtain a written asthma plan for all students diagnosed with asthma upon enrolment at the school and ensure they are updated at least annually
- Store medical information and medications appropriately
- Ensure students feel safe and supported at school
- Support student healthcare needs
- Provide and maintain at least two asthma emergency kits, with an extra kit required for every 300 students in a large school
- Ensure that key staff (e.g. School Nurses, First Aid Officers, P.E and Sports Teachers) undertake Emergency Asthma Management training and that all other staff with a duty of care for students attend a free asthma education session provided by the Asthma Foundation of Victoria

SCOPE

This policy applies to all:

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

Asthma management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at Thomastown West Primary School:

1. Parents/carers must provide the school with an Asthma Action Plan which has been completed by the student's medical practitioner. The plan must outline:
 - 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 contact details of the student's medical practitioner
 - the student's known triggers
 - the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack.



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2. Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan.
3. Thomastown West Primary School will keep all Asthma Action Plans:
 - In the First Aid room in a folder clearly labelled on top of the filing cabinet
 - A copy is also located in each classroom in their Emergency/OHS wall stand
4. School staff may also work with parents/carers to develop a Student Health Support Plan which will include details on:
 - how the school will provide support for the student
 - identify specific strategies
 - allocate staff to assist the studentAny Student Health Support Plan will be developed in accordance with Thomastown West Primary School Healthcare Needs Policy.
5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, Thomastown West Primary School parents/carers are required to provide any updated medical information.
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parents/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.
7. School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Action Plans (and Student Health Support Plans) once a year at the start of the year.

Student asthma kit

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 (if they use one)

Student asthma kits will be stored in the First Aid room, behind the door in their own pigeonholes.

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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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above (or give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler)
4.	If there is still no improvement, call Triple Zero “000” and ask for an ambulance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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
- if the person’s asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- if the person is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- if they are not sure if it is asthma
- if the person is known to have anaphylaxis

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Training for staff

Thomastown West Primary 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 face-to-face or online training.	Asthma Australia	Free to all schools	3 years
Group 2 Specific Staff	Staff working with high-risk children with a history of severe asthma, or with direct student wellbeing responsibility, (including nurses, PE/sport teachers, First Aid and school staff attending camp)	<i>Course in Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace 22282VIC</i> (accredited) OR <i>Course in Emergency Asthma Management 10392NAT</i> (accredited)	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by Thomastown West Primary School	3 years

Thomastown West Primary School will also conduct an annual briefing for staff on the procedures outlined in this policy:

- the causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma
- identities of the students diagnosed with asthma
- how to use a puffer and spacer
- the location of:
 - the Asthma Emergency Kits
 - asthma medication which has been provided by parents for student use.

Thomastown West Primary School will also provide this policy to casual relief staff and volunteers who will be working with students and may also provide a briefing if the principal decides it is necessary depending on the nature of the work being performed.

Asthma Emergency Kit

Thomastown West Primary School will provide and maintain Asthma Emergency Kits. Kits will be kept on school premises in the First Aid room and mobile kits are found in each building school as part of our schools Emergency Management Plan. Asthma emergency kits are always on hand during:

- Camps and excursions
- Sporting events

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 Thomastown West Primary 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 is logged in the First Aid book in the First Aid room.

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 replace 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 Thomastown West Primary 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.



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Communication plan

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

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Thomastown West Primary 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.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website (or insert other online parent/carer/student communication method)
- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Asthma Australia: [Resources for schools](#)
- Policy and Advisory Library:
 - [Asthma](#)
 - [Treating an asthma attack](#)
- *Thomastown West Primary School First Aid Policy*
- *Thomastown West primary School Anaphylaxis Policy*
- *Thomastown West Primary School Medication Policy*

EVALUATION

- Appropriate written comments on asthma incidents will be maintained and kept in the First Aid room.
- This policy will be reviewed as part of the Thomastown West Primary School four-year policy review cycle.



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Date Implemented	2016; 2020, 2024
Author	Principal Assistant Principal TWPS Leadership Team First Aid Officer
Approved By	School Council
Date Reviewed	October 2024
Responsible for Review	Assistant Principal Principal
Review Date	11/9/2028
References	Victorian Government Schools Policy Advisory Guide

APPENDIX A

STUDENT HEALTH SUPPORT PLAN - Cover Sheet

This plan outlines how the school will support the student's health care needs, based on health advice received from the student's medical/health practitioner. This form must be completed for each student with an identified health care need (not including those with Anaphylaxis as this is done via an Individual Anaphylaxis Management Plan – see [Anaphylaxis](#))

This Plan is to be completed by the principal or nominee in collaboration with the parent/carer and student.

School:	Phone:	
Student's name:	Date of birth:	
Year level:	Proposed date for review of this plan:	
Parent/carer contact information (1)	Parent/carer contact information (2)	Other emergency contacts (if parent/carer not available)
Name:	Name:	Name:
Relationship:	Relationship:	Relationship:
Home phone:	Home phone:	Home phone:
Work phone:	Work phone:	Work phone:
Mobile:	Mobile:	Mobile:
Address:	Address:	Address:
Medical /Health practitioner contact:		
<input type="checkbox"/> General Medical Advice Form - for a student with a health condition <input type="checkbox"/> Condition Specific Medical Advice Form – Epilepsy <input type="checkbox"/> School Asthma Action Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Care Medical Advice Form - for a student who requires support for transfers and positioning <input type="checkbox"/> Condition Specific Medical Advice Form – Cystic Fibrosis <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Care Medical Advice Form - for a student who requires support for oral eating and drinking <input type="checkbox"/> Condition Specific Medical Advice Form – Acquired Brain Injury <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Care Medical Advice Form - for a student who requires support for toileting, hygiene and menstrual health management <input type="checkbox"/> Condition Specific Medical Advice Form – Cancer <input type="checkbox"/> Condition Specific Medical Advice Form – Diabetes		
List who will receive copies of this Student Health Support Plan :		
1. Student's Family 2. Other: _____ 3. Other: _____		



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<p>_____</p>
<p>The following <i>Student Health Support Plan</i> has been developed with my knowledge and input</p> <p>Name of parent/carer or adult/mature minor** student: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>**Please note: Mature minor is a student who is capable of making their own decisions on a range of issues, before they reach eighteen years of age. See: Decision Making Responsibilities for Students</p> <p>Name of principal (or nominee): _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Privacy Statement</p> <p>The school collects personal information so as the school can plan and support the health care needs of the student. Without the provision of this information the quality of the health support provided may be affected. The information may be disclosed to relevant school staff and appropriate medical personnel, including those engaged in providing health support as well as emergency personnel, where appropriate, or where authorised or required by another law. You are able to request access to the personal information that we hold about you/your child and to request that it be corrected. Please contact the school directly or FOI Unit on 96372670.</p>

HOW THE SCHOOL WILL SUPPORT THE STUDENT'S HEALTH CARE NEEDS

Student's name:	
Date of birth:	Year level:
What is the health care need identified by the student's medical/health practitioner?	
Other known health conditions:	
When will the student commence attending school?	
Detail any actions and timelines to enable attendance and any interim provisions:	

Below are some questions that may need to be considered when detailing the support that will be provided for the student's health care needs. These questions should be used as a guide only.

Support	What needs to be considered?	Strategy – how will the school support the student's health care needs?	Person Responsible for ensuring the support
Overall Support	Is it necessary to provide support during the school day?	<i>For example, some medication can be taken at home and does not need to be brought to school.</i>	
	How can the recommended support be provided in the simplest manner, with minimal interruption to the education and care program?	<i>For example, students using nebulisers can often learn to use puffers and spacers at school.</i>	

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	Who should provide the support?	<p><i>For example, the principal should conduct a risk assessment for staff and ask:</i></p> <p><i>Does the support fit with assigned staff duties, the scope of their position, and basic first aid training (see First Aid for Students and Staff)</i></p> <p><i>Are additional or different staffing or training arrangements required?</i></p>	
	How can support be provided in a way that respects dignity, privacy, comfort and safety and enhances learning?	<p><i>For example, detail the steps taken to ensure that the support provided respects the student's dignity, privacy, comfort and safety and enhances learning.</i></p>	
First Aid	Does the medical/health information highlight any individual first aid requirements for the student, other than basic first aid?	<p><i>Discuss and agree on the individual first aid plan with the parent/carer.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure that there are sufficient staff trained in basic first aid (see First Aid for Students and Staff)</i></p> <p><i>Ensure that all relevant school staff are informed about the first aid response for the student.</i></p>	
	Are there additional training modules that staff could undertake to further support the student, such as staff involved with excursions and specific educational programs or activities?	<p><i>Ensure that relevant staff undertake the agreed additional training</i></p> <p><i>Ensure that there are contingency provisions in place (whilst awaiting the staff member to receive training), to facilitate the student's attendance at school.</i></p>	
Complex medical needs	Does the student have a complex medical care need?	<p><i>Is specific training required by relevant school staff to meet the student's complex medical care need?</i></p> <p><i>The school care Program enables students with ongoing complex medical needs to have their health care requirements met safely at school. This program is available to students who would be unable to attend school without the procedure being performed by appropriately trained staff. Following the referral process, RCH nurses will attend your school and provide specialist training to nominated school staff.</i></p> <p><i>Further information about the School care Program may be found in the School care Program Guidelines and Referral form at:</i> www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/schoolcare-program.aspx</p>	
Personal Care	Does the medical/health information highlight a predictable need for additional support with daily living tasks?	<p><i>Detail how the school will support the student's personal care needs, for example in relation to nose blowing, washing hands, toileting care (including menstrual health management and other aspects of personal hygiene)</i></p> <p><i>Would the use of a care and learning plan for toileting or hygiene be appropriate?</i></p>	

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Routine Supervision for health-related safety	Does the student require medication to be administered and/or stored at the School?	<p><i>Ensure that the parent/carer is aware of the school's policy on medication management.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure that written advice is received, ideally from the student's medical/health practitioner for appropriate storage and administration of the medication – via the Department's Medication Authority Form.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure that a medication log or equivalent official medications register is completed by the person administering the taking of the medication.</i></p>	
	Are there any facilities issues that need to be addressed?	<p><i>Ensure the school's first aid room/sick bay and its contents provide the minimum requirements and discuss whether other requirements can be facilitated in this room to meet the student's health care needs.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure the school provides necessary reasonable adjustments to assist a student who requires a wheelchair or other technical support. Discuss requirements and possible modifications with the parent/carer/student.</i></p>	
	Does the student require assistance by a visiting nurse, physiotherapist, or other health worker?	<p><i>Detail who the worker is, the contact staff member and how, when and where they will provide support.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure that the school provides a facility which enables the provision of the health service.</i></p>	
	Who is responsible for management of health records at the school?	<p><i>Ensure that information privacy principles are applied when collecting, using, retaining or disposing of personal or health information.</i></p>	
	Where relevant, what steps have been put in place to support continuity and relevance of curriculum for the student?	<p><i>For example, accommodation in curriculum design and delivery and in assessment for a student in transition between home, hospital and school; for a student's attendance (full-time, part-time or episodically).</i></p>	
Other considerations	Are there other considerations relevant for this health support plan?	<p><i>For example, in relation to behaviour, such as special permission to leave group activities as needed; planned, supportive peer environment.</i></p> <p><i>For example, in relation to the environment, such as minimising risks such as allergens or other risk factors.</i></p> <p><i>For example, in relation to communication, is there a need to formally outline the communication channels between the school, family and health/medical practitioner?</i></p> <p><i>For example, is there a need for planned support for siblings/peers?</i></p>	