



VCAL STUDENT ASTHMA POLICY AND PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

To explain to parents, guardians, staff and students the processes and procedures in place to support students diagnosed as being at risk of suffering from asthma.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all VCAL students who have been diagnosed with asthma or who may require emergency treatment for asthma and their parents or guardians.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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 Skillinvest:

1. Parents or guardians must provide the Skillinvest 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.
2. Parents or guardians should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan.
3. Skillinvest will keep all Asthma Action Plans in a secure location in the relevant Skillinvest First Aid Room/s.
4. Skillinvest staff may also work with parents or guardians to develop a Student Health Support Plan which will include details on:
 - how Skillinvest will provide support for the student
 - identify specific strategies
 - allocate staff to assist the student
5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a Skillinvest camp or excursion, parents or guardians are required to provide any updated medical information.
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent or guardians must notify the Skillinvest and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.
7. Skillinvest staff will work with parents or guardians to review Asthma Action Plans once a year.

Student asthma kit

All students diagnosed with asthma are required to have a student asthma kit at Skillinvest 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 a secure location in the First Aid Room;

OR

Students will be required to keep their asthma kits with them while at Skillinvest.

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

Skillinvest staff will endeavour to follow the Asthma First Aid procedures outlined in the table below.

Skillinvest staff may contact Triple Zero "000" at any time.

Asthma First Aid Procedures

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 Symbiocort 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

Skillinvest will provide and maintain at least three Asthma Emergency Kits. One kit will be kept on Skillinvest premises (in the First Aid Rooms at both Thomas Street and Cheltenham Road Dandenong) and one will be a mobile kit for activities such as camps and excursions.

Asthma Emergency Kits

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. 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.

Members of Skillinvest's OH&S Committee 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 a low on doses
- replace spacers in the Kits after each use (spacers are single-person use only)
- dispose of any previously used spaces.

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.

STAFF TRAINING

Skillinvest will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

- General Staff - Asthma first aid management for education staff (non-accredited)
- VCAL Educators and Support Staff - Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace 22282VIC (accredited) or Course in Emergency Asthma Management 10392NAT (accredited)

MANAGEMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL INFORMATION

Confidential medical information provided to Skillinvest 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 and Procedure will be available on Skillinvest's website so that parents and other members of the Skillinvest community can easily access information about Skillinvest's asthma management procedures.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE EVALUATION & REVIEW

This policy and procedure were last updated Term 3 2019 and is scheduled for review in 2021