Policy Statement

To ensure schools support students diagnosed with asthma and manage asthma sufferers as effectively and efficiently as possible at school.

Prerequisite

- Schools must have, for each student diagnosed with asthma, a written:
  - Asthma Action Plan
- Ensure all staff with a duty of care for students are trained to assess and manage an asthma emergency at least every three years
- Provide equipment to manage an asthma emergency in their asthma first aid kits

Definition

Asthma is a disease of the airways, the small tubes which carry air in and out of the lungs. When you have asthma symptoms the muscles in the airways tighten and the lining of the airways swells and produces sticky mucus. These changes cause the airways to become narrow so that there is less space for the air to flow into and out of your lungs.

Symptoms of asthma may include, but not limited to:
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing [a whistling noise from the chest]
- Tightness in the chest
- A dry, irritating, persistent cough

Symptoms vary from person to person. Triggers:
- Exercise
- Colds/flu
- Smoke
- Weather changes
- Dust and dust mites
- Moulds
- Pollens
- Animals
- Chemicals
- Deodorants/perfumes etc
- Foods and additives
- Emotions
- Certain medications
Implementation

Care must be provided immediately for any student who develops signs of an asthma attack. Children suffering asthma attacks should be treated in accordance with their Asthma Management Plan.

Asthma Management Plan:

- must be completed by the student’s medical/health practitioner in consultation with the parent/guardian
- provided annually by the doctor to the parents/guardians and then to the school

All Asthma Management Plans to be attached to the student’s records and entered on the CASES system. Parents/guardians must be responsible for ensuring their student has an adequate supply of appropriate asthma medication with them at school at all times.

The Plan must include:

- the prescribed medication taken on a regular basis
- as premedication to exercise
- if the student is experiencing symptoms
- emergency contact details
- business and after hours contact details of the student’s medical/health practitioner
- details about deteriorating asthma including:
  - signs to recognise worsening symptoms
  - what to do during an attack
  - medication to be used
- an asthma first aid section and should:
  - specify no less than 4 separate puffs of blue reliever medication with 4 breaths taken per puff every 4 minutes, using a spacer if possible

- Children and adults with mild asthma rarely require medication; however severe asthma sufferers may require daily or additional medication [particularly after exercise].

- Professional development will be provided for all staff on the nature, prevention and treatment of asthma attacks. Such information will also be displayed on the staffroom wall.

- The school will provide, and have staff trained, in the administering of, reliever puffers such as Ventolin, in all first aid kits, including first aid kits on excursions and camps. Clear written instructions on how to use these medications will be included in each first aid kit, along with steps to be taken to treat severe asthma attacks. Each kit will always contain a supply of puffers and spacers and 70% alcohol swabs to clean devices after use.

- The first aid officer will be responsible for checking reliever puffers’ expiry dates.

- A nebuliser pump will not be used by the school staff unless a student’s asthma management recommends the use of such a device, and such a device is supplied by the parent/guardian, and only then if the Plan includes and complies with Asthma Foundation guidelines.

- If no asthma management plan is available, children are to be sat down, reassured, administered 4 puffs of a shaken reliever puffer [Ventolin] delivered via a spacer if available, inhaling 4 deep breaths per puff, wait 4 minutes, if necessary administer 4 more puffs and repeat the cycle. If there is no improvement after the second 4 minute wait period, an ambulance must be called immediately. Parents must be contacted whenever their child suffers an asthma attack.

Resources Required

- Asthma medication [Ventolin] in each of the school’s first aid kits
- Spacer [in the General Office – Sick Bay]

School Council Endorsement Date: 21ST AUGUST 2012