



## **Asthma Policy -PP017**

Plenty River College (the College) is an independent, specialist senior secondary school and a Registered Training Organisation (RTO Code: 22732), delivering the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) and VCE Vocational Major (VM) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificates. It provides a safe and inclusive learning environment for young people aged 15-20 years who may have been disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education.

Plenty River College is a school of opportunities in which all students are empowered to achieve their personal best. Our mission is to assist students to develop life and work skills and achieve in their learning by:

- re-engaging them in education;
- fostering their social and emotional development; and
- providing a supportive and safe environment for them

### **Purpose**

To ensure that Plenty River College appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma and to explain to parents, staff and students the processes and procedures in place to support such students.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to:

- all staff, including casual relief teachers, contractors and volunteers
- all students who have been diagnosed with asthma or who may require emergency treatment for asthma and their parents.

### **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.



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### ***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
- house dust mites
- animals such as cats and dogs
- food chemicals/additives
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)
- pollens or moulds
- smoke (cigarette smoke, wood smoke from open fires, burn-offs or bushfires)
- chemicals such as household cleaning products
- deodorants (including perfumes, aftershave, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)
- weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air
- laughter or emotions, such as stress

### **Asthma management**

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at the College:

1. Parents must provide the school with an Asthma Action Plan which has been completed by the student's medical practitioner. The plan must outline:



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- 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 should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student’s Asthma Action Plan.
  3. All Asthma Action Plans will be kept in the First Aid Room and a copy with the relevant classroom teacher.
  4. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend an excursion parents will be required to provide any updated medical information.
  5. If a student’s asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent must notify the College and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.
  6. College staff will work with parents to review Asthma Action Plans annually.

### Student asthma kit

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

- their own prescribed reliever medication clearly labelled with their name
- their spacer (if they use one)

### Asthma emergency response plan

If a student is having an asthma attack or difficulty breathing for an unknown cause, even if they are not known to have asthma, staff will follow the Asthma First Aid procedures outlined in the table below and on the student’s Asthma Action Plan.

Step	Action
1	Sit the person upright <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be calm and reassuring</li> <li>• Do not leave them alone</li> <li>• 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).</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the student's action plan is not immediately available, use the Asthma First Aid as described in Steps 2 to 5.</li> </ul>
2	<p>Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shake the puffer</li> <li>Use a spacer if you have one</li> <li>Put 1 puff into the spacer</li> <li>Take 4 breaths from the spacer</li> </ul> <p><b>Remember – Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths</b></p>
3	<p>Wait 4 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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)</li> </ul>
4	<p>If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero "000" and ask for an ambulance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack</li> <li>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)</li> </ul>
5	<p>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</p>

Staff will call Triple Zero "000" immediately if:

- the student is not breathing
- if the student's asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- if the student 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

### Training for staff

The College will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Valid for
All staff	School staff with a direct teaching role with students affected by asthma and other	Asthma first aid for schools (free, online training)	Asthma Australia	3 years



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	school staff directed by the Executive Principal after conducting a risk assessment			
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### Asthma Emergency Kit

The College will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. One kit will be kept on school premises in the first aid room and extras will be in each of the First Aid bags for activities such as excursions.

The Asthma Emergency Kit will contain:

- at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Asmol 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 (spare spacers are available as replacements).
- clear written instructions on Asthma First Aid, including:
  - a) How to use the medication and spacer devices
  - b) Steps to be taken in treating an asthma attack
- A record sheet/log for recording the details of an asthma first aid incident.

First aid trained administration staff 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



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- 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 the College 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.

### Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

The College will act on the warnings and advice from Vic Emergency when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high.

### Communication

This policy will be available on our website. It will also be included in staff induction processes and staff training and provided to casual relief staff who will be working with students.

Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Asthma Australia</u> – Asthma Action Plan template</li></ul>
Related Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administration of Medication</li><li>• Care for Ill Students</li><li>• First Aid Policy</li><li>• Health Care Needs</li><li>• Medication Administration Log</li><li>• Medication Authority Form</li></ul>



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<b>Document Number:</b>	PP015	<b>Developed by:</b>	Compliance
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Executive Principal	<b>Approver Name &amp; Role:</b>	PRC Board
<b>Evidence of Approval:</b>	Board Meeting	<b>Version No:</b>	V2025.01
<b>Review Due To:</b>	Internal Audit/Review	<b>Date Approved:</b>	20/10/2025
<b>Next Review Due:</b>	20/10/2026		
<b>Department:</b> Compliance and Governance		School Standards: STD-Care,Safety and Welfare of Students	
		RTO Standards: Guideline 6 – Child Safe Standards	

### Revision Record

Date	Version	Revision description
20/10/2025	V2025.01	Initial Policy