

Ringwood Secondary College

Asthma Policy



Help for non-English speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Ringwood Secondary College on (03) 9870 2002.

Ringwood Secondary College is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation. The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian schools to ensure they are well prepared to keep children and young people safe and protect them from abuse. [Ministerial Order 1359](#) provides the framework for child safety in schools.

Purpose

To ensure that Ringwood Secondary College appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

Objective

To explain to Ringwood Secondary College 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, contractors 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 sometime 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
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)
- deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)

Asthma Management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at Ringwood Secondary College:

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.
- * If a parent does not provide an Asthma Action Plan completed by the student's medical practitioner, the college will use the 4x4x4 Asthma Action Plan to ensure the student has an asthma plan in place.
2. Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan. If no photo is provided, the student's school photo will be used.
 3. Ringwood Secondary College will keep all Asthma Action Plans:
 - In First Aid and an electronic copy will be pinned to the students' Compass profile
 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 student

Any Student Health Support Plan will be developed in accordance with Ringwood Secondary College's Healthcare Needs Policy.

5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, parents/carers are required to provide any updated medical information.
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.

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- School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Action Plans (and Student Health Support Plans) as required.

Student Asthma Kit

All students diagnosed with asthma are required to have quick access to:

- their own prescribed reliever medication labelled with the student's name
- their spacer (if they use one)

Students should carry this with them at all times, not leave it in their bag or locker.

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 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

Training for Staff

First Aid Certificate training is offered to all staff annually. Many college staff have a valid First Aid Certificate, including the college nurse, first aid room staff, camp first aid officers and PE teachers. Ringwood Secondary College will offer the following asthma management training to staff without a First Aid Certificate.

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
General Staff	School staff with a direct teaching role with students affected by asthma and other school staff directed by the principal.	Asthma first aid for schools (non-accredited) One hour online training	Asthma Australia	Free to all schools	3 years

Ringwood Secondary College will conduct half-yearly briefings for teaching staff on:

- 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 medication which has been provided by parents for student use

Ringwood Secondary College 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

Ringwood Secondary College has reliever medication and spacers in all first aid kits around the college and all camp/excursion first aid kits.

The Asthma Emergency Supplies include:

- at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Ventolin
- at least 1 spacer device (for single person use only) to assist with effective inhalation of the blue or blue/grey reliever medication. Ringwood Secondary College 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

The College Nurse will monitor and maintain the First Aid 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 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.

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The blue or blue/grey reliever medication in the First Aid 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 First Aid Kit.

Management of Confidential Medical Information

Confidential medical information provided to Ringwood Secondary 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.

Communication Plan

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

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Ringwood Secondary College 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, including:

- act of advice and warnings from the Department's Emergency Management Division associated with a potential thunderstorm asthma activity and implement a communication strategy to inform the school community and parents/carers
- implement procedures to avoid exposure, such as staying indoors with windows and doors closed
- implement emergency response procedures and follow individual asthma action plans as needed

Communication

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

- available publicly on our school's website
- included in staff induction processes and staff training
- discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- included in transition and enrolment packs
- 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](#)

Policy status and review

Assistant principal is responsible for reviewing and updated the Asthma Policy annually.

Approval

Policy last reviewed	August 2025
Approved by	Rosina Fotia, Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2027