



## Supporting Students with Asthma in the School Setting

### Information for Staff

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- ☞ Be aware of which of your students have asthma. At the beginning of the school year, review the student's **Asthma Action Plan/Emergency Care Plan** with the school nurse. A copy of this plan should be readily available on site, and should be taken on field trips. The student should be identified in the substitute's folder as having asthma.
- ☞ Know the early symptoms/signs of an asthma episode. These may include any of the following: **shortness of breath, chest/throat tightness, coughing, wheezing (high pitched whistling sound).**
- ☞ Encourage students to tell you immediately if they are experiencing asthma symptoms. **Any student experiencing symptoms should be referred to the School Nurse for assessment.**
- ☞ Follow the procedures listed on the student's Asthma Action Plan/Emergency Care Plan if the student develops symptoms/signs of an asthma episode. **Never send a student with asthma symptoms to the health office alone.**
- ☞ **Always make sure the student can readily access his/her rescue inhaler.** It is important that the student or teacher carry the rescue inhaler on field trips or during other activities that don't take place on school grounds. The student must be able to take the appropriate reliever/rescue medicine at the onset of symptoms.
- ☞ Let your school nurse know if asthma symptoms are interfering with learning or activities. Uncontrolled asthma can affect a student's successful learning and participation in physical activities. Inform the School Nurse if you notice lingering cough after colds, cough during/after physical activity, low level of stamina or continued asthma symptoms listed above, even though the child is taking medicine for asthma. Changes in a student's health status should be communicated as soon as possible between school staff and school nurse. Share information provided by parents.
- ☞ If prescribed by a health care provider, a reliever/rescue inhaler should be taken 15-20 before exercise/PE class. Send a student for treatment as soon as possible if they have forgotten to use it. The effects of this treatment last 2-3 hours. Warm up and cool down activities may be helpful for the student with asthma. When asthma is under good control, students should be able to fully participate in athletic activities.
- ☞ Students with asthma may appear drowsy, tired, withdrawn, nervous, jittery, and/or hyperactive due to asthma symptoms or medications used to treat them. Refer concerns to the School Nurse.
- ☞ Create a plan with the student/parent for making up class work missed due to asthma.
- ☞ Reduce asthma triggers in school. This includes chalk dust, odors such as perfume, cleaning or paint fumes, animals, dust mites, mold/mildew and pollen. Make sure the ventilation areas (intake and blower vents) are free of obstruction. Animals, if present, should be kept in cages that are cleaned regularly and are located away from ventilation systems and off carpets. Vacuum and clean carpets, pillows, gym mats and athletic equipment frequently. Throw out unused papers, magazines, or any other accumulations of materials. Review your yearly supply list and choose products that are low odor, non-toxic, and water based.

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