

Teacher Implementation Tips

Tool

Resource: Creating Asthma Friendly Environments

Open communication among teachers, parents/guardians and children with asthma is essential to support students with asthma to be fully engaged and active participants in school. The following implementation tips include activities appropriate for teachers to create and promote asthma friendly schools.

- **Know which students have:**

Be aware of which students in your class have asthma and/or use inhaler medication. Keep copies of important forms for each student with asthma in the classroom to provide easy access for those working in the classroom (for example, volunteers, occasional teachers).

- **Supporting a student with asthma is a collaborative effort:**

Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 161: Supporting Children and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions (Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Diabetes, and/or Epilepsy) in Schools, 2018 requires that school boards work collaboratively with families to develop a *Plan of Care* to help students with asthma. The *Plan of Care* is a form that helps empower and support students with prevalent medical conditions, such as asthma. This form requires participation from the school boards, school staff, educators, parents/guardians and students.

- **Easy access to asthma medication:**

- Encourage students to carry their inhaler medication with them at all times. For students who are not allowed to carry their inhaler, the inhaler medication should be kept in an easily accessible location in the classroom. Typically, most children age seven years or older are capable of deciding when medication is required and have the skills to administer the medication properly.

- Know which students require assistance to use their inhaler.
- Be prepared to assist a student with asthma with the correct method for administering the inhaler when needed. Meet with the parent/guardian at the start of the school year to understand the child's needs for support/assistance.
- **Establish a process for handling worsening asthma:**
 - Know the school-wide emergency plan for handling worsening asthma.
 - Display and review the Lung Health Foundation's [What to do in the event of an Asthma Attack](#) poster in key locations.
 - Know how to support individual students in your class with asthma. Review the *Plan of Care* for each student with asthma. This form contains the student's photograph, emergency contacts, information about the student's asthma triggers and reliever medication and dosing (including where it's located) and how to recognize and respond to asthma symptoms and emergency situations.
- **Identify and reduce common asthma triggers within the school:**
 - Know the asthma triggers for students with asthma in your class. Take action to reduce exposure to asthma triggers whenever possible, with the exception of physical activity.
 - Notify parents/guardians well in advance of field trips and identify types of exposures and activities involved. Ensure that reliever inhalers (usually blue) are easily accessible on field trips and that you know how to handle worsening asthma. Bring copies of students' *Plan of Care* on field trips.
- **Encourage students with asthma to participate in physical activity and outdoor play:**
 - Encourage students with asthma to participate in physical activity, play, exercise and sports. Understand the strategies for supporting children to participate in physical activity.
 - Determine if indoor/outdoor asthma triggers exist and if they need to be avoided. For instance, outdoor triggers that could require modification to the activity include poor air quality.
 - Incorporate a warm-up period and a cool-down period with all strenuous physical activity.

- Permit use of a reliever inhaler (usually blue) 10 to 15 minutes prior to activity, if directed by the student's health care provider.
- **Provide opportunities for asthma education to school staff, parents/guardians, students and volunteers:**
 - Use asthma resources to learn more about managing asthma, especially handling worsening asthma. Participate in educational opportunities provided by the school to learn about asthma.
 - Provide opportunities for students to learn about asthma.
- **Collaborate with others (such as health care providers, public health, parents/guardians and community partners) to create asthma friendly schools:**
 - Inform parents/guardians when students show signs of poorly controlled asthma and worsening asthma.
 - Consult with parents/guardians if you have questions about their child's asthma.