

Appendix 7: Management of Asthma — Teacher Implementation Tips

Open communication between teachers and parents/guardians supports students with asthma. The following implementation tips include activities appropriate for teachers to create/support asthma friendly schools.

Establish a process to identify students with asthma.

- Know which students in your class have asthma and/or use inhaler medication. Keep a copy of the *Individual Student Asthma Management Plan* form for each student with asthma in the classroom to provide easy access for those working in the classroom (e.g., volunteers, occasional teachers).

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. 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 to use an inhaler when needed.

Establish a process for handling worsening asthma.

- Know the school-wide emergency plan for handling worsening asthma. Display the Lung Association - Ontario's poster *Managing Asthma Attacks* (refer to Appendix 2) in key locations. For each student with asthma, review the *Individual Student Asthma Management Plan* form. This form contains the student's photograph, emergency contacts, information about the student's asthma triggers and reliever medication (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. Notify parents/guardians well in advance of field trips and identify 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' *Individual Student Asthma Management Plan* forms on field trips.

Encourage students with asthma to participate in physical activity and outdoor play.

- Determine if indoor/outdoor triggers exist and if they need to be avoided. Incorporate a warm-up period and a cool-down period with all strenuous physical activity. Permit use of 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 handling worsening asthma. Attend educational opportunities provided by the school to learn about asthma. Provide opportunities for students to learn about asthma.

Collaborate with others (i.e. 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.