

## Appendix 8: Management of Asthma — Parents/Guardians of Students with Asthma Implementation Tips

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing the school with up-to-date information about their child's asthma. Information should be provided at the start of each school year/session and when the child's asthma information changes.

Educate your child so that they understand:

- common asthma triggers;
- signs of worsening asthma and when to ask for help;
- the importance of being physically active;
- the importance of carrying medication with them at all times; and
- how to administer medication.

The following includes things you can do to assist in the management of your child's asthma while at school:

### Identify that your child has asthma.

- Tell the school and the teacher that your child has asthma. When the school registration form asks about health information, inform the school about your child's asthma and use of asthma medicines. Consider having your child wear a MedicAlert™ bracelet or similar device to identify that he/she has asthma.

### Ensure your child has easy access to asthma medication.

- Find out about the school's procedure for managing asthma medications and complete the necessary forms (i.e. *Individual Student Asthma Management Plan* form) to ensure your child has easy access to his or her reliever medication. *Ryan's Law (Ensuring Asthma Friendly Schools), 2015* requires schools to provide easy access to asthma inhalers when the necessary forms are completed and with parent/guardian permission for those under 16 years of age. Complete and return required Medication Administration forms. If your child is capable of using his or her own inhaler independently, ensure that your child:
  - has the reliever inhaler (usually blue) accessible at all times (the inhaler needs to be with the student every day at all times); and
  - knows when and how to use the inhaler correctly.
- Make sure that the inhaler is kept in an accessible location so that it is within reach at all times.
- If your child needs help to take the inhaler, provide this information on their *Individual Student Asthma Management Plan* form, and include information about how to give the inhaler medications correctly and review the technique with school staff caring for your child.
- Prepare your child for field trips and discuss any issues with the supervising teacher. Remember to send the reliever medication (usually blue) for your child to take on the field trip.
- Ensure that your child knows how and when to use asthma medication safely. Make sure your child:
  - has his or her name on the medication;
  - does not share the medication with friends;
  - knows when the medication is empty and a new one is needed;

- tells the teacher every time he or she takes the medication; and
- tells a teacher or school staff member if he or she is capable of taking the medication independently or needs help.

### **Establish a process for handling worsening asthma.**

- Complete and return to the school the *Individual Student Asthma Management Plan* form. This form contains your child's photograph (if you have consented), emergency contacts, information about your child's asthma triggers and reliever medication (including where it's located) and how to recognize and respond to asthma symptoms and emergency situations. Pictures should be recent photographs of the head and shoulders, approximately 2 x 2.5" (this form will be posted in the staff room/health room and /or where appropriate, given parent/guardian permission, and in the supply teacher folder to identify students to staff).
- Provide the teacher/coach/recreation leader with a copy of the *Individual Student Asthma Management Plan* form so that he or she will know about your child's triggers, medications and what to do when the asthma gets worse. Review with your child the *Individual Student Asthma Management Plan* form and how to prevent and handle asthma symptoms.

### **Identify and reduce common asthma triggers for your child within the school.**

- Talk to teachers about the triggers that affect your child.

### **Encourage your child to participate in physical activity and play.**

- Talk to your child about the benefits of participating in physical and play. Do not let your child/youth's asthma be a barrier to being active.

### **Provide opportunities for asthma education (i.e., school staff, other parents/guardians, students and volunteers).**

- Be an Asthma Champion and talk to school staff about how to become asthma friendly.

### **Collaborate with others (i.e., health care providers, public health, other parents/guardians and community partners) to create asthma friendly schools.**

- Work with your asthma care provider to ensure that your child's asthma is under good control, that they have a quick relief inhaler for school use and that they have the asthma knowledge and skills to successfully manage his/her asthma at school.