

Asthma Episode Emergency Response Protocol

November 2022

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to provide assistance to a student who is experiencing an asthma episode with possible symptoms of wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and/or breathing difficulty.

Equipment and Supplies:

1. Prescribed quick-relief medication (Albuterol, ProAir, Proventil, Ventolin, etc.). Many students diagnosed with asthma carry their inhaler on their person or in their backpack, as allowed by state law. Students may also keep their medication in the front office. If asthma medication is unable to be found, immediately summon a school staff member who has access to medication.
2. All equipment and supplies necessary for administering asthma medication. For example: spacer (should be with the student's medication) or nebulizer machine (kept in nurse's office).
3. Pulse-oximeter. This is a device used to measure the percentage of oxygen in the blood. It is stored in the nurse's office. If it is determined that a student is having an asthma episode and the nurse is unavailable, send someone to get this device from the office. Goal SpO₂ is > 90%. If SpO₂ is 80-90%, follow the steps below and monitor for improvement. If SpO₂ is < 80% CALL 911.
4. Student's Asthma Action Plan (if available)

Procedures:

First, determine if the student is having a **Mild Asthma Episode** or a **Severe Asthma Episode**.

Mild Asthma Episode: wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, difficulty breathing, student reports needing their inhaler or asthma medication

Severe Asthma Episode: breathing so hard they cannot walk or speak, lips or fingernail beds turn blue, nasal flaring, skin retracting/sucking over child's neck, stomach or ribs with breaths, change in mental status (student is drowsy or confused)

- If it is determined to be a mild asthma episode, do the following:

If the student can safely be moved to the nurse's office, please do so. The student should be escorted to the office by a teacher or another student. If it is not safe to have the student go to the office, notify the school nurse of the situation (in as much detail as possible) and they will come to the student's location.

- ☀ If a nurse is not available-

-Refer to the student's Asthma Action Plan (under attachments in PowerSchool) and follow the instructions given on that plan.

- ☀ If there is no action plan do the following:

- Help student to sit in an upright position
- Allow/assist student to use their rescue medication.
- Send a student or teacher to get pulse oximeter from office.
- Call parents to inform them of current situation and to get guidance on next steps if student does not improve.
- Continue to sit with the student and monitor their condition.
- If symptoms improve after administration of medication- student may return to class and resume activities. Parent should be notified of Asthma episode.
- If symptoms do not improve, follow the steps that were given by the parent/guardian.

☀ If the student does not have rescue medication:

- Encourage student to breathe slowly and relax.
- Contact parent/guardian to notify them of the situation and ask for further guidance.

➤ If it is determined that the student is experiencing a **severe asthma episode**:

Notify the school nurse of the situation immediately (in as much detail as possible) and they will come to the student's location.

☀ If there is no school nurse available:

Administer quick relief medication (if available) and monitor for improvement. If no improvement after 10 minutes- call 911.

☀ If the student does not have rescue medication:

Call 911

******If at any point the student becomes unresponsive. CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.******

Nurse's Procedure:

If the nurse is assessing a student who is thought to be in an asthma episode, the following will occur:

Review asthma action plan.

Perform a focused assessment on the student- including (but not limited to) respiratory assessment, vital sign monitoring and neurological assessment.

Assist the student to use their rescue medication.

Monitor the student for improvement after medication administration.

Notify the parent/guardian of the situation.

If at any time the nurse feels that the student requires a higher level of care, they will call 911 and notify the parents/guardian at that time.

If symptoms improve after administration of medication- student may return to class and resume activities.