

# **MARION COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF ASTHMA IN THE SCHOOLS**

## **Policy Statement**

The Marion County Department of Education recognizes that a clear, concise policy on asthma management in school can have an impact on academic achievement. All schools must have protocols and procedures for children with asthma and evaluate the implementation of these plans on a regular basis. This document outlines the comprehensive and collaborative nature of managing a child's asthma within a school setting.

## **Background on Asthma**

The Tennessee Department of Education, Office of Coordinated School Health reports 51,564 students diagnosed with Asthma and attending Tennessee Schools in the 2009-2010 school year. Asthma was also reported as the 2<sup>nd</sup> most challenging health diagnosis to manage in the school setting. Because asthma is one of the most common chronic childhood illnesses and a major cause of student absences, it is important for schools to adopt a comprehensive, coordinated approach to addressing asthma.

A comprehensive plan includes: management and support systems, appropriate health and mental health services, educational programs for staff and students, appropriate and reasonable environmental remediation and communication systems with home and child clinicians.

These components need to be integrated with community efforts that include the medical and mental health fields, housing and community air quality improvements, and active engagement of families.

This document links with the Medication Policy and Management of Life Threatening Allergic Reaction policies and is further documented and supported in the Marion County School Nurse Protocol and Procedure Manual. This policy builds upon existing asthma best practices including national strategies for addressing asthma from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program.

## **Protocol for Implementation**

### Role of the Parent

- Fill out appropriate asthma information on health form at the time of entry into Marion County Schools.
  
- Complete emergency forms indicating that child has asthma and include emergency numbers.
  
- Meet with the school nurse to discuss the child's asthma as needed

- Review with your child's primary care provider and sign all asthma forms presented by the school nurse. These may include a combination of the following:
  - o Permission for school nurse to communicate with the family and the primary care provider.
  - o Authorization to dispense medication
  - o Consent for child's self administration of asthma medicine (when developmentally appropriate)
  - o The Parent/guardian Asthma Questionnaire
  - o The Asthma Action Plan
- Provide the school with a pharmacy labeled supply of medications, including nebulizer medications, mask and tubing.
- Participate in the Asthma Action Plan for their child with the child's health practitioner and deliver the completed asthma action plan to the school nurse.
- Provide a pager, cell phone or other emergency number/s.
- Will assure that the pre-school and after-school staff have the appropriate information and training.

#### Role of the School Administrator

Provide a **safe and healthy school environment** to reduce asthma triggers by:

- Support faculty, staff and parents in implementing all aspects of the asthma management program including self-management.
- Support the development a school wide policy for management of the school environment which includes, but is not limited to:
  - o Maintaining an active Integrated Pest Management Program
  - o Review of and action on annual school inspections
  - o Use of green cleaners
  - o Enforcement of tobacco policy
- Ensure there is a contingency plan in the case of a substitute nurse, teacher, or food service personnel who is not familiar with the child
- Ensure that the child is placed in a classroom where the teacher is informed about asthma prevention, management and emergency response.
- Review environmental inspections and ensure that all work orders occur in a timely fashion.

- Support the student support team, the school nurse and classroom teacher in identifying children with increased absenteeism in relation to asthma.

#### Role of the Student (where developmentally appropriate)

- Student signs off on self-administration plan guidelines
- Student reports to the school nurse/teacher/office personnel following use of rescue inhaler if able to self-administer and carry their own inhaler

#### Role of the School Nurse

Provide **appropriate school health services** for students with asthma including:

- Procedures to obtain, maintain, and utilize written asthma action plans and/or asthma specific [Individual Health Plans].
- Ensure that all appropriate asthma-related forms listed in the Nurse Protocol and Procedure book are distributed to the parent and/or the primary care provider.
- Make a reasonable attempt (a minimum of two phone calls) to collect all outstanding forms.
- Be familiar with and follow the standard emergency protocol for students in respiratory distress, if they do not have an asthma action plan or Individual Health Plan in place.
- Procedures to ensure immediate access to asthma medications at all times as prescribed by a medical professional and approved by a parent or legal guardian, including provisions for student self-medication.
- Develop a plan for child management in classroom, lunchroom, and playground.
- Ensure that all other staff members (including coaches, bus drivers) who have contact with children with asthma are familiar with their Individual Health Care Plans on a need-to-know basis. Teachers should be contacted individually rather than lists posted.
- Conduct in-service training and education for appropriate staff regarding asthma symptoms, risk reduction procedures, and emergency procedures. This information should be reviewed annually, preferably in the beginning of the school year.
- Ensure that there is a contingency plan in place in all school-related venues where substitutes are utilized.
- Communicate with parents on a regular basis to discuss issues relating to plan.
- Maintain child's medications as per the medication policy.

### Role of the Teacher

- Maintain a discrete list of all students in classroom with asthma and their triggers.
- Avoid know triggers such as, but not limited to, warm blooded animals, air fresheners, perfumes, cleaning agents, etc.
- Participate in asthma awareness professional development.
- Inform volunteers, student teachers, aides, specialists and substitute teachers about the child's asthma needs.
- Provide school nurse with adequate warning about school-sponsored off-site activities.
- Notify nurse of any concerns.

### Role of Off-site Staff

- Maintain a list of all students with severe persistent asthma.
- Coaches will be told of any students on their teams who have asthma and will be trained in asthma awareness and maximizing athletic performance.
- Allow responsible student to self medicate during practices and sports events.
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- Inform substitutes about the child's food/other allergies and necessary safeguards by both verbal communication and in an organized, prominent and accessible written format.

### **Details of management and all necessary forms are available in the Nurses' Protocol and Procedure Manual**

For more information about this circular, contact:

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