

## Asthma Management Policy

*Vision: Grow - Flourish - Succeed*

*Mission: Together we inspire creative, mindful learners who value diversity, support one another and strive for success.*

### 1. Introduction

#### What Is Asthma?

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that affects the airways. Children with asthma have airways that are inflamed. Inflamed airways are very sensitive, so they tend to react strongly to things called "triggers." Triggers are either allergy-causing substances, such as dust mites, mold, and pollen; or irritants, such as cigarette smoke and fumes from paint and cleaning fluid. When the airways react to a trigger, they become narrower due to swelling and squeezing of the airways by the small muscles around them. This results in less air getting through to the lungs and less air getting out.

Effective management can control asthma and it can be controlled with proper medical diagnosis and management. It cannot be cured. With appropriate asthma care, students with asthma should have minimal or no asthma symptoms. When their asthma is managed effectively, they can safely participate in all school activities. New treatment approaches emphasize preventing episodes by using medication appropriately and by protecting the airways from exposure to the triggers that cause inflammation.

### 2. Purpose of policy

GEMS Founders School, Dubai recognises that asthma is a widespread, serious but a controllable condition. Students with asthma are encouraged to achieve their potential in all aspects of school life by having a clear policy that is understood by school staff and students.

### 3. Aims and objectives

- GEMS Founders School, Dubai aims to ensure that students with asthma can and do participate fully in all aspects of school life, including art lessons, Physical Education, day trips and other out of school activities.
- It is recognized that students with asthma always need immediate access to reliever inhalers while ensuring that all staff who encounter students with asthma know what to do in the event of an asthma attack.
- An online record is kept of all students with asthma and the medications they take. This policy will outline how each of the above points will be implemented in school.

### 4. Assessment and recording

Symptoms of asthma include acute episodes of:

- Coughing
- Wheezing (a whistling or squeaky sound during breathing)
- Chest tightness
- Shortness of breath



Symptoms can vary in severity; they can be mild or moderate and affect activity levels, or they can be severe and life threatening. Asthma triggers and symptoms vary from one person to another. Some children have asthma symptoms only occasionally, while others have symptoms almost all the time. With proper control of asthma, children should have minimal or no asthma symptoms.

### Common asthma triggers

Although triggers that cause an asthma episode vary among individuals, there are several common triggers.

- Allergens such as pollen, animal dander, dust mites, cockroaches, and molds
- Irritants such as cold air, perfume, pesticides, strong odors, weather changes, cigarette smoke, and chalk dust
- Respiratory infections such as a cold or the flu
- Physical exercise, especially in cold weather

### Record keeping

#### Health Declaration and Individualised Care Plans

Parents are required to complete an online **DHA Health Form** of their child in school to disclose any existing health conditions. For students diagnosed with asthma, parents will be asked to provide a comprehensive individualised care plan from their treating physician. This plan should be reviewed and discussed with the class teacher, Head of Year, STS (in case of bus user) and the school medical team.

Based on this information, the school medical team will develop an **Individualised Health Care Plan (IHCP)** in collaboration with the parents. The IHCP will be maintained in the student's health record and shared with the class teacher and other relevant caregivers within the school to ensure appropriate support.

The IHCP must be reviewed and updated annually, or more frequently if there are any changes in the student's condition, in accordance with Dubai Health Authority (DHA) guidelines.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

Managing asthma relies on:

- Taking medication exactly as prescribed. A person with asthma may need two types of medications one type is used to relax the airways and is taken as needed when symptoms occur. The other is used daily to decrease the inflammation in the airways and prevent episodes from occurring.
- Monitoring students with asthma. A peak flow meter which helps to keep track of how well air is moving through the lungs and is helpful for some patients with asthma. When the airways become narrow from inflammation, the peak flow measurement will be lower.
- Recognizing the early warning signs of asthma. These signs may include coughing, shortness of breath, and increased breathing rate.
- Avoiding or controlling triggers.
- Intervening with proper therapy when early signs are recognized.
- Forming a partnership among the student, parent(s) or guardian(s), the physician, and school staff. The school team helps students manage their asthma by supporting development and implementation of an asthma management plan.

Immediate access to reliever medicine is essential.

- Students with asthma are encouraged to carry their reliever inhaler as soon as their parent, treating Doctor and Class Teacher agree they are competent enough.



- The reliever medications of younger children can be kept with their class teacher and a spare inhaler in the School Clinic.
- Parents are advised to ensure that reliever medication are in date and labelled with their child's name and class.
- The school nurse will administer asthma medication to younger students.

#### **Responsibilities of school staff:**

- Understand the school asthma policy.
- Know which students they encounter have asthma.
- Allow students with asthma to have immediate access to their reliever inhaler.
- Ensure that students have their asthma medication when going on a school trip.
- Ensure that students who have been unwell can catch up.
- Monitor students with asthma that may experience bullying.
- Liaise with a student's parents or guardians, the School medical team and Special Educational Needs Coordinator if a child is falling behind on school work because of their asthma.

#### **The School Medical Team has a responsibility to:**

- Implement/update the School Asthma Policy.
- Provide information for school staff in managing asthma.
- Ensure that all students with asthma have an Individual Asthma Care Plan and that this information is communicated to all staff coming in to contact with the student with asthma.

#### **Students have a responsibility to:**

- Treat all students equally.
- Ensure that a member of staff is called if any student is having an asthma attack.
- Know how to gain access to their own medicine in an emergency and know how to take their medicine effectively.

#### **Parents have a responsibility to:**

- Inform the school promptly if their child has asthma.
- Complete the Health Form and provide all necessary medical documentation in a timely manner. Collaborate with the School Nurse or Physician to develop an Individual Asthma Care Plan.
- Supply the school with all required medications for use during school hours and on school trips. Ensure that medications are current, clearly labelled with the child's name and class.
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to the child's medication or asthma care plan

#### **Teachers have a responsibility to:**

- Class Teachers follow the same principles as above for games and activities involving physical activities. Taking part in sports, games and activities is an essential part of school life for all pupils.
- Students with asthma are encouraged to participate fully in all Physical Education lessons.
- Teachers will remind students whose asthma is triggered by exercise to take their reliever inhaler before the lesson and if a student needs to use their inhaler during a lesson they should be encouraged to do so.



## 6. General strategy

### Asthma Attack Response Procedures

- All staff who interact with students with asthma are trained and aware of the procedures to follow in the event of an asthma attack.
- Assist the student to rest and sit in a comfortable position that aids breathing.
- Help the student to use their prescribed medication, typically an inhaler.
- Notify the school medical team immediately.
- The school medical team will assess the student’s vital signs to determine the severity of the attack.
- Administer oxygen therapy as directed by the school physician’s standing orders.
- If breathing difficulties persist after inhaler use, call emergency services by dialing 998 immediately or send someone to make the call.
- All asthma attack responses will follow the protocols outlined in the student’s Individualised Health Care Plan (IHCP).

## 7. Monitoring and review

This policy has been reviewed and approved by the teaching staff and leadership teams at GEMS Founders School, Dubai for implementation.

Signed .....  .....  
**School Doctor**

Date ..... 22 August 2025.....

Signed .....  .....  
**Manager School Operations**

Date ..... 22 August 2025 .....

Signed .....  .....  
**Executive Principal/CEO/GEMS Executive Vice President- Education**

Date ..... 22 August 2025 .....

**Next policy review date:**  
February 2026