

Policy Number	Ratification Date	Reviewed	Review Date
5	2017	2016	2020



ASTHMA

Rationale

- Asthma affects up to one in four primary aged children, one in seven teenagers and one in ten adults. It is important therefore for all staff members to be aware of asthma, its symptoms and triggers, and the management of asthma in a school environment. Asthma attacks involve the narrowing of airways making it difficult to breathe. Symptoms commonly include difficulty breathing, wheezy breathing, dry and irritating cough, tightness in the chest and difficulty speaking.
- Children and adults with mild asthma rarely require medication; however severe asthma sufferers may require daily or additional medication (particularly after exercise).

Aim

- To manage asthma and asthma sufferers as effectively and efficiently as possible at school.

Action

- Parents of children diagnosed with asthma are asked to provide to the School Nurse a copy of their child's asthma management plan on enrolment or when a plan has been prepared.
- All students with asthma must have an up to date (annual) written asthma management plan consistent with Asthma Victoria's requirements completed by their doctor or paediatrician. Appropriate asthma plan proformas are available at www.asthma.org.au and a copy is attached to this policy as appendix 1.
- Asthma plans will be retained by the School Nurse in the student medical folder.
- The School Nurse will provide an annually updated list of students with asthma management plans on record to staff including specialists, aides and class teachers. Class teachers are responsible for having this medical information available at the front of their roll for days when Casual Relief Staff are teaching.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their children have an adequate supply of appropriate asthma medication (including a spacer) with them at school at all times.
- Professional development will be provided for all staff on the nature, prevention and treatment of asthma attacks in line with the recommendations of the asthma friendly schools program. Such information will also be displayed in the First Aid Centre and on the staff intranet in the health and wellbeing folder.
- The school will provide, and have staff trained in the administering of, reliever puffers (blue canister) such as Ventolin, Airomir, Asmol or Bricanyl and spacer devices in all first-aid kits, including kits on excursions and camps. Clear written instructions on how to use these medications and devices will be included in each first aid kit, along with steps to be taken to treat severe asthma attacks. Kits will contain 70% alcohol swabs to clean devices after use..
- The School Nurse will be responsible for checking all reliever puffer expiry dates.
- A nebuliser pump will not be used by the school staff unless a student's asthma management plan recommends the use of such a device, and only then if the plan includes and complies with the Vic Government School's Reference Guide – Asthma Medication Delivery Devices.
- All devices used for the delivery of asthma medication will be cleaned appropriately after each use.
- Intervention must be provided immediately for any student who develops signs of an asthma attack.
- Children suffering asthma attacks should be treated in accordance with their asthma plan.
- If no plan is available children are to be sat down, reassured, administered 4 puffs of a shaken reliever puffer (blue canister) delivered via a spacer – inhaling 4 deep breaths per puff, wait 4 minutes, if necessary administer 4 more puffs and repeat the cycle. An ambulance must be called if there is no improvement after the second 4-minute wait period, or if it is the child's first known attack. Parents must be contacted whenever their child suffers an asthma attack.
- The school is registered as an asthma friendly school and will ensure that this registration remains current on a three yearly basis and will undertake as required the requirements for maintaining this registration– www.asthmafriendlyschools.org.au

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.