



## ASTHMA POLICY

### RATIONALE

Asthma affects up to one in nine children and one in ten adults. It is important 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).

### GOALS

- ensure that the school is compliant with asthma policies and procedures as outlined in the *School Policy and Advisory Guide* and the Asthma Foundation Victoria <https://www.asthmaaustralia.org.au/vic/home>
- provide a safe and supportive environment in which students at risk of asthma can participate equally in all aspects of the student's schooling
- raise awareness about asthma and the school's Asthma Management Policy in the school community
- engage with parents/carers of students at risk of asthma in assessing risks, develop risk minimisation strategies and management strategies for the student
- ensure that each staff member has adequate knowledge about asthma and the school's policy and procedures in responding to a student suffering asthma

### GUIDELINES

- Professional development will be provided for all staff on the nature, prevention and treatment of asthma attacks (such information will be discussed at a staff meeting and posters will also be displayed in the First Aid Room)
- 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. It is the responsibility of parents/caregivers to inform the school if the child's plan has changed. Appropriate asthma plan proformas are available from the school office or at <https://www.asthmaaustralia.org.au/vic/home>. The plan must include:

- the usual medical treatment
- the prescribed medication taken e.g.:
  - on a regular basis when the student is 'well', or
  - as premedication prior to exercise
- emergency contact details
- contact details of the student's medical/health practitioner
- details about deteriorating asthma including:
  - signs to recognise worsening symptoms
  - what to do during an attack
  - medication to be used
- an asthma first aid section and should:
  - specify no less than 4 separate puffs of blue reliever medication every 4 minutes.

**Note:** It is recommended that if the plan has less than the required number of puffs per minute period it should be sent back to the parent/guardian and doctor for review.

- updated separate Camp Asthma Management Forms are required before a student who has asthma may attend camp. When embarking on an overnight camp the school should ensure parents provide enough medication for their child
  - asthma plans will be kept in the First Aid Room and in the student's classroom
  - parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their child has an adequate supply of appropriate asthma medication with them at school
  - the school will provide, and have staff trained in, the administering of, reliever puffers such as Ventolin and spacer devices in all first-aid kits, including kits on excursions and camps; kits will contain swabs to clean devices after their use
  - the First Aid staff officer will be responsible for checking reliever puffer expiry dates and to ensure students have up to date asthma plans at school
  - students will need to have their medication available to them at any time as they may need to use it without prior warning
  - an ambulance will be called for a student experiencing a severe asthma attack
  - parents will be notified should their child experience a severe asthma attack
  - all severe asthma attacks will be documented using the school's first aid documentation procedure
  - immediate care must be provided to any student who develops signs of an asthma attack
  - children suffering asthma attacks should be treated in accordance with their asthma plan
  - parents may provide a nebuliser pump and be prepared to administer this for their child's use when:
    - the treating Doctor verifies that medication can only be delivered effectively through a nebuliser
    - parents provide their own nebuliser, mask, bowl and tubing and are responsible for this equipment
- In extenuating circumstances parents/carers may negotiate with the Principal or First Aid Co-ordinator for staff to administer asthma medication with a nebuliser providing the parents/guardian supply their own equipment and are responsible for its maintenance.

***If medication is to be stored at school***

- parents/carers must provide the medication and ensure that it is labelled with the name of the drug, the dosage, frequency of use and the child's name
- medication stored at school should be renewed when expiry date is reached. The First Aid Coordinator to be responsible for alerting parents to pending expiry date
- the school will endeavour to reduce asthma triggers such as having regular cleaning and dusting and examine cleaning products that could potentially impact students with asthma

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's cyclic review strategy.

**Status:** Reviewed February 2018

**Ratified:** March 2018

**Next Review:** February 2021