



ASTHMA POLICY

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).

AIMS:

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

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Professional development will be provided annually for all staff on the nature, prevention and treatment of asthma attacks. Such information will also be displayed on the staffroom wall.
- 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. Clearly 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.
- All students with asthma should 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 proforma are available at www.asthma.org.au.
- Asthma plans will be attached to the student's records for reference.
- 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.
- The first aid staff member will be responsible for checking 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 section 4.5.7.3 of the SOTF Reference Guide – Asthma Medication Delivery Devices.
- All devices used for the delivery of asthma medication will be cleaned appropriately after each use. See 4.5.7.4 SOTF Reference Guide – Cleaning of Delivery Devices.
- Care 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 seated, reassured, administered four puffs of a shaken reliever puffer (blue canister) delivered via a spacer – inhaling 4 deep breaths per puff, wait four minutes, if necessary administer four more puffs and repeat the cycle. An ambulance must be called if there is no improvement after the second four-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 first aid person in charge of each school camp and excursion will ensure that asthma medication equipment is taken on each school camp and excursion.

EVALUATION:

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