



Purpose

This document includes information on the implementation and operation of a model policy for the best practice management of asthma in Victorian schools. It is recommended that in situations where policy alterations are required, the Principal of the school seeks the advice of The Asthma Foundation of Victoria.

Statement

Asthma is a chronic health condition affecting approximately 10% of Australian children and teenagers. Asthma is one of the most common reasons for child admissions to hospital and missed days of school. Asthma flare ups can commonly occur while attending schools, particularly in February and May. In order to meet the duty of care obligations specified by the School Policy and Advisory Guide (SPAG) and to ensure the health and wellbeing of all students attending, (insert name of school) recognises the importance of staff education and the implementation of an asthma policy. The school recognises the importance of involvement and engagement with parents and carers of students and the ability of students to self-manage their asthma where appropriate.

Key points within the SPAG, relevant to an asthma management policy, specify that schools must:

- Obtain written asthma plan for all students diagnosed with asthma upon enrolment at the school and ensure they are updated at least annually
- Complete a Health Support Plan for students with an identified health care need
- Store medical information and medications appropriately - Ensure that students feel safe and supported at school
- Provide and maintain at least two asthma emergency kits, with an extra kit required for every 300 students in a large school
- Ensure that key staff (e.g. School Nurses, First Aid Officers, P.E. and Sport Teachers) undertake accredited Emergency Asthma Management (EAM) training and that all other staff with a duty of care for students attend a free asthma education session provided by The Asthma Foundation of Victoria

Scope

- To ensure the whole school community (principals, staff, volunteers, parents and carers and students) are aware of their obligations and best practice management of asthma in the school setting
- To provide the necessary information to effectively manage episodes of asthma within the school

Responsibilities

The Principal/Senior Management will:

- Provide staff with a copy of the school's asthma management policy and ensure staff are aware of asthma management strategies upon employment at the school
- Provide asthma education and first aid training for staff as required
- Provide parents and carers with a copy of the school's asthma policy upon enrolment of their child
- Identify students with asthma during the enrolment process and provide parents and carers with a blank asthma plan to be completed and signed by the child's medical practitioner and returned to the school
- Ensure Health Support Plans are completed for students with asthma
- Where possible, ensure that all students with asthma have a current written asthma plan (must be updated at least annually)
- Ensure a School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Form is completed by parents/carers for offsite activities where possible,

- Ensure the parents and carers of all students with asthma provide reliever medication and a spacer (and a face mask if required) at all times their child attends the school
- Implement an asthma first aid procedure consistent with current national recommendations and all staff are aware of the asthma first aid procedure
- Ensure adequate provision and maintenance of asthma emergency kits for the school and that each asthma emergency kit contains reliever medication, two spacer devices, instructions outlining the first aid procedure and a record form
- Ensure that reliever medications within the asthma emergency kits are replaced regularly and have not expired, and that spacers are replaced after each use
- Facilitate communication between management, staff, parents and carers and students regarding the school's asthma management policy and strategies
- Promptly communicate to parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students attending the school
- Identify and minimise, where possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students
- Ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in all activities safely and to their fullest abilities

Staff will:

- Be aware of the school's asthma management policy
- Be aware of the asthma first aid procedure
- Be aware of students with asthma and where their medication and personal spacers are stored
- Participate in Health Support Plan completion as required
- Attend asthma education and training sessions when required
- Be aware of where to access written asthma plans, School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Forms, and asthma emergency kits
- Identify and minimise, where possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students
- Ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in activities safely and to their fullest abilities
- Promptly communicate to the principal, parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students enrolled in the school

Parents and Carers will:

- Inform the school if their child has asthma upon enrolment
- Read the school's asthma management policy
- Participate and sign student Health Support Plans as required
- Provide a signed written asthma plan to the school, and ensure that it is updated at least yearly
- Provide a School Camp or Excursion Medical Update form as required
- Provide the school with their child's reliever medication along with a spacer (required for 'puffer' medication) for all times the child is attending the school, unless the child is carrying the medication and spacer for self-management purposes
- Ensure that if their child is self-managing their asthma correctly the child carries their reliever medication and spacer at all times
- Promptly communicate all medical and health information relevant to their child, to the principal and staff of the school
- Communicate any changes to their child's asthma or any concerns about the health of their child

Students will:

- Immediately inform staff if they experience asthma symptoms
- Inform staff if they have self-administered any asthma medication
- Go straight to the office (or send for assistance) when they require their medication

Asthma First Aid

Follow the written first aid instructions on the student's Asthma Action/Care Plan. If no specific and signed instructions are available, the instructions are unclear, or the person does not have an Asthma Action/Care Plan, **begin the first aid procedure immediately (as authorised by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development).**

Call emergency assistance to attend (000) IF:

- the person's asthma symptoms are severe
- the person suddenly stops breathing
- the person's asthma symptoms continue to worsen
- there is no Asthma Action/Care Plan for the person
- blue/grey reliever medication is not available
- you are unsure what is causing the breathing difficulty

Related Legislation

School Policy and Advisory Guide, Department of Education and Training
(2011) www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/spag/default.htm

Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010), National Health and Medical Research Council, [www.nhmrc.gov.au/ files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/cd33_infection_control_healthcare_0.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/cd33_infection_control_healthcare_0.pdf)

Reference

This policy is from the Victorian School Asthma Policy.

<file:///Users/bobbiecameron/Downloads/Victorian%20Schools%20Model%20Policy%20Version%204.pdf>

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools three year review cycle.