



Asthma Management Policy

Background

- Symptoms of asthma may include, but are not limited to shortness of breath, wheezing (a whistling noise from the chest), tightness in the chest, a dry, irritating, persistent cough. Symptoms vary from person to person.
- Triggers can include exercise, colds/flu, smoke (cigarette smoke, wood smoke from open fires, burn-offs or bushfires), weather changes, dust and dust mites, moulds, pollens, animals, chemicals, deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and deodorant sprays), foods and additives, certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories) and emotions.
- Schools should have a whole school policy to manage asthma that addresses staff asthma awareness training, first aid kits content and maintenance, medication storage and management of confidential medical information.
- Schools must provide equipment to manage an asthma emergency in their Asthma First Aid Kits
- All school staff has a duty of care in regard to the wellbeing of students.

Purpose

- To ensure Werribee Primary School supports students diagnosed with asthma.
- To ensure a compliant Asthma Management Plan is developed for each such child.

Definition

"Asthma is a disease of the airways, the small tubes which carry air in and out of the lungs. When you have asthma symptoms the muscles in the airways tighten and the lining of the airways swells and produces sticky mucus. These changes cause the airways to become narrow, so that there is less space for the air to flow into and out of your lungs." (National Asthma Council 2011)

Implementation

- The school has developed a mandatory prerequisite *Health Needs Policy*.
- For each student diagnosed with asthma, the Asthma Foundation Victoria's School Asthma Action Plan must be completed by the student's medical/health practitioner in consultation with the parents/guardians and provided to the school annually.
- The plan must include:
 - the prescribed medication taken:
 - on a regular basis
 - as premedication to exercise
 - if the student is experiencing symptoms.
 - emergency contact details
 - business and after hours 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, with four breaths taken per puff every four minutes, using a spacer if possible. If the plan specifies less than the required number of puffs per minute it will be sent back to the parent/guardian and doctor for review.
- The school will ensure that all staff with a duty of care for students is trained to assess and manage an asthma emergency and complete the free one-hour Asthma Education session at least every three years.
- At Werribee Primary School this will be all staff, teaching and non-teaching. New staff will receive training as part of the induction process.
- The school will ensure those staff with a direct student wellbeing responsibility such as First Aid Officer, PE/Sport teachers, first aid and camp organisers have completed the Emergency Asthma Management (EAM) course at least every three years.



- The school will provide asthma emergency kits amongst the first aid supplies. Please refer to Asthma First Aid Kits in the related policies referenced below. Parent supplied asthma medication will be stored separately from the kits.
- The school will endeavour to reduce asthma triggers by
 - mowing school grounds out of hours
 - planting a low allergen garden
 - limiting dust, for example by having the carpets and curtains cleaned regularly and out of hours
 - examining the cleaning products used in the school and their potential impact on students with asthma
 - conducting maintenance that may require the use of chemicals, such as painting, during school holidays
 - turning on fans, air conditioning and heaters out of hours when being used for the first time after a long period of non-use.
- The school will request parents to provide sufficient asthma medication for students when attending school camps or other overnight activities.
- If a student is diagnosed with Exercise Induced Asthma (EIA), staff will ensure adequate time is allowed for reliever medication before the activity and cooling down after the activity. If a student has an asthma attack during exercise, the student will cease the activity and the Student's Asthma Action Plan will be followed.
- The school will regularly communicate with parents about the student's development, successes, changes and any health concerns and if an attack occurs.
- Please refer also to the school's *Health Care Needs Policy*, *Duty of Care Policy* and the *Parental Responsibilities Policy*.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update early September 2014).

When First Developed/Reviewed - DET School Policy Advisory Guide > A-Z Index:
October 2014

This policy was ratified by School Council on 18 October 2016

Next review Due: August 2019

References:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/soaghealth/pages/conditionsasthma.aspx
www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/asthmaattack.aspx
www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/asthma.aspx