

ASTHMA POLICY

This policy was adapted from the Asthma and Victorian Schools Model Policy, provided by 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 exacerbations can commonly occur while attending schools particularly in February and May.

In order to meet the duty of care obligations specified in the School Policy and Advisory Guide (SPAG) and to ensure the and health and wellbeing of all students attending, Concord 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 the schools must:

- Obtain a written asthma plan for all students diagnosed with asthma upon enrolment at the school and ensure they are updated at least annually
- Store medical information and medications appropriately
- Ensure students feel safe and supported at school
- Support student healthcare needs
- 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 Sports Teachers) undertake Emergency Asthma Management 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 the best practice management of asthma in a 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 schools 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 management policy upon enrolment of their child
- Identify students with asthma during enrolment process and provide parents and carers with a written asthma plan completed and signed by the child's medical practitioner
- 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 facemask if required) at all times their child attends 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 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

**THOMASTOWN WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL
POLICY**

- Identify and minimize, where possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students
- Ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in anyway
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in all activities safely and to their fullest abilities

Staff will:

- Be aware of the schools 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
- Attend asthma education 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 minimize, 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 activates safely and to their fullest abilities
- Promptly communicate to the principal, parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students enrolled at the school

Parents and carers will:

- Inform the school if their child has asthma upon enrolment
- Read the schools asthma management policy
- Provide a signed written asthma plan to school, and ensure it is updated at least yearly
- Provide a school camp and or excursion update form as required
- Provide the school with their child’s reliever medication along with a spacer for all times the child is attending school, unless the child is carrying 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 any health information relevant to their child, to the principal, first aid officer 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 is they have self-administered any asthma medication
- Carry asthma medication and a spacer with them at all times (if self-managing their asthma)

ASTHMA FIRST AID

Follow the written first aid instructions on the students 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 authorized by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development).

Call emergency assistance to attend (000) IF:

- The personas asthma symptoms are severe
- The person suddenly stops breathing
- The persons 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

Recognizing an Asthma Attack:

Mild	Moderate	Severe
Talk in Sentences	Shortened Sentences	Few words per breath
Cough	Persistent cough	Persistent cough
Soft wheeze	Loud wheeze	Wheeze may be absent
Minor difficulty breathing	Difficulty breathing	Gasping for breath/distress
Tightness in chest	Tightness in chest	Pale, sweaty, blue lips
Young children may complain of a sore tummy	Young children may complain of a sore tummy	Muscle exertion

Asthma Emergency kits:

Asthma emergency kits should contain:

- Reliever medication
- 2 x small volume spacer devices
- Record form and asthma first aid instruction card

Please note that it is a recommendation of the Asthma Foundation of Victoria that spacers and face masks are single use only. It is essential to give at least two spacers contained in each first aid kit and that spacers and face masks are replaced each time they are used.

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

Forms mentioned in this policy are available to download free of charge from the Resources section of The Asthma Foundation of Victoria Website at www.asthma.org.au

RELATED LEGISLATION

School Policy and Advisory Guide, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (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