



ASTHMA POLICY

Rationale

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. 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.

Purpose

In order to meet the duty of care obligations specified by the School Policy and Advisory Guide and to ensure the health and wellbeing of all students attending, St Joseph's Wonthaggi 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. This policy aims 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 the school setting - To provide the necessary information to effectively manage episodes of asthma within the school.

Definitions

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. Severe asthma sufferers may require daily or additional medication particularly after exercise.

Implementation

- Asthma education is provided for all school staff.
- Asthma Action Plans for each student are actively encouraged and kept in the school Sick Bay, in the allocated folder and a copy is also kept in the relevant classroom Medical Notes display book.
- Asthma First aid posters are on display in the Sick Bay.
- Students with asthma are encouraged to have their medications readily and are safely stored at all times. These are clearly labelled with the student's name.
- A plan is in place for managing asthma during sporting activities, excursions and camps.
- A blue reliever puffer and spacer device are available for emergency use at school and are always taken on excursion by class teachers in the first aid backpack.
- The school's policy is to require students to use a spacer device when taking their asthma medication.
-

Responsibilities:

The Principal/Senior Management will:

- Request a School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Form is completed by parents/carers for offsite activities where possible,
- Request 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, a spacer device, 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
- 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
- Provide a signed written asthma plan to the school, and ensure that it is updated regularly
- 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
- Carry asthma medication and a spacer with them at all times (if self-managing their asthma)

Asthma Emergency Kits will include:

- A blue reliever puffer
- A spacer
- Clear written instructions in how to use these medications and devices, plus the steps to be taken in treating an acute asthma attack
- Alcohol swabs to clean devices after use
- Record form

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's ongoing review cycle or as required.

Reviewed: April 2022