



Asthma

POLICY

Rationale

According to Asthma Australia around 1 in 9 Australians have asthma, equating to about 2.5 million people. It is therefore important for all staff members to be aware of asthma, its symptoms and triggers, and to ensure that Cardinia Primary School appropriately support students diagnosed with asthma.

Asthma

Asthma is a long term lung condition. People with asthma have sensitive airways in their lungs which react to triggers, causing a 'flare-up'. In a flare-up, the muscles around the airway squeeze tight, the airways swell and become narrow and there is more mucus. This makes it hard to breathe. An asthma flare-up can come on slowly (over hours, days or even weeks) or very quickly (over minutes). A sudden or severe asthma flare-up is sometimes called an asthma attack.

Symptoms of asthma can vary over time and often vary from person to person. The most common asthma symptoms are:

- Breathlessness;
- Wheezing (a whistling noise from the chest);
- Tight feeling in the chest; and/or
- Persistent cough.

Symptoms often occur at night, early in the morning or during/just after physical activity. If asthma is well controlled, a person should only have occasional asthma symptoms.

Everyone with asthma has different triggers. A trigger is something that sets off or starts asthma symptoms. For most people with asthma, triggers are only a problem when asthma is not well controlled with medication.

Aim

- To ensure that the school appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma by having adequate processes and procedures in place.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all staff, including casual relief staff, contractors and volunteers; and
- all students who have been diagnosed with asthma or who may require emergency treatment for asthma and their parents/carers.

Implementation

- Professional development will be provided for all staff on the nature, prevention and treatment of asthma attacks. Such information will also be displayed on the wall in the First Aid room.

- The school will provide, and have staff trained in the administering of, reliever medication (blue canister) such as Ventolin or Asmol and spacer devices.
- If a student has been diagnosed with asthma, a parent/carer must provide the school with an Asthma Care Plan which has been completed and signed by the student's medical practitioner.
- Asthma Care Plans will be kept in the First Aid room for reference with the student's medical alert.
- If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parents/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Care Plan.
- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children have an adequate supply of appropriate asthma medication with them at school at all times. The medication should be clearly named and must be within its expiry date.
- Parents/carers need to ensure that the asthma medication their child has at school is within its expiry date. If school staff become aware that the asthma medication a student has at school has expired, we will promptly contact the student's parent/carer who will need to arrange for medication within the expiry date to be provided.
- If a student's Asthma Care Plan indicates that asthma medication must be administered through a spacer, parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that a spacer is provided to the school. The spacer should be clearly named.
- For each student diagnosed with asthma, the school will create an asthma kit, which will contain the student's:
 - * Asthma Care Plan;
 - * their prescribed reliever medication labelled with their name; and
 - * their spacer (if they use one) labelled with their name.

Student asthma kits will be stored in their classroom.

- Asthma medication may be kept by a student in either their school bag or on their person where it has been agreed in writing by the parent/carer that this may occur. It is at the Principal's discretion to agree for the student to carry and manage his/her own asthma medication.
- Reliever medication 'puffers' may be used by more than one student, as long as they have been used with a spacer.
- Asthma spacers provided by the school are single-person use only. Once a spacer has been used it can be given to that student and replaced in the first aid kit.
- A nebuliser pump will not be provided by the school. If a student is prescribed a nebuliser they must bring their own to school.
- Care must be provided immediately for any student who develops signs of an asthma attack.
- Students suffering asthma attacks should be treated in accordance with their Asthma Care Plan.
- If no plan is available students are to be sat down, reassured, administered 4 puffs of a shaken reliever puffer (blue canister), delivered via a spacer and inhaling 4 deep breaths per puff, then wait 4 minutes. An ambulance should be called if there is no improvement, or if it is the student's first known attack. If necessary administer 4 more puffs and repeat the cycle.
- If first aid is administered for an asthma attack, or in an emergency situation, the parent/carer of the student will be contacted as soon as reasonably practical by a staff member.
- Staff may take emergency action by contacting Triple Zero (000) at any time and do not need to obtain parent/carer consent to do so.

- The school will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. One kit will be kept at school and one will be a mobile kit for activities such as excursions and camps. The Asthma Emergency Kit will contain:
 - * at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Asmol or Ventolin;
 - * at least 2 spacer devices (single use only) stored in a dust proof container;
 - * clear written instruction on how to use the reliever medications and spacer devices and steps to be taken in treating an asthma attack; and
 - * a record sheet/log for recording the details of a first aid incident, such as the number of puffs administered.
- The member of staff nominated each year to maintain the school's first aid supplies will also be responsible for maintaining the school's Asthma Emergency Kit, including:
 - * ensuring all contents are maintained and replaced when necessary;
 - * regularly checking the expiry date on the canister of the reliever puffer and replacing reliever medication if expired or low on doses;
 - * replacing spacers in the Kits after each use; and
 - * disposing of any previously used spacers.

References

- School Policy Advisory Guide
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/conditionasthma.aspx>
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/asthmaattack.aspx>
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/asthmakits.aspx>
- Asthma Australia
www.asthmaaustralia.org.au

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every year or as deemed necessary.

Ratified

As this is an operational policy it is not required to be ratified by School Council.