

Asthma Policy

St Albans East Primary School

Date: March 2018



Rationale

People with asthma have sensitive airways and when exposed to certain triggers their airways narrow making it difficult to breathe. Symptoms commonly include difficulty breathing, wheezy breathing, dry and irritating cough, tightness in the chest and difficulty speaking. Children and adults with mild asthma rarely require medication; however severe asthma sufferers may require daily or additional medication (particularly after exercise). Asthma affects up to one in four primary aged children, one in seven teenagers and one in ten adults. 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.

Aim

To assist asthma sufferers to manage their asthma as effectively and efficiently as possible at school.

Implementation

Asthma awareness

As asthma affects up to one in four primary age children, one in seven teenagers and one in ten adults, it is important for school staff to be aware of asthma, its symptoms and triggers and most importantly, the management of asthma in the school environment.

Asthma is a condition that affects the small airways (bronchioles) of the lungs. In a person with asthma, the airways are more sensitive than normal. When the sensitive airways are exposed to a 'trigger factor' they overreact, resulting in an asthma attack. A variety of different trigger factors may lead to an asthma attack (e.g. colds/flu, exercise, pollens, dust, dust mite or cigarette smoke) and these triggers vary from person to person.

During an asthma attack the airways narrow making it difficult to breathe. The narrowing is caused by constriction of the muscle in the walls of the airways, swelling of the lining layer of the airways and excessive production of mucus.

Symptoms of asthma commonly include:

- Difficulty in breathing, breathlessness.
- Wheezy breathing (a whistling noise from the chest).
- Cough (usually dry and irritating).
- Tightness in the chest.
- Difficulty in speaking.
- These symptoms are particularly likely to occur during or immediately after exercise, at night or early in the morning.
- Many children and adolescents have mild asthma with very minor problems and rarely need medication. However, some students will need medication on a daily basis and frequently require additional medication at school (particularly before or after vigorous exercise). Most students with severe asthma can have their asthma controlled by taking regular medication.

Triggers of asthma commonly include:

- Exercise
- Smoke (cigarette smoke, wood smoke from open fires, burn-offs or bushfires)
- House dust mites
- Pollens

- Chemicals such as household cleaning products
- Food chemicals/additives
- Laughter or emotions, such as stress
- Colds/flu
- Weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air
- Moulds
- Animals such as cats or dogs
- Deodorants (including perfumes, aftershaves, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)
- Certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)

Asthma management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at St Albans East Primary School:

1. Parents/carers must provide the school with an [Asthma Care Plan](#) that has been completed by the student's medical practitioner. The plan must outline:
 - the prescribed medication taken by the student and when it is to be administered, for example as a pre-medication to exercise or on a regular basis
 - emergency contact details
 - the contact details of the student's medical practitioner
 - the student's known triggers
 - the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack.
2. Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Care Plan.
3. St Albans East Primary School will keep all Asthma Care Plans in:
 - the first aid room
4. School staff may also work with parents/carers to develop a Student Health Support Plan which will include details on:
 - how the school will provide support for the student
 - identify specific strategies
 - allocate staff to assist the student
 - any Student Health Support Plan will be developed in accordance with St Albans East Primary School's Healthcare Needs Policy.
5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, St Albans East Primary School parents/carers are required to provide any updated medical information.
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Care Plan.
7. School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Care Plans (and Student Health Support Plans) once a year.

Student asthma kit

All students diagnosed with asthma are required to have a student asthma kit at school which contains:

- their own prescribed reliever medication labelled with the student's name
- their spacer (if they use one)

Student asthma kits will be stored **in their classroom, first aid room or the child may keep it with them if they are capable of administering the medication themselves.**

Asthma emergency response plan

If a student is:

- having an asthma attack
- difficulty breathing for an unknown cause, even if they are not known to have asthma

school staff will endeavour to follow the Asthma First Aid procedures outlined in the table below. School staff may contact Triple Zero “000” at any time.

Step	Action
1.	Sit the person upright <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be calm and reassuring• Do not leave them alone• Seek assistance from another staff member or reliable student to locate the student’s reliever, the Asthma Emergency Kit and the student’s Asthma Care Plan (if available)• If the student’s action plan is not immediately available, use the Asthma First Aid as described in Steps 2 to 5
2.	Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shake the puffer• Use a spacer if you have one• Put 1 puff into the spacer• Take 4 breaths from the spacer Remember – Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths
3.	Wait 4 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above (or give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler)
4.	If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero “000” and ask for an ambulance. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack• Keep giving 4 separate puffs every 4 minutes until emergency assistance arrives (or 1 dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort every 4 minutes – up to 3 doses of Symbicort)
5.	If asthma is relieved after administering Asthma First Aid, stop the treatment and observe the student. Notify the student’s emergency contact person and record the incident

Staff will call Triple Zero “000” immediately if:

- the person is not breathing
- if the person’s asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- if the person is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- if they are not sure if it is asthma

- if the person is known to have anaphylaxis

Training for staff

St Albans East Primary School will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
Group 1 General Staff	School staff with a direct teaching role with students affected by asthma or other school staff directed by the principal after conducting a risk assessment.	Asthma first aid management for education staff (non-accredited) One hour face-to-face or online training.	The Asthma Foundation of Victoria	Free to all schools	3 years
Group 2 Specific Staff	Staff working with high risk children with a history of severe asthma, or with direct student wellbeing responsibility, (including nurses, PE/sport teachers, first aid and school staff attending camp)	<i>Course in Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace</i> 22282VIC (accredited) OR <i>Course in Emergency Asthma Management</i> 10392NAT (accredited)	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by St Albans East Primary School	3 years

St Albans East Primary School will also conduct an annual briefing for staff on:

- the procedures outlined in this policy
- the causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma
- identities of the students diagnosed with asthma
- how to use a puffer and spacer
- the location of:
 - the Asthma Emergency Kits
 - asthma medication which has been provided by parents for student use.

St Albans East Primary School will also provide this policy to casual relief staff and volunteers who will be working with students, and may also provide a briefing if the principal decides it is necessary depending on the nature of the work being performed.

Asthma Emergency Kit

St Albans East Primary School will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. One kit will be kept on school premises in the first aid room and one will be a mobile kit for activities such as:

- yard duty
- camps and excursions.

The Asthma Emergency Kit will contain:

- at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Admol or Ventolin
- at least 2 spacer devices (for single person use only) to assist with effective inhalation of the blue or blue/grey reliever medication (St Albans East Primary School will ensure spare spacers are available as replacements). Spacers will be stored in a dust proof container
- clear written instructions on Asthma First Aid, including:
 - how to use the medication and spacer devices
 - steps to be taken in treating an asthma attack
- A record sheet/log for recording the details of an asthma first aid incident, such as the number of puffs administered

The first aid coordinator / officer will monitor and maintain the Asthma Emergency Kits. They will:

- ensure all contents are maintained and replaced where necessary
- regularly check the expiry date on the canisters of the blue or blue/grey reliever puffers and replace them if they have expired or are low on doses
- replace spacers in the Kits after each use (spacers are single-person use only)
- dispose of any previously used spacers.

The blue or blue/grey reliever medication in the Asthma Emergency Kits may be used by more than one student as long as they are used with a spacer. If the devices come into contact with someone's mouth, they will not be used again and will be replaced.

After each use of a blue or blue/grey reliever (with a spacer):

- remove the metal canister from the puffer (do not wash the canister)
- wash the plastic casing
- rinse the mouthpiece through the top and bottom under running water for at least 30 seconds
- wash the mouthpiece cover
- air dry then reassemble
- test the puffer to make sure no water remains in it, then return to the Asthma Emergency Kit.

Management of confidential medical information

Confidential medical information provided to St Albans East Primary School to support a student diagnosed with asthma will be:

- recorded on the student's file
- shared with all relevant staff so that they are able to properly support students diagnosed with asthma and respond appropriately if necessary.

Communication plan

This policy will be available on the St Albans East Primary School website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about the school's asthma management procedures.

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

St Albans East Primary School will be prepared to act on the warnings and advice from the Department of Education and Training when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high.

Further information and resources

Asthma Foundation Victoria: [Resources for schools](#)

School Policy and Advisory Guide:

- [Asthma](#)
- [Asthma Attacks: Treatment](#)
- [Asthma Emergency Kits](#)

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.

Review Year

2021