



ASTHMA POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

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, triggers, and the management of asthma in a school environment. Children and adults with mild asthma may or may not require medication; however severe asthma sufferers may require daily or additional medication (particularly after exercise).

It is Dromana Primary School's aim to manage asthma and asthma sufferers as effectively and efficiently as possible whilst at school.

2. 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 an out of your lungs" (National Asthma Council 2011)

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

- 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)
- emotions.

3. ASTHMA MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION:

- Professional learning will be provided for all staff on the nature, prevention and treatment of asthma attacks. Such information will also be displayed on the First Aid Room wall.
- All students with asthma must have an up to date (annual) written Asthma Management Plan consistent with Asthma Victoria's requirements completed by their doctor or paediatrician. Appropriate asthma plan pro-formas are available at www.asthma.org.au
- Asthma plans will be attached to the student's records for reference.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their children have an adequate supply of appropriate asthma medication (including a spacer) with them at school at all times.
- The school will provide and have staff trained in the administering of reliever puffers (blue canister) such as Ventolin, Airomir, Asmol or Bricanyl and spacer devices in all first-aid kits, including kits on excursions and camps. Clear written instructions on how to use these medications and devices will be included in each first aid kit, along with steps to be taken to treat severe asthma attacks. Kits will contain 70% alcohol swabs to clean devices after use.
- The delegated first aid staff member will be responsible for checking reliever puffer expiry dates.
- A nebuliser pump will not be used by the school staff unless a student's asthma management plan recommends the use of such a device and only then if the plan

includes and complies with the Victorian Government School's Reference Guide – Asthma Medication Delivery Devices.

- All devices used for the delivery of asthma medication will be cleaned appropriately after each use.
- Care must be provided immediately for any student who develops signs of an asthma attack.
- Children suffering asthma attacks should be treated in accordance with their asthma plan.
- If no plan is available Asthma First Aid is to be administered immediately:

Asthma First Aid

The four-step asthma first aid is:

1. Sit the person upright and give reassurance – do not leave them alone.
2. Without delay, give the person four separate puffs of their blue reliever medication (Airomir, Asmol, Bricanyl, or Ventolin). If using a puffer (Ventolin or Asmol) this should be taken one puff at a time via a spacer. Ask the person to take four breaths from the spacer after each puff of medication.
3. Wait four minutes. If there is little or no improvement, repeat steps 2 and 3.
4. If there is still no improvement, call an ambulance immediately. Dial triple zero (000).

Repeat steps 2 and 3 continuously while waiting for the ambulance to arrive.

NB: A 'spacer' is a special device shaped like a clear plastic football or tube through which aerosol inhaler medications are inhaled. Bricanyl is the only reliever medication available in a dry powder inhaler and cannot be used with a spacer. Although Airomir comes in a puffer, it will not fit into all spacers.

4. LINKS AND APPENDICES

- Links which are connected with this policy are:

<http://www.asthma.org.au/Resources/InformationSheets.aspx>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/conditionasthma.asp>

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There are no appendices.

5. EVALUATION

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

This policy was last ratified by School Council on 2015