



Asthma Policy

Asthma

Asthma is an extremely common condition for Australian students. Students with asthma have sensitive airways in their lungs. When exposed to certain triggers their airways narrow, making it hard for them to breathe.

Symptoms of asthma commonly include:

- cough
- tightness in the chest
- shortness of breath/rapid breathing
- wheeze (a whistling noise from the chest)

Many children 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 asthma can control their asthma by taking regular medication.

Student Asthma Information

Every student with asthma attending the school has a written Asthma Action Plan, ideally completed by their treating doctor or pediatrician, in consultation with the student's parent/carer. Parents are responsible for informing the school on enrolment if their child has asthma.

The completed plan is attached to the student's medical files and their asthma medication is located in their school bag. A student medical conditions folder which is located in all classrooms and offices around the school highlights the students who have asthma plans. It is also flagged on class roles in Compass.

The Asthma Action Plan should be updated annually, or more frequently if the student's asthma changes significantly. This Plan is accessible to all staff and a photocopy must accompany medication on excursions.

The Plan contains information including:

- usual medical treatment (medication taken on a regular basis when the student is 'well' or as pre-medication prior to exercise)

- details on what to do and details of medications to be used in cases of deteriorating asthma – this includes how to recognise worsening symptoms and what to do during an acute asthma attack
- name, address and telephone number of an emergency contact
- name, address and telephone number (including an after-hours number) of the student's doctor

If a student is obviously and repeatedly experiencing asthma symptoms and/or using an excessive amount of reliever medication, the parents/carers will be notified so that appropriate medical consultation can be arranged.

Students needing asthma medication during school attendance must have their medication use, date, time and amount of dose recorded in the office.

Asthma Medication

There are three main groups of asthma medications: relievers, preventers and symptom controllers. There are also combination medications containing preventer and symptom controller medication in the same delivery device.

Reliever medication provides relief from asthma symptoms within minutes. It relaxes the muscles around the airways for up to four hours, allowing air to move more easily through the airways. Reliever medications are usually blue in colour and common brand names include Airomir, Asmol, Bricanyl, Epaq and Ventolin. These medications will be easily accessible to students at all times, preferably carried by the student with asthma. All students with asthma are encouraged to recognise their own asthma symptoms and take their blue reliever medication as soon as they develop symptoms at school.

Preventer medications come in autumn colours (for example brown, orange, and yellow) and are used on a regular basis to prevent asthma symptoms. They are mostly taken twice a day at home and will generally not be seen in the school environment.

Symptom controllers are green in colour and are often referred to as long acting relievers. Symptom controllers are used in conjunction with preventer medication and are taken at home once or twice a day.

Symptom controllers and preventer medications are often combined in one device. These are referred to as combination medications and will generally not be seen at school

Evaluation:

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

This policy was last ratified by School Council: 17.06.2014

