



Asthma

Rationale:

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 harder 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.

Aims:

To manage asthma and asthma sufferers as effectively and efficiently as possible at our College.

Implementation:

- 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.
- Children and adults with mild asthma rarely require medication; however, severe asthma sufferers may require daily or additional medication (particularly after exercise).
- Professional development will be provided for all staff on:
 - Causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma.
 - The identities of students diagnosed with asthma and where their medication is located.
 - How to use a puffer and spacer.
 - The school's general first aid and emergency response procedures.
 - The location of, and access to, reliever medication that has been provided by parents or the Asthma Emergency Kits.
- Schools must have for each student diagnosed with asthma, a written: Asthma Care Plan and Student Health Support Plan.
 - Parents must provide the school with an Asthma Action Plan completed by the student's medical practitioner. The plan must outline the students known triggers and the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack.
 - The Student Health Support Plan includes details on how the school will provide support, identify specific strategies and allocate staff to assist the student.
- Where a student is enrolled diagnosed with asthma, the child is required to bring their own prescribed reliever medication. This will be stored in their asthma kit, with a copy of their Asthma Action Plan and their spacer.
- Appropriate asthma plan proformas and training are available at www.asthma.org.au
- Asthma plans will be attached to the student's records for reference.
- The Asthma Action Plan for Victorian schools will be completed/reviewed annually for each student with asthma and contain-
 - The prescribed medication taken and when it is to be administered e.g.: - on a regular basis - as premedication to exercise - if the student is experiencing symptoms.
 - Emergency contact details.
 - Contact details of the student's medical/health practitioner.
 - Details about deteriorating asthma including: - signs to recognise worsening symptoms / what to do during an attack / what medication to be used.

- Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their children have an adequate supply of appropriate asthma medication (including a spacer) with them at College at all times.
- The College 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 alcohol swabs to clean devices after use.
- A delegated first aid staff member will be responsible for checking reliever puffer expiry dates.
- A nebuliser pump will not be used by the College 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 Vic Government School's Reference Guide – Asthma Medication Delivery Devices.
- The student's personal spacer should be washed monthly or as required, to wash the spacer:
 - Wash the spacer in warm soapy water
 - Do not rinse the spacer
 - Leave it to air dry
 - Wipe the mouthpiece before use.
 - The student's spacer will be replaced if contaminated with blood or vomit.
- Asthma First Aid posters will be displayed in the:
 - Staff room
 - Sick room
 - Areas where asthma attacks are likely to occur or be treated.
- 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 children are to be sat down, reassured, administered 4 puffs of a shaken reliever puffer (blue canister) delivered via a spacer – inhaling 4 deep breaths per puff, wait 4 minutes, if necessary administer 4 more puffs and repeat the cycle. An ambulance must be called if there is no improvement after the second 4-minute wait period, or if it is the child's first known attack. Parents must be contacted whenever their child suffers an asthma attack.
- Our College will also follow the Asthma Foundation Schools Asthma guidelines and the Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/supportplanning.aspx>

References:

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

Evaluation:

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

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