



St Michael's Parish School Ashburton

Asthma Management Policy

November 2017

1. Rationale

The Victorian Schools Asthma Policy has recently been revised in conjunction with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2011). This policy is mandatory for all Victorian Government schools and is recommended by the Catholic Education Office and the Association of Independent Schools (*The Asthma Foundation Victoria 2013*).

St Michael's has adopted the Victorian Schools Asthma Policy as recommended by Catholic Education Melbourne.

2. Statement

Asthma is a chronic health condition affecting approximately 10% of Australian children and teenagers. Asthma is one of the most common reasons for child admissions to hospital and missed days of school. Asthma exacerbations can commonly occur while attending schools, particularly in February and May.

The school will meet its duty of care obligations specified by the School Policy and Advisory Guide (SPAG2). It will ensure the health and wellbeing of all students attending the school.

St Michael's Ashburton recognises the importance of staff education and the implementation of an asthma policy.

The school recognises the importance of involvement and engagement with parents and carers of students and the ability of students to self-manage their asthma where appropriate.

Key points within the SPAG2, relevant to an asthma management policy, specify that schools must:

- Obtain an written asthma plan for all students diagnosed with asthma upon enrolment at the school and ensure they are updated at least annually;
- Store medical information and medications appropriately;
- Ensure that students feel safe and supported at school;
- Support student healthcare needs;
- Provide and maintain at least two asthma emergency kits, with an extra kit required for every 300 students in a large school; and
- Ensure that key staff (e.g. *School Nurses, First Aid Officers, P.E. and Sport Teachers*) undertake Emergency Asthma Management training and that all other staff with a duty of care for students attend a free asthma education session provided by The Asthma Foundation of Victoria.

3. Scope

- To ensure the whole school community (principals, staff, volunteers, parents and carers and students) are aware of their obligations and the best practice management of asthma in the school setting; and
- To provide the necessary information to effectively manage episodes of asthma within the school.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The Principal/Senior Management will:

- Provide staff with a copy of the school's asthma management policy and ensure staff is aware of asthma management strategies upon employment at the school;
- Provide asthma education and first aid training for staff as required;
- Provide parents and carers with a copy of the school's asthma policy upon enrolment of their child;
- Identify students with asthma during the enrolment process and provide parents and carers with a written asthma plan completed and signed by the child's medical practitioner;
- Where possible, ensure that all students with asthma have a current written asthma plan (must be updated at least annually);
- Ensure a School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Form is completed by parents/carers for off-site activities where possible;
- Ensure the parents and carers of all students with asthma provide reliever medication and a spacer (and a face mask if required) at all times their child attends the school;
- Implement an asthma first aid procedure consistent with current national recommendations and all staff are aware of the asthma first aid procedure;

- Ensure adequate provision and maintenance of asthma emergency kits for the school and that each asthma emergency kit contains reliever medication, two spacer devices, instructions outlining the first aid procedure and a record form;
- Ensure that reliever medications within the asthma emergency kits are replaced regularly and have not expired, and that spacers are replaced after each use;
- Facilitate communication between management, staff, parents and carers and students regarding the school's asthma management policy and strategies;
- Promptly communicate to parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students attending the school
- Identify and minimise, where possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students;
- Ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way; and
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in all activities safely and to their fullest abilities

4.2 Staff will:

- Be aware of the school's asthma management policy
- Be aware of the asthma first aid procedure;
- Be aware of students with asthma and where their medication and personal spacers are stored
- Attend asthma education and training sessions when required;
- Be aware of where to access written asthma plans, School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Forms, and asthma emergency kits;
- Identify and minimise, where possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students;
- Ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way;
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in activities safely and to their fullest abilities; and
- Promptly communicate to the principal, parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students enrolled in the school.

4.3 Parents and Caregivers will:

- Inform the school if their child has asthma upon enrolment;
- Read the school's Asthma Management Policy;
- Provide a signed written asthma plan to the school, and ensure that it is updated at least yearly;
- Provide a School Camp or Excursion Medical Update form as required;
- Provide the school with their child's reliever medication along with a spacer (required for 'puffer' medication) for all times the child is attending the school, unless the child is carrying the medication and spacer for self-management purposes;
- Ensure that if their child is self-managing their asthma correctly the child carries their reliever medication and spacer at all times;
- Promptly communicate all medical and health information relevant to their child, to the Principal and staff of the school; and
- Communicate any changes to their child's asthma or any concerns about the health of their child.

4.4 Students will:

- Immediately inform staff if they experience asthma symptoms;
- Inform staff if they have self-administered any asthma medication; and
- Carry asthma medication and a spacer with them at all times (if self-managing their asthma).

5. Asthma Emergency Kits

Asthma Emergency Kits should contain:

- Reliever medication;
- X2 small volume spacer device; and
- Record form and Asthma First Aid instruction card.

Please note that it is a recommendation of The Asthma Foundation of Victoria that spacers and face masks are single-person use only. It is essential to have at least two spacers and two face masks contained in each first aid kit and that spacers and face masks are replaced each time they are used.

6. Further Reading and Resources

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (2010), "Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare", Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2010.

Forms mentioned in this policy are available to download free of charge from the Resources section of The Asthma Foundation of Victoria website at www.asthma.org.au

7. Related Legislation

School Policy and Advisory Guide, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2011):
www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/spag/default.htm

Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010), National Health and Medical Research Council:
www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/cd33_infection_control_healthcare_0.pdf

6. Evaluation

The Asthma Management Policy will be reviewed as part of the School Improvement Plan review cycle.

7. Ratification

The Asthma Management Policy was ratified by John Whitehouse (Chairperson) on 17 November 2017.