



St Michael's Parish School Ashburton

Asthma Management Policy

August 2020

Rationale

To ensure that St Michael's Ashburton appropriately supports students with asthma and to explain to St Michael's parents / care givers, staff and students the processes and procedures in place to support students with asthma.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff including casual relief staff, contractors and volunteers
- All students who have been diagnosed with asthma or who may require emergency treatment for asthma and their parents/carers.

Policy

Asthma

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 hard 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.

Symptoms

Symptoms of asthma can vary over time and often vary from person to person. The most common asthma symptoms are:

- breathlessness
- wheezing (a whistling noise from the chest)
- tight feeling in the chest
- persistent cough

Symptoms often occur at night, early in the morning or during/just after physical activity. If asthma is well controlled, a person should only have occasional asthma symptoms.

Triggers

A trigger is something that sets off or starts asthma symptoms. Everyone with asthma has different triggers. For most people with asthma, triggers are only a problem when asthma is not well controlled with medication. Common asthma triggers 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 and dogs
- deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)

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.

- Ensure that students feel safe and supported at school;
- Support student healthcare needs
- Provide and maintain at least two asthma emergency kits,

Responsibilities

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
- Where possible, ensure that all students with asthma have provided the school with 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
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in all activities safely and to their fullest abilities

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
- Promptly communicate to the principal, parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students enrolled in the school.
- Work with parents/carers to review Asthma Action Plans as needed

Parents and Caregivers must:

- Inform the school if their child has asthma upon enrolment
- Read the St Michael's Asthma Management Policy
- Provide St Michael's with an updated Asthma Action plan which 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.
- Parents/ Caregivers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan.
- Provide a School Camp or Excursion Medical Update form as required
- Provide the school with their child's reliever medication that is current and not expired which along with a spacer (required for 'puffer' medication) for all times the child is attending St Michael's, 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, health and treatment information relevant to their child, to the Principal and staff of the school
- Communicate any changes to their child's asthma or treatment or any concerns about the health of their child

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).

School Management and Emergency Response

In the event of an asthma attack, the emergency response procedures in St Michael's Asthma Management Policy must be followed, together with St Michael's general first aid procedures, emergency response procedures and the student's Individual Asthma Action Plan.

A complete and up to date list of students identified as being at risk of asthma is maintained on our digital platform Operoo as well as a hard copy stored in a Purple folder located in the first aid room.

Student Asthma Kits

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

- their own prescribed reliever medication that is current and not expired labelled with the student's name
- their spacer (if they use one)

Student asthma kits will be stored in the First Aid Room

Asthma Emergency Kits

St Michael's 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:

- a blue/ or blue /grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Admol or Ventolin
- x 2 small volume spacer device
- Record form and asthma First Aid instruction card

The Asthma Emergency Kits will be:

- Regularly checked and replaced if they are on a low does or have expired
- Replace spacers in the kits after each use

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.

Management of Confidential Medical Information

Confidential medical information provided to St Michael's 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 St Michael's website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about St Michael's asthma management procedures.

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

St Michael's will be prepared to act on the warnings and advice when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high.

Further Reading and Resources

- Asthma Australia: Resources for schools
- Policy and Advisory Library
 - Asthma
 - Treating an asthma attack
 - Puffer cleaning guide — after every use

Evaluation

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

Ratification

The Asthma Management Policy was ratified by John Whitehouse (Chairperson)