



HIGHVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Asthma Policy

Ratified by School Council: May 2013

Review date: May 2016

Rationale:

Asthma affects up to one in four primary aged children, one in seven teenagers and one in ten adults¹. It is important therefore for all staff members to be aware of asthma, its symptoms and triggers, and the management of asthma in a school environment. 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).

Aim:

To manage asthma and asthma sufferers as effectively and efficiently as possible at school.

Implementation:

Parents of children diagnosed with asthma are asked to provide the School with a copy of their child's asthma management plan on enrolment or when a plan has been prepared.

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 proformas are available at www.asthma.org.au.

Plans should be reviewed when updated information is received from the student's medical or health care practitioner. If the student doesn't need an asthma plan anymore a letter from the medical or health care practitioner is required. It should also be reviewed if the school, student or parents/guardians have concerns in the support for the child's asthma plan. Otherwise, an annual review is required. Asthma plans will be retained by the School in the First Aid room.

The school will provide an annually updated list of students with asthma management plans on record to staff including specialists, aides and class teachers. Class teachers are responsible for having this medical information available at the front of their roll for days when Casual Relief Staff are teaching.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their children have an adequate supply of appropriate asthma medication (including a spacer) stored in the child's school bag at all times. An emergency relieve puffer and spacer are kept in the First Aid room and the First Aid bag. A reliever puffer is kept in each 'bum' bag for yard duty and excursions.

Professional development will be provided for all staff on the nature, prevention and treatment of asthma attacks in line with the recommendations of The Asthma Friendly Schools Program. Such information will also be displayed in the First Aid room. 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 or Management Plan, along with steps to be taken to treat severe asthma attacks. Kits will contain alcohol swabs to clean devices after use.

Parents are responsible for checking their child's reliever puffer expiry dates. The school checks those bought by the school. 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 which is supplied by parents, and only then if the plan includes and complies with the Victorian Government School's Reference Guide – Asthma Medication Delivery Devices. Staff would need to be trained in its use.

All devices used for the delivery of asthma medication will be cleaned appropriately after each use.

Intervention 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.

Students who suffer from Asthma but do not have an authorised or up to date Asthma Management Plan will be treated in the following manner. This is the standard asthma emergency protocol:

Step 1: Sit or stand the student in an upright position and remain calm and provide reassurance. Do not leave the student alone.

Step 2: Give 4 puffs of a blue reliever, one puff at a time, through a spacer device. Ask the student to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff.

Step 3: Wait 4 minutes.

Step 4: If there is little or no improvement, repeat steps 2 and 3. If there is still little or no improvement, call an ambulance immediately (Dial 000). Continue to repeat steps 2 and 3 while waiting for the ambulance.

NOTE: Parents must be contacted whenever their child suffers an asthma attack.

The school is registered as an asthma friendly school and will ensure that this registration remains current on a three yearly basis and will undertake as required the requirements for maintaining this registration—www.asthmafriendlyschools.org.au.

Responsibility and Evaluation:

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

1. Australian Centre for Asthma Monitoring 2011. Asthma in Australia 2011. AIHW Asthma Series no. 4. Cat. no. ACM 22. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.