



# ASTHMA POLICY

## PURPOSE

- To ensure that Orchard Grove Primary School appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma. Orchard Grove Primary School recognises the benefits to students of continuous attendance at school and supports the regular attendance of all students.
- Teachers have a legal duty of care with regard to the physical well-being of students and will support students who require regular medication to be able to attend school.
- To explain to Orchard Grove Primary School parents/carers, staff and students the processes and procedures in place to support students diagnosed with asthma.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to:

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

## 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, aftershaves, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)

## Asthma Management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at Orchard Grove Primary School:

- Parents/carers **must** provide the school with an Asthma Care Plan which has been completed by the student's medical practitioner. **This needs to be signed by the doctor with the Clinic's identification stamp.** 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/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Care Plan.
- Orchard Grove Primary School will keep all Asthma Care Plans:
  - In sick bay.
  - Teachers classroom folders
  - Casual Relief Teacher folders - there will be a list of students with asthma. If required, refer to teachers' classroom folders.
- School staff (First Aid Officer) may also work with parents/carers to develop a Student Health Support Plan for Asthma, in accordance with Orchard Grove Primary School's Healthcare Needs Policy, which will include details on:
  - how the school will provide support for the student
  - identify specific strategies
  - allocate staff to assist the student

Any Student's Individual Health Support Plan for Asthma will be developed in accordance with Orchard Grove Primary School's Healthcare Needs Policy.

1. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, Orchard Grove Primary School parents/carers are required to provide any updated medical information.
2. If a student does not have an up to date and medically signed Asthma Care Plan, the school reserves the right to refuse the student to attend camp and/or excursions;
3. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Care Plan.

4. School staff (First Aid Officer) will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Care Plans (and Individual Health Support Plans) once a year, at the beginning of the school year, or if condition or treatment changes;
5. Staff will communicate any changes in frequency/severity of asthma symptoms to parents and record any medication administered.

## **Risk Management**

- Mowing of the school's grassed areas will be done after school hours
- No chemicals will be used when steam cleaning the school's carpets (only hot water to be used)

## **Student Asthma Kit**

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

- their own prescribed reliever medication labelled with the student's name;
- their spacer (children will be encouraged to use personal spacers. However, disposable spacers are available in the first aid room for emergency use only. Parents will be asked to reimburse the school for use of the spacer.)

Where appropriate, students will be encouraged to be responsible for the administration of their asthma medication, which will be stored in their bag or carried by them. Otherwise, students' asthma kits will be stored in the first aid room in the main administration building.

The teacher in charge of camps and excursions will ensure that the Risk Register contains asthma management details for each child with asthma.

The teacher in charge of first aid for each school camp and excursion will ensure that asthma medication equipment is taken on each school camp and excursion and that camp/excursion asthma plans are completed for each asthmatic student.

The First Aid Officer will be responsible for regularly checking the expiry date on the reliever medication and request replacement when required.

## **Asthma Emergency Response Plan**

If a student is:

- having an asthma attack;
- having difficulty breathing for an unknown cause, even if they are not known to have asthma.

School staff will endeavour to follow the Asthma First Aid procedures outlined in the table below. School staff may contact Triple Zero "000" at any time.

Step	Action
1.	Sit the person upright <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be calm and reassuring</li> <li>● Do not leave them alone</li> <li>● Seek assistance from another staff member or reliable student to locate the student's reliever, the Asthma Emergency Kit and the student's Asthma Care Plan (if available).</li> <li>● If the student's action plan is not immediately available, use the Asthma First Aid as described in Steps 2 to 5.</li> </ul>
2.	Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shake the puffer</li> <li>● Use a spacer if you have one</li> <li>● Put 1 puff into the spacer</li> <li>● Take 4 breaths from the spacer</li> </ul> Remember – Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths
3.	Wait 4 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above</li> </ul> (or give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler)
4.	If there is still no improvement, call Triple Zero "000" and ask for an ambulance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack</li> <li>● Keep giving 4 separate puffs every 4 minutes until emergency assistance arrives (or 1 dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort every 4 minutes – up to 3 doses of Symbicort)</li> </ul>
5.	If asthma is relieved after administering Asthma First Aid, stop the treatment and observe the student. Notify the student's emergency contact person and record the incident

Staff will call Triple Zero "000" immediately if:

- the person is not breathing;
- if the person's asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving;
- if the person is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available;
- if they are not sure if it is asthma;
- if the person is known to have anaphylaxis.

## Training for Staff

Orchard Grove Primary School will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
<b>Group 1 All Staff</b>	School staff with a direct teaching role with students affected by asthma or other school staff directed by the principal after conducting a risk assessment.  <i>All staff to complete this training annually.</i>	Asthma first aid management for education staff (non-accredited) One hour face-to-face OR online training.	The Asthma Foundation of Victoria	Free to all schools	3 years

<b>Group 2 Specific Staff</b>	Staff working with high risk children with a history of severe asthma, or with direct student wellbeing responsibility, (including nurses, PE/sport teachers, first aid and school staff attending camp)	<i>Course in Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace 22556VIC</i> (accredited) OR <i>Course in Emergency Asthma Management 10392NAT</i> (accredited)	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by Orchard Grove Primary School	3 years
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Orchard Grove Primary School will also conduct an annual briefing for staff on:

- the procedures outlined in this policy;
- the causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma (as described at the start of this policy);
- identities of the students diagnosed with asthma;
- how to use a puffer and spacer;
- the location of:
  - the Asthma Emergency Kits (First Aid room and First Aid bags, Meadow);
  - asthma medication which has been provided by parents for student use.

Orchard Grove Primary School will also provide this policy to casual relief staff and volunteers who will be working with students, and may also provide a briefing if the principal decides it is necessary depending on the nature of the work being performed.

Clear written instructions on how to use the medications and devices and steps to be taken in treating acute asthma attack will be displayed in the first aid room, classrooms and other appropriate areas throughout the school.

### **Asthma Emergency Kit**

Orchard Grove Primary School will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. Two kits will be kept in the first aid room and one will be kept at the Meadow.

Two emergency ventolin and spacers will be sent on camps and excursions.

The Asthma Emergency Kit will contain:

- at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Admol or Ventolin
- at least 2 spacer devices (for single person use only) to assist with effective inhalation of the blue or blue/grey reliever medication (Orchard Grove Primary School will ensure spare spacers are available as replacements). Spacers will be stored in a dust proof container.
- clear written instructions on Asthma First Aid, including:
  - how to use the medication and spacer devices
  - steps to be taken in treating an asthma attack
- A record sheet/log for recording the details of an asthma first aid incident, such as the number of puffs administered.

The First Aid Officer will monitor and maintain the Asthma Emergency Kits. They will:

- ensure all contents are maintained and replaced where necessary
- regularly check the expiry date on the canisters of the blue or blue/grey reliever puffers and place them if they have expired or a low on doses
- replace spacers in the Kits after each use (spacers are single-person use only)

- dispose of any previously used spacers.

The blue or blue/grey reliever medication in the Asthma Emergency Kits may be used by more than one student as long as they are used with a spacer. If the devices come into contact with someone's mouth, they will not be used again and will be replaced.

After each use of a blue or blue/grey reliever (with a spacer):

- remove the metal canister from the puffer (do not wash the canister)
- wash the plastic casing
- rinse the mouthpiece through the top and bottom under running water for at least 30 seconds
- wash the mouthpiece cover
- air dry then reassemble
- test the puffer to make sure no water remains in it, then return to the Asthma Emergency Kit.

## **Management of Confidential Medical Information**

Confidential medical information provided to Orchard Grove Primary School to support a student diagnosed with asthma will be:

- recorded on the student's file in CASES21
- 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 Orchard Grove Primary School's website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about Orchard Grove Primary School's asthma management procedures.

## **Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma**

Orchard Grove Primary School will be prepared to act on the warnings and advice from the Department of Education and Training when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Department policies and guidelines:

DET Policy and Advisory Library:

- [Asthma Guidance](#)
- [Health Care Needs](#)
- [Duty of Care](#)

[Asthma Foundation Victoria School Resources](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Asthma Policy:

- Health Care Needs
- [Individual Health Support Plan - Asthma](#)
- Camps & Excursions

## **Review Cycle And Evaluation**

**Tabled: 2021**

**To be reviewed in 2022.**

## APPENDIX A:

### Types of asthma attack

The following describes the symptoms of different types of asthma attacks. Symptoms will vary from student to student.

Type	Symptoms
Mild/Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● may have a cough</li><li>● may have a wheeze</li><li>● minor difficulty in breathing</li><li>● able to talk in full sentences</li><li>● alert, able to walk/move around</li><li>● have normal skin colour.</li></ul>
Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● cannot speak a full sentence in one breath</li><li>● obvious difficulty in breathing</li><li>● sitting hunched forward</li><li>● tugging in of skin over the chest and throat</li><li>● lethargic (children)</li><li>● sore tummy (young children)</li><li>● reliever medication is not lasting as long as usual.</li></ul>
Life-threatening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● unable to speak, or 1-2 words per breath</li><li>● drowsy/confused</li><li>● collapsed, exhausted, unconscious</li><li>● wheeze and cough may be absent</li><li>● gasping for breath</li><li>● discolouration (turning blue)</li><li>● not responding to reliever medication.</li></ul>