

INTRODUCTION:

Asthma is a long term lung conditions. People with asthma have sensitive airways in their lungs which react to triggers. 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.

Signs and symptoms may include:

- breathlessness
- wheezing
- tight feeling in chest
- persistent cough

A trigger is something that sets off or starts asthma symptoms. Triggers are only a problem when asthma is not well controlled with medication. Asthma triggers may include:

- exercise
- smoke
- house dust mites
- pollens
- chemicals
- food chemicals/additives
- laughter or emotions such as stress
- colds/flu
- weather changes, thunderstorms, cold air
- moulds
- animals such as cats and dogs
- deodorants, perfumes, sprays
- medications

PURPOSE:

This policy is in place to ensure that;

- duty of Care obligations are met in regard to asthma management
- staff are aware of their obligations in regard to asthma management
- students with asthma are supported and treated appropriately
- parents/carers, staff and students are aware of the processes and procedures in place to support students diagnosed 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 asthma treatment and their parents/carers.

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

Parents will be referred to this policy at the commencement of each school year and on enrolment. A copy will be available on the school website.

Staff will be referred to this policy at the commencement of each school year and on induction (new staff). A copy will be available on COMPASS.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1 Parent/Carer Responsibilities

Parents/carers play a vital role in the effective management of asthma in schools. Parents/carers are required to;

- a be aware of the school's asthma management policy
- b provide a written Asthma Care Plan, signed by a medical practitioner, for children with asthma (updated annually)
- c provide a School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Form for off-site activities.
- d promote students' independence in asthma management
- e provide reliever medication and a spacer for their child at school. As students become more responsible for the management of their asthma, they are permitted to carry their own medication, in addition to the medication stored at the school
- f communicate any changes to their child's asthma or treatment to the school promptly.

2 Staff Responsibilities

All staff are required to;

- a maintain up-to-date knowledge of asthma management, and emergency asthma treatment
- b be aware of the school's asthma management policy
- c ensure that they are aware of student's in their care who have asthma and the location of their medication
- d know which students in their care have responsibility for self-administration of asthma medication
- e ensure that medical plans and medication are available during all on-site and off-site activities
- f identify and minimise, where possible, triggers for asthma symptoms
- g ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way and are able to participate in activities safely
- h communicate promptly to the Principal and parents/carers any concerns regarding asthma and the conditions of specific students
- i act on advice and warnings from the DET Emergency Management Division in regard to potential thunderstorm asthma activity
- j facilitate opportunities for students with exercise induced asthma to take their medication 15 minutes before exercise or activity.

3 First Aid Coordinator Responsibilities

- a Check all stored asthma medication for expiry dates and request new medication as needed.
- b Ensure all student asthma plans are updated annually and displayed in the first aid room.
- c Ensure asthma medication is available for camps and excursions.
- d Ensure spacers are sterilised after each use.
- e Ensure Asthma First Aid posters (available from the Asthma Foundation) are displayed in the first aid room, office and gymnasium.

4 Student Responsibilities

- a Inform staff immediately if they experience asthma symptoms (even if they are responsible for self-administration of medication).
- b Carry their asthma medication at all times if they are self-administering medication.
- c Take increasing responsibility for the management and treatment of their asthma.

5 Staff Training

- a All staff with a duty of care for students will complete the one-hour Asthma Education session available online through the Asthma Community and Health Professional e-Learning Hub) at least every three years
- b All staff with a direct student wellbeing responsibility (PE, first aid and those attending camps and excursions) will complete an accredited Emergency Asthma Management (EAM) course at least every three years
- c Key staff (First Aid Officers, PE teacher) will complete relevant asthma management training.

6 Responding to Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

To minimise the risk of an epidemic of thunderstorm asthma school staff will;

- a act on advice and warnings from the DET Emergency Management Division
- b reduce the risk when thunderstorm asthma conditions are predicted by keeping students inside with windows and doors closed
- c implement individual asthma plans as needed

7 Asthma Kits

Gladstone Views Primary School will have the following equipment available at all times at school and for use on camps/excursions:

- a at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever such as Ventolin
- b at least 2 spacer devices (stored in dust proof containers)
- c clear written instructions on Asthma First Aid including steps to be taken and how to use medication and spacer devices
- d a record sheet/log for recording the details of an asthma first aid incident.

8 Management of Confidential Medical Information

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

- a stored on the student's file, CASES21 and COMPASS
- b shared with all relevant staff.

RELATED POLICIES DET:

Asthma Attacks; Treatment
Asthma Emergency Kits
Excursions – Student Medical information
Health Care Needs
Health and Support Planning Forms

OTHER RESOURCES:

Asthma Australia
Asthma, Chronic Illness Alliance
Asthma Australia
Better Health Channel – Thunderstorm Asthma

All school policies are reviewed every three years, or earlier in response to incidents or DET instructions.

