



Glendal Primary School Asthma Management Policy

Rationale

Asthma is a long term lung condition. Individuals 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 fire, 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-inflammatory).

In order to meet the duty of care obligations specified by the Department's Policy and Advisory Guide (see <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal>) and to ensure the health and wellbeing of all students attending, Glendal Primary School recognises the importance of staff education and the implementation of an asthma management policy. Glendal also 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.

Guidelines

The Asthma Management Policy will be communicated to the school community:

- to ensure the school community are aware of their obligations and the best practice management of asthma in the school setting
- to provide the necessary information to effectively manage students with asthma while attending school.

Implementation

A school management plan, detailing implementing strategies and processes, will be developed to ensure a safe and supportive environment for students with asthma. This will include:

- displaying Asthma Action Plans in the Staffroom, Health Centre and classrooms of students with asthma so that they can be access quickly
- providing regular asthma education and first aid and asthma training for staff
- identifying students with asthma during the enrolment process and providing parents and carers with an Asthma Action Plan to be completed by the child's medical practitioner
- where possible, ensuring that all students with asthma have a current Asthma action plan which is updated at least annually
- ensuring that a Camps and Excursions Medical update form is completed for off-site activities
- Where possible, ensuring that the parents and careers of students with asthma provide reliever medication and a spacer (and a face mask if required) at all times that their child attends school
- implementing an asthma first aid procedure consistent with current national recommendations
- ensuring adequate provision and maintenance of at least five asthma emergency kits for the school which contain reliever medication, two spacer devices, instructions outlining the first aid procedure and a record form with provision for expiry date checks and replacement of used spacers
- facilitating communication between management, staff, parents, carers and students regarding the school's asthma management policy and strategies
- promptly communicating to parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students attending the school
- identifying and minimising where possible triggers of asthma symptoms for students attending the school
- ensuring the students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way
- ensuring that students with asthma can participate in the school's activities safely and to their best potential.
- Staff will:
 - ensure that they are aware of the school's Asthma Management Policy
 - ensure that they are aware of the asthma first aid procedure
 - ensure that they are aware of students with asthma and where their medication and personal spacers are stored
 - ensure they attend asthma education and training when required
 - ensure that are aware of where to access Asthma Action Plans, Camps and Excursions Medical Update forms and emergency asthma kits
 - identify and minimise, where possible, asthma triggers for students attending the school
 - ensure that students are not discriminated against in any way
 - ensure that students with asthma can participate in the school's activities safely and to their best potential
 - promptly communicate to the principal, school nurse, parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students enrolled at the school.
- Parents and Carers will:
 - inform the school if their child has asthma on enrolment or diagnosis
 - read the school's Asthma Management Policy
 - provide a signed Asthma Action Plan on an annual basis (with a current colour photo) which has been completed by the student's medical practitioner. This plan will include 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 contract details of the student's medical practitioner, the student's known triggers and the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack
 - provide a Camps or Excursions Medical Update Form as required or when requested by the school
 - 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

- in conjunction with the school assess the child’s ability to self-manage prior to their reliever medication and spacer being discharged from the Health Centre
- promptly communicate all medical and health information relevant to their child to the Principal, school nurse and staff of the school
- communicate any changes to their child’s asthma or any concerns about the current health of their child.
- Students will:
 - immediately inform staff if they experience asthma symptoms
 - be willing to be assessed concerning their ability to self-manage their asthma at school
 - inform the school nurse or staff if they have self-administered any asthma medication
 - always carry their asthma medication and spacer with them if they are self-managing asthma symptoms.
- Asthma Emergency Kits:
 - will be available in strategic areas of the school, Health Centre, Hall and Resource room
 - will contain asthma first aid instructions, reliever medication, two spacer devices, a form for recording medication administration and contact procedures.

Asthma Emergency Response Plan

If a student is:

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

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Example 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.

Resources

- See Glendal's [Health Care Needs](#) and [Anaphylaxis Management](#) Policies
- Asthma Australia: [Resources for schools](#)
- Policy and Advisory Library:
 - [Asthma](#)
 - [Treating an asthma attack](#)

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request.

Evaluation

This policy was reviewed 25th July, 2021. It will be reviewed annually or earlier if deemed necessary.