

Mount Waverley Primary School

Asthma Policy



'Achieving Excellence Together'

2020

Principal: Greg Paine

School Council President: Dean Goble



MOUNT WAVERLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Asthma Policy

RATIONALE

Mount Waverley Primary School (MWPS) has procedures for supporting student health for those students diagnosed with Asthma. The school will provide a basic first aid response as set out in the procedure below for students who require **emergency /first aid** assistance.

PURPOSE

To ensure MWPS appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

To ensure the school community understands our school's processes and procedures in place to provide first aid for students with a diagnosis of Asthma.

POLICY GUIDELINES

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.

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 often occur at night, early in the morning or during/just after physical activity.

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
- colds/flu
- weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air
- moulds
- animals such as cats and dogs

- chemicals such as household cleaning products
- food chemicals/additives
- laughter or emotions, such as stress
- deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)

Assessment and First Aid Treatment of an Asthma attack

If a student develops signs of what appears to be an asthma attack, appropriate care must be given immediately.

Assessing the severity of an asthma attack

Asthma attacks can be:

1. **Mild** - this may involve coughing, a soft wheeze, minor difficulty in breathing and no difficulty speaking in sentences
2. **Moderate** - this may involve a persistent cough, loud wheeze, obvious difficulty in breathing and ability to speak only in short sentences
3. **Severe** - the student is often very distressed and anxious, gasping for breath, unable to speak more than a few words, pale and sweaty and may have blue lips.

All students judged to be having a severe asthma attack require emergency medical assistance.

Call an ambulance (dial 000), notify the student's Parents or emergency contact and follow the '*4 Step Asthma First Aid Plan*' while waiting for the ambulance to arrive. When calling the ambulance state clearly that a student is having 'breathing difficulties.' The ambulance service will give priority to a person suffering extreme shortness of breath.

Regardless of whether an attack of asthma has been assessed as mild, moderate or severe, Asthma First Aid (as detailed below) must commence immediately. The danger in any asthma situation is delay. Delay may increase the severity of the attack and ultimately risk the student's life.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Asthma Management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at MWPS:

1. Parents/carers must provide the school with an 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
 - contact details of the student's medical practitioner
 - student's known triggers
 - emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack.
2. Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan.
3. MWPS will keep all Asthma Action Plans:

- in the school Health Centre / First Aid room
4. MWPS staff may also work with parents/carers to develop a Student Health Support Plan 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 Health Support Plan will be developed in accordance with MWPS Healthcare Needs Policy.

If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, MWPS parents/carers are required to provide any updated medical information.

5. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.
6. School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Action Plans (and Student Health Support Plans) once a year

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 (if they use one)

Student asthma kits will be stored in the front pocket of the student's school bag so the student has access to their own spacer and Ventolin during class and or specialist times. They will be brought to the school health centre when needed.

In an emergency an asthma kit (Asthma Australia La Petite Spacer) will be provided by the school. The spacer will be named and given to the student(at a nominal cost to parents/ carers) to place in front pocket of their school bag.

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.	<p>Sit the person upright</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.	Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.	Wait 4 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.	If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero “000” and ask for an ambulance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
- the person’s asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- the person is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- they are not sure if it is asthma

Staff Training

The Principal will ensure MWPS has sufficient staff with the appropriate levels of first aid training to meet the first aid needs of the school community in particular to first aid plans for Asthma and treatment of an Asthma attack.

Teachers and Principals must:

1. be familiar with the Asthma first aid procedures
2. observe their duty of care to students by providing first aid treatment within the limits of their skill, expertise, training and responsibilities.

MWPS will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
Group 1 General Staff	School staff with a direct teaching role with students affected by asthma or other school staff directed by the principal after	Asthma first aid management for education staff (non-accredited)	Asthma Australia	Free to all schools	3 years

	conducting a risk assessment.	One hour face-to-face or online training.			
Group 2 Specific Staff	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)	<p><i>Course in Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace 22282VIC</i> (accredited)</p> <p>OR</p> <p><i>Course in Emergency Asthma Management 10392NAT</i> (accredited)</p>	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by MWPS	3 years

MWPS will also conduct an annual briefing for staff on:

- the procedures outlined in this policy
- the causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma
- identities of the students diagnosed with asthma
- how to use a puffer and spacer
- the location of:
 - the Asthma Emergency Kits
 - asthma medication which has been provided by parents for student use.

MWPS 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.

Asthma Emergency Kit

MWPS will provide and maintain Large First Aid Backpacks as well as a First Aid crate which contain Ventolin plus spacers. Ventolin and spacers will be kept on school premises at the school's Health Centre / First Aid room and the emergency first aid backpack or large first aid crate are used for activities such as:

- sport days
- excursions
- camps.

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. MWPS 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 school nurse 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 replace 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 spaces.

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 MWPS 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 MWPS website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about MWPS asthma management procedures.

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

MWPS 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.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THIS POLICY

- Asthma Australia: [Resources for schools](#)
- School Policy and Advisory Guide:
 - [Asthma](#)
 - [Asthma Attacks: Treatment](#)
 - [Asthma Emergency Kits](#)
- Health Care Needs
- First Aid Policy
- Medication Policy

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's regular evaluation cycle and will be reviewed in three years' time or as required.

Policy Area:**Student Wellbeing****Tabled at School Council:****March 2020****Next Review:****2021**