



## ASTHMA POLICY

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### PURPOSE

This purpose of this policy is to ensure Altona Primary School as far as practicable, provides a safe, healthy and supportive school environment that takes into consideration the needs of all students, including those who may suffer from 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 treatment for asthma and their parents/carers.

This policy will be available on Altona Primary School website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about our asthma management procedures. The parents and carers of students who are enrolled at Altona Primary School and are identified as being at risk of asthma will also be provided with a copy of this policy.

### DEFINITIONS

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 harder 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



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- 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-inflammatories)

### POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

#### Statement

##### **Altona Primary School will:**

- Raise awareness about asthma and the school's asthma management policy in the school community to ensure all students can participate equally in all aspects of the student's schooling.
- Engage with parents/carers of students at risk of asthma in assessing risks, developing risk minimisation strategies and management strategies for the student.
- Ensure that each staff member has adequate knowledge about asthma and the school's policy and procedures in responding to an asthmatic reaction.

#### Asthma Management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at Altona Primary School:

1. Parents/carers must provide the school with an [Asthma Care 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;
  - 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.
2. Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Care Plan

All Asthma Action Plans will be located:

3. In a Medical Alert Folder in the first aid room; a copy placed in the relevant classroom and; a copy with the student's individual asthma medication container located in the first aid room
4. School 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
5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, Altona Primary School parents/carers are required to provide any updated medical information.
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Care Plan.
7. School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Care Plans (and Student Health Support Plans) at least once a year e.g. at the beginning of the school year, and/or if students health plans change

#### **Please note:**



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- 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](http://www.asthma.org.au)
- 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
- Asthma plans will be attached to the student’s records for reference.

Student asthma kits will be stored in **clearly labelled individual containers in the first aid room**

### 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 (**See also Appendix B**). School staff may contact Triple Zero “000” at any time.

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

#### Please note:

- Care 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.
- If no plan is available children are to be sat down, reassured, administered 4 puffs of a shaken reliever puffer (blue canister) delivered via a spacer– inhaling 4 deep breaths per puff, wait 4 minutes, if necessary administer 4 more puffs and repeat the cycle. An ambulance must be called if there is no improvement after the second 4-minute wait period, or if it is the child’s first known attack. Parents must be contacted whenever their child suffers an asthma attack.

Step	Action
1.	<p>Sit the person upright</p> <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.	<p>Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer:</p> <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>



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	<b>Remember – Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths</b>
3.	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.	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 Sybicort 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

### Training for staff

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

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
<b>Group 1 General 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.	Asthma first aid management for education staff (non-accredited)  One hour face-to-face or online training.	Asthma Australia	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 22282VIC</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 Altona Primary School	3 years

The school will also conduct an annual briefing for staff on:

- the procedures outlined in this policy
- 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

The school will communicate information to casual relief teachers who will be working with students who have asthma and the procedures for their care.



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### Asthma Emergency Kit

Altona Primary School will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. One kit will be kept on school premises in the first aid room and/or the front office and one will be a mobile kit for activities such as:

- yard duty
- 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 (the 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:
  - o how to use the medication and spacer devices
  - o 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;
- A designated staff member will monitor and maintain the Asthma Emergency Kits. The delegated first aid staff member will be responsible for checking reliever puffer expiry dates;
- 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, and only then if the plan includes and complies with the Vic Government School's Reference Guide – Asthma Medication Delivery Devices. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide the nebuliser.

The designated staff member 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 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 Altona Primary School to support a student diagnosed with asthma will be:

- recorded on the student's file



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- 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 Altona Primary School's website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about the school's asthma management procedures.

### Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Altona 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

### Related School Policies

- First Aid Policy
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Anaphylaxis Management Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Excursions and Camping Policy
- Child Safe Policy

### Related DET Resources

- Asthma Foundation Victoria: [Resources for schools](#)
- School Policy and Advisory Guide:
  - o [Asthma](#)
  - o [Asthma Attacks: Treatment](#)
  - o [Asthma Emergency Kits](#)

### Related Appendices

**APPENDIX A:** Training for staff

**APPENDIX B:** Asthma First Aid

## EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or as necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances and/or after a significant asthma incident.