

# Asthma Management

## POLICY

To provide parents/carers and staff of Ripponlea Primary School (RPS) with processes and protocols regarding the management of students with asthma while they are at RPS and in the care of staff.

## PURPOSE

To manage the wellbeing of students who suffer from asthma or asthma symptoms while they are at RPS and in the care of staff.

## 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 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
- a 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 of asthma include:

- exercise
- cold/flu
- smoke
- weather changes
- dust
- mould
- foods/additives
- medications
- emotions.

## IMPLEMENTATION

1. Students must alert a staff member of RPS immediately when they begin to experience any signs of asthma.
2. Schools can manage triggers by:
  - planting low allergenic gardens/plants;

- reviewing cleaning products used;
  - conducting works outside of school hours;
  - ensuring regular cleaning schedules.
3. Parents/carers of students who suffer from asthma must:
- on enrolment, notify RPS if a student suffers from asthma and provide accurate, current and detailed information to RPS regarding:
    - the prescribed medication to be taken and when it is to be administered;
    - emergency contact details;
    - contact details of the student’s medical/health practitioner;
    - the student’s asthma symptoms and triggers including signs to recognise worsening symptoms;
  - provide RPS with a completed Victorian School Asthma Action Plan;
  - notify RPS of any changes relevant to the student’s asthma management;
  - update the Victorian School Asthma Action Plan annually or as requested by RPS;
  - complete School Camp Asthma Action Plan and Excursion Medical Update Form prior to the student attending camp or going on excursions.
4. **Staff of RPS must be aware of:**
- students in their class/level who suffer from asthma;
  - this Asthma Management Policy and related processes and protocols regarding the management of students with asthma.
5. **Nominated first aid staff members must:**
- inform staff of RPS about the Asthma Management Policy and related processes and protocols regarding the management of students with asthma;
  - inform parents/carers about the Asthma Management Policy and where applicable request parents/carers to update annually their student’s Victorian School Asthma Action Plan;
  - act on advice and warnings from the Department Education and Training’s Emergency Management Division associated with a potential thunderstorm asthma activity;
  - provide staff with all relevant asthma information for students in their care;
  - ensure asthma medication kept at RPS is managed in accordance with the Medication Policy;
  - organise asthma training in accordance with applicable DET guidelines;
  - manage and maintain asthma first aid kits;
  - maintain private and confidential medical documentation of students with asthma.

## REFERENCES

- Asthma, Chronic Illness Alliance: <http://www.chronicillness.org.au/invisible-illness/asthma/>
- Asthma Australia - see Asthma Foundation Victoria for Victorian Schools: <https://www.asthmaaustralia.org.au/vic/education-and-training/for-victorian-schools/victorian-schools-resources>
- DET School Policy & Advisory Guide – Asthma: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/conditionasthma.aspx>
- Asthma Australia: <https://asthmaonline.org.au/>

- Better Health Channel – Thunderstorm Asthma:  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/conditionasthma.aspx#1>

## **RELATED POLICIES**

- Medication Policy
- Camps & Excursions Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Duty of Care

**Ratified by School Council: May 2019**  
**Next review date: May 2020**