Osbornes Flat
PRIMARY SCHOOL

# ASTHMA POLICY

**Help for non-English speakers**

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Osbornes Flat Primary School on (02) 6027 1415 or email us at osbornes.flat.ps@education.vic.gov.au.

## Purpose

To ensure that Osbornes Flat Primary School appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

## Objective

To explain to Osbornes Flat Primary School parents/carers, staff and students 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 treatment for asthma and their parents/carers.

## Policy

### 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*

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
- colds/flu
- smoke (cigarette smoke, wood smoke from open fires, burn-offs or bushfires)
- weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air
- house dust mites
- moulds
- pollens
- animals such as cats and dogs
- chemicals such as household cleaning products
- deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)
- food chemicals/additives
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)
- laughter or emotions, such as stress

## Asthma management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrols at Osbornes Flat Primary School:

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
    - 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. A photo of the student, provided by the parent/carer or school, will be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan to assist with identification.

3. Osbornes Flat Primary School will keep Asthma Action Plans in the student's school record and in designated locations/systems that are readily accessible to relevant staff while protecting the student's privacy and confidentiality.

4. A student with an Asthma Action Plan only requires a Student Health Support Plan if their asthma is not well-controlled, as identified by a health practitioner, and they require individualised medical or health-related supervision, care or adjustments at school. Where required, school staff will 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 Osbornes Flat Primary School's Healthcare Needs Policy.

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

6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parents/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.

7. School staff will review Asthma Action Plans (and, where relevant, Student Health Support Plans) when updated medical or health practitioner information is received, when the student's needs or level of support change, or when the school, student or parents/carers have concerns about the support being provided. Otherwise, plans will be reviewed with parents/carers at least annually to confirm they remain current and to seek updated medical or health advice where available.

## 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 a location that is readily accessible to the student and relevant staff. Reliever medication should be easily accessible at all times and, where appropriate, may be carried by the student. A student's asthma kit, including their prescribed reliever medication, spacer and a copy of their Asthma Action Plan, must accompany them on off-site activities including camps, excursions and sporting events.

## 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 follow the Asthma First Aid procedures outlined in the table below. Staff may call Triple Zero (000) at any time and must do so immediately where the circumstances listed below apply.

| Step | Action |
|---|---|
| 1. | Sit the person upright<br>· Be calm and reassuring<br>· Do not leave them alone<br>· Seek assistance from another staff member or reliable student to locate the student's Asthma Action Plan and an Asthma Emergency Kit if required.<br>· If the student's Asthma Action Plan is not immediately available, use Asthma First Aid as described in Steps 2 to 5. |
| 2. | Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue-grey reliever puffer:<br>· Shake the puffer<br>· Use a spacer if you have one<br>· Put 1 puff into the spacer<br>· The student draws in the medication from the spacer<br>· Repeat until 4 separate puffs have been given<br>Note: give 2 doses if using a Bricanyl inhaler instead of a blue or blue-grey reliever puffer. |
| 3. | Wait 4 minutes<br>· If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue or blue-grey reliever as above and wait 4 minutes (or give 1 more dose of Bricanyl inhaler). |
| 4. | If there is still no improvement, call Triple Zero (000) and ask for an ambulance.<br>· Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack.<br>· Keep giving 4 separate puffs every 4 minutes until emergency assistance arrives (or 1 dose of Bricanyl inhaler every 4 minutes). |
| 5. | If asthma is relieved after administering Asthma First Aid, stop the treatment and observe the student.<br>· Notify the student's emergency contact person.<br>· Record the incident in eduSafe Plus in accordance with the Department's Managing and Reporting School Incidents (Including Emergencies) policy.<br>· If the Asthma Emergency Kit was used, record the details in the kit record/log, including the number of puffs administered. |

Staff will call Triple Zero (000) immediately if:

- the student is not breathing

· the student is having a severe or life-threatening asthma attack, including where reliever medication is not working, they cannot speak a full sentence, they have extreme difficulty breathing, feel their asthma is out of control, or their lips are turning blue

· the student is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available

· at any time the student's condition suddenly worsens or is not improving, or staff are otherwise concerned about the student's health and safety

· the student is known to have anaphylaxis – staff will follow the student's Anaphylaxis Action Plan first, then give asthma first aid.

## Training for staff

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

| Staff | Completed by | Course | Provider | Cost | Valid for |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group 1 General Staff | All school staff. | Asthma First Aid for Schools (non-accredited) One-hour training, online or face-to-face. | Asthma Australia | Free to all schools | 3 years |
| Group 2 Targeted Staff | Staff working with high-risk students with a history of severe asthma; staff with direct student wellbeing responsibility (including first aid officers and camp organisers); and staff in high-risk teaching areas such as PE/sport and cooking. | 22702VIC Course in the Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace (accredited) | Registered Training Organisation with this course in scope | Paid by Osbornes Flat Primary School | 3 years |

Osbornes Flat Primary School will ensure staff complete the appropriate asthma management training. General staff training is to be completed at least every 3 years. Targeted accredited training is required for staff with higher-level asthma responsibilities or working in higher-risk settings. Where required training has not yet been completed, the Principal will establish an interim supervision arrangement and ensure training occurs as soon as practicable. The school may also conduct an annual briefing for staff to reinforce asthma management procedures, including:

· 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.

Osbornes Flat Primary School 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

Osbornes Flat Primary School will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits: one located on school premises and one 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, Asmol 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 (Osbornes Flat Primary 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:
    - 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's Business Manager will monitor and maintain the Asthma Emergency Kits. They will:

- ensure all contents are maintained and replaced where necessary
- regularly check the expiry date and remaining doses of blue or blue-grey reliever puffers and replace them if expired or low on doses
- replace spacers in the Kits after each use (spacers are single-person use only; a used spacer may be given to the student or disposed of)
- dispose of any previously used spacers that are not given to the student.

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 Osbornes Flat Primary School to support a student diagnosed with asthma will be:

- recorded on the student's file
- shared only with relevant staff who require the information to properly support the student and respond appropriately, in accordance with applicable Department privacy and information-sharing requirements.

### Communication plan

This policy will be available on Osbornes Flat Primary School's website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about Osbornes Flat Primary School's asthma management procedures.

### Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Osbornes Flat Primary School will follow warnings and advice from the Department of Education, including advice from the Security and Emergency Management Division, associated with a potential epidemic thunderstorm asthma event.

## 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 and staff training
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

## Further information and resources

- Asthma Australia: Resources for schools and Asthma Emergency Kits Resources for schools
- Department of Education Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):
  - Asthma Asthma
  - Treating an asthma attack Treating an asthma attack

- Related school policies: Health Care Needs Policy, First Aid Policy, Administration of Medication Policy and Anaphylaxis Policy

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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|---|---|
| Policy last reviewed | 20/08/2026 |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | August 2027 |