



Procedures

This procedure provides guidance and direction in the management of a student at risk of asthma. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the DOBCEL Asthma Management Policy

The components of this procedure include:

- Duty of Care
- Asthma Information, Symptoms and Triggers
- Annual Asthma Risk Management Checklist
- Asthma Emergency Response Plan
- Asthma Action Plan
- Student Health Support Plan
- Accessing and Managing Student Asthma Action Plans
- First Aid for Asthma Procedure
- Asthma Emergency Kits
- Recording Asthma First Aid Treatments
- Managing Asthma and School Based Activities
 - Exercise Induced Asthma
 - Managing Colour Fun Run Asthma
 - Managing Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma
 - Asthma Communication Plan
 - Management of Confidential Medical Information.

Actions

Duty of Care

- All school staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect students in their supervision from risks that are reasonably foreseeable including the provision of a first aid facility, knowing which students at the school have been diagnosed with asthma and how to provide asthma emergency first aid.

Asthma Information, Symptoms and Triggers

- 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 making 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
- These 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; and/or
 - persistent cough
- If a student develops signs of what appears to be an asthma attack, appropriate care must be given immediately using the information in the student's Asthma Action Plan
- A trigger is something that induces 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
 - 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)
- School can reduce asthma triggers by:
 - mowing school grounds out of hours
 - planting a low allergen garden
 - limit dust, for example having the carpets and curtains cleaned regularly and out of hours
 - examine the cleaning products used in the school and their potential impact on students with asthma
 - conduct maintenance that may require the use of chemicals, such as painting, during school holidays; and
 - turn on fans, air conditioning and heaters out of hours when being used for the first time after a long period of non-use
- Completing the Annual Asthma Risk Management checklist is one way to prevent asthma. Eliminating or reducing exposure to triggers is the best strategy to minimise the likelihood and severity of asthma incidents in schools.

Annual Asthma Risk Management Checklist

- All DOBCEL schools must complete an Annual Asthma Risk Management Checklist (Appendix 1) to identify hazards and reasonably mitigate the risks of triggering an asthma attack occurring at school. DOBCEL schools must consider:
 - the likelihood of asthma attack
 - the accessibility and location of medication
 - the availability of suitably trained staff to administer medication in accordance with an asthma management plan; and
 - availability and accessibility to emergency services should they be required
- The Annual Asthma Risk Management Checklist must be completed in Term 1 each year and the actions managed by the school.

Asthma Emergency Response Plan

- DOBCEL school staff will follow the generic First Aid for Asthma plan in Appendix 2 if a student is displaying signs and symptoms of asthma for the first time. If the student's symptoms do not improve, they will call Emergency Services and request an ambulance
- DOBCEL school staff will follow a student's Asthma Action Plan. If the student's symptoms do not improve then they will call Emergency Services and request an ambulance.

Asthma Action Plan

Please refer to the links in Appendix 3 for examples of Asthma Action Plans

Once a student is diagnosed with Asthma at a DOBCEL school, the parents/carers must:

- provide the school with an Asthma Action Plan which has been completed by the student's medical practitioner. The plan must include:
 - the prescribed medication (labelled with the student's name) and when it is to be administered, for example as a pre-medication to exercise or on a regular basis
 - their own spacer, if required
 - emergency contact details
 - the contact 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
- advise the school of any change in the student's medical condition, including any changes in the diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions
- must provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan.

Student Health Support Plan

- Once a student is diagnosed with Asthma and has provided the school with an Asthma Action Plan, the principal (or nominee) will meet with the parents/carers to discuss and complete a Student Health Support Plan (see Appendix 5) detailing the asthma risk minimisation and prevention strategies in relation to on-site and off-site activities, including camps, excursions and sports.

Accessing and Managing Student Asthma Action Plans

- Asthma Action Plans must be kept/displayed in the classroom (for primary school students), in the staffroom, and first aid facilities
- If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, the parents/carers must provide a School Camp and Excursion Asthma Update Form as detailed in Appendix 4)
- If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan
- DOBCEL school principals must appoint a person to be responsible for ensuring that:
 - student's emergency contact details are up-to-date
 - ensure that the student's Asthma Action Plan matches the student's supplied medication
 - regularly check that the student's medication is not out-of-date
 - inform parents if medication is approaching expiration
 - ensure that the student's medication is stored correctly and in an unlocked, easily accessible place; and
 - ensure that a copy of the Asthma Action Plan is stored with the student's medication

- The Asthma Action Plan must be reviewed in consultation with the student's parents/carers:
 - annually
 - if the student's medical condition changes; and
 - as soon as is practicable after the student has an asthmatic reaction at school

First Aid for Asthma Procedure

If a student is having an asthma attack for the first time, and/or difficulty breathing, school staff are advised to follow the First Aid for Asthma procedure detailed in Appendix 2.

Asthma Emergency Kits

Every DOBCEL school with a student diagnosed with Asthma, should have at least one (1) Asthma Emergency Kit which contains the following items:

- 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
- clear written instructions on First Aid for Asthma (Appendix 2), including:
 - how to use the medication and spacer devices; and
 - steps to be taken in treating an asthma attack
- The principal or nominated first aid staff member 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 are low on doses
 - replace spacers in the kits after each use (spacers are single-person use only); and
 - dispose of any previously used spacers
- 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; and
 - test the puffer to make sure no water remains in it, then return to the Asthma Emergency Kit.

Recording of Asthma First Aid Treatments

- Maintain a record sheet/log of the asthma first aid treatment provided. Include details of symptoms displayed/severity; the time of each observation and the number of puffs administered etc.

Exercise Induced Asthma

- Exercise induced asthma can be managed by the following steps:
 - encourage the student to take blue/grey reliever medication 15 minutes before exercise begins
 - ensure that the student participates in the warm-up activity
 - stop the student from participating, if symptoms occur, take reliever and follow their Asthma Action Plan; and
 - only recommence activity if symptom free. Cease activity for the day if symptoms reoccur.

Managing Colour Fun Run Induced Asthma

- The inhalation of small particles could affect people with asthma. The colours used in the Colour Run are in powder form (corn starch), which could irritate the airways of someone with asthma and result in an asthma flare-up, particularly if they have a sensitivity to corn
- Parents/carers of students with asthma should be made aware of the potential risk and should be encouraged to consult their GP to ensure participation is safe prior to participating
- If students with asthma are participating in the event they must have their medication with them and if required, wear a facemask
- The Asthma Foundation of Victoria advises the organizers of the event not to throw the powder in the faces of the participants.

Managing Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

- Every year during grass pollen season there is also the chance of an epidemic thunderstorm asthma event. Epidemic thunderstorm asthma is triggered by an uncommon combination of high grass pollen levels and a certain type of thunderstorm, resulting in large numbers of people developing asthma symptoms over a short period of time.
- People at risk during an Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma event include:
 - people with asthma
 - people with a past history of asthma
 - people with undiagnosed asthma; and
 - people with hay fever
- Having both asthma and hay fever, as well as poor control and self-management of asthma increases the risk further
- The school will follow all advice from the Department of Education and Training (DET) and ensure the following strategies are in place:
 - implement a communication plan to inform the school community and parents, if the risk of thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high
 - implement procedures to minimise exposure such as postponing outdoor activities and directing staff and students to stay indoors, with windows and doors closed; and
 - following Asthma Action Plans for students diagnosed with Asthma or follow the First Aid for Asthma procedure if it is the first time a student is displaying signs or symptoms of asthma.

Asthma Communication Plan

- The school Asthma Communication Plan is to be documented in the Asthma Risk Management Checklist (see Appendix 1) and made available on the school website.
- Newsletters will also be sent periodically to all schools to remind parents/carers to update student health plans and asthma action plans.

Management of Confidential Medical Information

Confidential medical information provided to the school or office location will be securely managed. Student and staff information will be shared with all relevant staff so that they are able to support and respond appropriately, to student or staff member diagnosed with asthma.

Supporting Documents

Related DOBCEL Policies and Procedures

- DOBCEL Asthma Management Policy
- DOBCEL First Aid and Infection Control Policy
- DOBCEL First Aid and Infection Control Procedure

Forms, Templates and Associated Documents

- Appendix 1 - Annual Asthma Risk Management Checklist
- Appendix 2 - First Aid for Asthma
- Appendix 3 - Asthma Action Plan
- Appendix 4 – School Camp and Excursion Asthma Update Form
- Appendix 5 – Student Health Support Plan

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