

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT POLICY

Rationale:

Asthma affects many primary school aged children and can be life- threatening. It is important therefore for all staff members of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Primary School, to be aware of asthma, its symptoms and triggers, and the management of asthma in a school environment. Asthma is one the most common causes of death in primary school aged children and the prevalence of students with severe allergic reactions is increasing, therefore, it is literally a matter of life or death that the school is able to provide a safe environment for the students who suffer from asthma. People with poorly managed asthma are more likely to suffer and even die from anaphylaxis.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to manage asthma and asthma suffers as effectively and efficiently as possible at school, and to continue to meet the requirements of Asthma Friendly Schools (AFS) accreditation.

Definitions Asthma attacks involve the narrowing of airways making it difficult to breathe. Symptoms commonly include difficulty breathing, wheezy breathing, dry and irritating cough, tightness in the chest and difficulty speaking. Severe asthma sufferers may require daily or additional medication particularly after exercise.

Implementation:

- Asthma education is provided for all school staff.
- Asthma Action Plans for each student are actively encouraged and kept in a central location.
- Asthma First Aid posters are on display in staff areas, First Aid areas and Sick Bay.
- Students with asthma are encouraged to have their medications readily accessible and are safely stored at all times. These are clearly labelled with the student's name.
- A plan is in place for managing asthma during school sporting activities, excursions and camps.
- A blue reliever puffer and spacer device are available for emergency use at school and are always taken on excursions by class teachers in the asthma pack.
- Details of student's asthma action plans are taken by class teacher every time a group of students leaves the school within normal school hours e.g. inter-school sports.
- Asthma related information is provided through the school to parents/carers that contributes to the quality of life, health outcomes and well-being for their children.
- Asthma Friendly Schools Program teaching resources are used as part of the school's health curriculum.
- St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Primary School policy is to require students' to use a spacer device when taking their asthma medication.

The asthma emergency kit must include:

A blue reliever puffer for first aid use. Students should provide their own medication for their usual asthma management although a spacer device from the asthma emergency kit can be used with the student's own medication.

A spacer device to assist with effective inhalation of the blue reliever medication.

Clear, written instructions on how to use these medications and devices, plus the steps to be taken in treating an acute asthma attack as described on the AFS poster.

70% alcohol swabs to clean devices after use.

- St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Primary School strives to minimize potential asthma triggers within the school environment.

- Blue reliever puffers are extremely safe even if the student does not have asthma therefore if a student is having difficulty breathing at school and is not known to have pre-existing asthma administer 4 separate puffs of a blue reliever puffer via a spacer and call an ambulance immediately.

Resources <http://www.asthmafriendlyschools.org.au>

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed every two years as part of the required asthma management training staff receive.