

St Philomena's Primary School

Asthma Policy



Reviewed May 2019

St Philomena's Primary School – Asthma Policy

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disorder of the airways. In susceptible individuals, this inflammation causes recurrent episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing, particularly at night or in the early morning. These episodes are usually associated with widespread but variable airflow obstruction that is often reversible either spontaneously or with treatment.

Potential triggers for the inflammatory process in asthma include allergy, viral respiratory infections, tobacco smoke, air pollutants and occupational dusts, gases and chemicals, certain drugs, and non-specific stimuli such as cold air exposure and exercise.

St Philomena's endeavours to educate the school community on the nature of the disease, asthma management, the need current student documentation and what do to do in the event of an asthma emergency.

Values

St Philomena's Primary School is committed to:

- Raising the awareness of asthma amongst those involved with our school the necessary procedures to ensure the health and safety of all persons with asthma
- Providing an environment in which children with asthma can participate in all activities to their full potential
- Providing a clear set of guidelines and expectations to be followed with regard to the management of asthma

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to document strategies for implementation of best practice asthma management so that:

- All children enrolled at St Philomena's who have asthma can receive appropriate attention as required
- Staff can respond to the needs of children who have not been diagnosed with asthma and who have an asthma attack or difficulty breathing.

Considerations

This policy is correct at the time of publication. This policy has been developed in accordance with the Asthma Foundation of NSW's Asthma Friendly Children's Services Program, and incorporates the 7 essential criteria to become an Asthma Friendly School.

Our Commitment

Asthma management should be viewed as a shared responsibility. To this end each of the key groups within St Philomena's School give the following undertakings:

The Executive will:

- Identify children with asthma during the enrolment process.

- Seek permission from all parents on enrolment to administer Asthma First Aid if the child has difficulty breathing or has a first attack of asthma in care.
- Provide families with a copy of the Asthma Policy upon enrolment.
- Provide all staff with a copy of the Asthma Policy and brief them on asthma procedures upon their appointment to our school.
- Provide opportunity & encouragement for staff to attend regular asthma training and ensure that at least one staff member responsible for first aid who has completed asthma training (Emergency Asthma Management) is on duty whenever children are being cared for or educated, including off site excursions.
- Provide an Asthma Record to all families of children with asthma upon enrolment. The completed Asthma Record is to be returned promptly, reviewed annually and kept in a central location.
- Ensure that all staff are informed of the children with asthma in their care.
- Formalise and document the internal procedures for Asthma First Aid, for both children with a diagnosis of asthma, and those with no known diagnosis of asthma (first attack).
- Ensure that an Asthma First Aid poster is displayed in a key location.
- Ensure that the Asthma Emergency Kit contains a blue reliever puffer (e.g. Airomir, Asmol, Epaq or Ventolin), a spacer device and child mask if necessary and concise written instructions on Asthma First Aid procedures.
- Provide a mobile Asthma Emergency Kit for use on activities outside the school grounds.
- Encourage open communication between families and staff regarding the status and impact of a child's asthma.
- Promptly communicate any concerns to families should it be considered that a child's asthma is limiting his/her ability to participate fully in all activities.
- Identify and, where practicable, minimise asthma triggers.

Staff will:

- Ensure that they maintain current Asthma First Aid training.
- Ensure that they are aware of the children in their care with asthma.
- In consultation with the family, optimise the health and safety of each child through supervised management of the child's asthma.
- Identify and, where practicable, minimise asthma triggers.
- Ensure children's reliever puffers are available to them at all times.
- Ensure that all regular prescribed asthma medication is administered in accordance with the information on the Child's Asthma Record.
- Administer emergency asthma medication if required according to the child's Asthma Record. If no Asthma Record is available the Standard Asthma First Aid Plan should be followed immediately.
- Promptly communicate, to executive and families, if they are concerned about the child's asthma limiting his/her ability to participate fully in all activities.
- Provide families with the contact details of the Asthma Foundation if further asthma advice is needed.
- Regularly maintain all asthma components of the Asthma Emergency Kit to ensure all medications are current and any asthma devices are cleaned after each use and ready to use.

Families will:

- Inform staff, either upon enrolment or on initial diagnosis, that their child has a history of asthma.
- Provide all relevant information regarding the child's asthma via the Asthma Record as provided by the child's doctor.
- Notify the staff, in writing, of any changes to the Asthma Record during the year.
- Ensure that their child has an adequate supply of appropriate medication (reliever) and spacer device clearly labeled with the child's name including expiry dates.
- Communicate all relevant information and concerns with staff as the need arises e.g. if asthma symptoms were present during the night.

Procedure if a child has an asthma attack at school

In any case where a child is having an asthma attack, the staff should immediately:

Administer Asthma First Aid according to either:

The Child's Asthma Record's First Aid Plan as signed by the family and doctor and/or doctor's written instructions **or**

If a staff member has had the appropriate training they should follow the **Asthma First Aid Plan** on the poster

In an emergency call an ambulance (Dial 000) and notify the family.

If a child has difficulty in breathing and there is no notification on any written communication from the parents/guardian about him/her having asthma call an ambulance immediately, follow the Asthma First Aid Plan and contact the parents immediately. No harm is likely to result from giving a reliever puffer to someone without asthma.

Call an ambulance immediately when:

- A child is having a severe asthma attack
- There is any breathing difficulty
- The child's condition suddenly deteriorates
- There is no improvement after Asthma First Aid
- If there is concern at any time

Continue Asthma First Aid while waiting for the ambulance

Record any asthma incident and file the completed form with all incident reports.

Asthma First Aid Plan

Step 1: Sit the child upright, remain calm and provide reassurance. Do not leave the child alone.

Step 2: Give 4 puffs of a blue reliever (Airomir, Asmol, Epaq or Ventolin), one puff at a time, through a spacer device. Ask the child to take 4 breaths from the spacer after each puff.

Step 3: Wait 4 minutes.

Step 4: If there is little or no improvement, repeat steps 2 and 3. If there is still little or no improvement, call an ambulance immediately (Dial 000). Continue to repeat steps 2 and 3 while waiting for the ambulance.

In an emergency the blue reliever puffer can be accessed from the Asthma Emergency Kit, or borrowed from another child. No harm is likely to result from giving a reliever puffer to someone without asthma.

Appendix

- Student Asthma Record Card
- Managing Your Child's Asthma information sheet - *for new enrolments*