

ASTHMA POLICY

*The Currajong School takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all **Child Safe Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015)***

PURPOSE

To ensure that students who have been diagnosed with asthma are efficiently and effectively supported.

OBJECTIVE

To explain to The Currajong School parents, 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.

POLICY

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 airways 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:

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

Asthma management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at The Currajong School:

1. Parents must provide the school with an [Asthma Care 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 The Currajong School 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 flareup or attack.
2. Parents/ guardians/carers should also provide a current photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Care Plan.
3. The Currajong School will keep all Asthma Care Plans:
 - in the Staff Room, on the bench under the first aid cabinet;
 - in the classroom; and
 - in the classroom excursion folder.
4. School staff may also work with parents/ guardians/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 The Currajong School's Healthcare Needs Policy.

5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, The Currajong School parents are required to provide any updated medical information.
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Care Plan.
7. School staff will work with parents to review Asthma Care Plans (and Student Health Support Plans) at the beginning of each school year.

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 the Staff Room**.

Asthma emergency response plan

If a student is having an asthma attack OR difficulty breathing for an unknown cause, even if they are not known to have asthma, School staff will endeavour to follow the Asthma First Aid procedures outlined in the table below.

| Step | Action |
|------|--|
| 1. | Sit the person upright <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be calm and reassuring • Do not leave them alone • Seek assistance from another staff member or reliable student to locate the student's reliever, the Asthma Emergency Kit and the student's Asthma Care Plan (if available). • If the student's action plan is not immediately available, use the Asthma First Aid as described in Steps 2 to 5. |
| 2. | Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shake the puffer • Use a spacer if you have one • Put 1 puff into the spacer • Take 4 breaths from the spacer Remember – Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths |
| 3. | Wait 4 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above (or give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler) |
| 4. | If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero "000" and ask for an ambulance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack • Keep giving 4 separate puffs every 4 minutes until emergency assistance arrives |
| | (or 1 dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort every 4 minutes – up to 3 doses of Symbicort) |

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| 5. | If asthma is relieved after administering Asthma First Aid, stop the treatment and observe the student. Notify the student's emergency contact person and record the incident |
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Staff will call Triple Zero "000" immediately if:

- the person is not breathing
- if the person's asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- if the person is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- if they are not sure if it is asthma
- if the person is known to have anaphylaxis.

Training for staff

The Currajong School will arrange asthma management training for all staff every three years. In addition, an annual briefing at the start of each year will address:

- 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.

The Currajong 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

The Currajong School will provide and maintain enough Asthma Emergency Kits for one in each of the First Aid bags which are taken on all off-site programs and excursions.

The Asthma Emergency Kit will contain:

- 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 (The Currajong 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 First Aid officer 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 place them if they have expired or a low on doses;
- replace spacers in the Kits after each use (spacers are single-person use only);

- 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
- 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 The Currajong School to support a student diagnosed with asthma will be:

- recorded on the student's file
- shared with all relevant staff so that they are able to properly support students diagnosed with asthma and respond appropriately if necessary.

Communication plan

This policy will be available on The Currajong School's website so that parents/guardians/carers and other members of the school community can easily access information about The Currajong School's asthma management procedures.

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

The Currajong School will be prepared to act when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as per our three-year review cycle or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

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| Approval date: | Approved by: | Next Review: |
| October 2021 | School Board | October 2024 |



The Currajong School acknowledges the traditional owners of this country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to the Elders past, present and emerging.