



Asthma Management Policy

Reviewed: October 2020

Ratified: December 2020

Next Review: December 2022

Rationale

DOBCEL is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all staff and students in all aspects of school life. People who are at risk of asthma require a 'whole of community' response with each member committing to maintain their knowledge, skills and diligence towards planning.

It is the intention of every DOBCEL school to provide, as far as practicable, a safe and supportive environment in which students and staff at risk of asthma can participate equally.

DOBCEL acknowledges that the management of a student at risk of asthma is a partnership between the school, the staff, the students, the student's parents/carers and the treating medical practitioner.

Appropriate first aid facilities, training and resources must be in place in every DOBCEL school to meet the first aid needs of staff, students and others.

This policy sets out the expectations for schools when a student enrolled is diagnosed with asthma and how schools will work with students and families to effectively manage episodes of asthma.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the DOBCEL Asthma Management Procedure.

Definitions

Act: The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic).

Asthma: a respiratory condition causing difficulty in breathing. It is usually connected to allergic reaction or other forms of hypersensitivity. Asthma is a disease of the airways, the small tubes which carry air in and out of the lungs. When you have asthma symptoms the muscles in the airways tighten and the lining of the airways swells and produces sticky mucus. These changes cause the airways to become narrow, so that there is less space for the air to flow into and out of your lungs" (National Asthma Council 2011).

ASCIA: Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy, the peak professional body of clinical immunology and allergy in Australia and New Zealand.

Asthma Action Plan: This is a nationally recognised Action Plan for Asthma. This plan lists the student's prescribed medications and must be completed by the student's medical practitioner.

Communication Plan: A plan implemented by the school which provides information to all school staff, students and parents about asthma and the school's policy and procedures.

Asthma Emergency Response Plan: A plan for responding to an on-campus or off-campus asthma emergency. This plan includes the *First Aid for Asthma Action* plan for students displaying signs or symptoms for the first time or a student's *Asthma Action Plan* if they have been diagnosed as having Asthma.

Guidelines: *Asthma Management Guidelines – A resource for managing severe allergies in Victorian schools*, published by the Department of Education and Training from time to time.

Asthma Action Plan: This is a plan that is prepared by a medical practitioner for a student diagnosed with Asthma. This plan includes age-appropriate strategies to prevent or reduce the risk of an allergic reaction occurring at school.

Medical practitioner: This is a registered medical practitioner within the meaning of the *Health Professions Registration Act 2005*, but excludes a person registered as a non-practising health practitioner.

Principal: Defined in s 1.1.3 of the Education and Training Reform Act as meaning a person appointed to a designated position as principal of a registered school or a person in charge of a registered school.

School Staff: Any person employed or engaged at a DOBCEL school who:

- is required to be registered under Part 2.6 of the Act to undertake duties as a teacher within the meaning of that Part
- is in an educational support role and will be working with a student diagnosed with asthma
- the principal determines should comply with the school's asthma management policy
- is designated as a school volunteer and will be working with a student diagnosed with asthma

Policy Statement

All DOBCEL schools must:

- align their asthma management practices to the DOBCEL Asthma Management Policy and Procedure
- complete an Annual Asthma Risk Management Checklist for the school to document what arrangements are unique in relation to Asthma Management for each DOBCEL school
- ensure each student diagnosed as having asthma has an Asthma Action Plan
- wherever possible, minimise the risk of exposure to triggers and allergens that may induce an asthma attack
- develop and distribute a school Asthma Communication Plan to staff, parents/carers, and students to raise awareness about asthma and the schools risk mitigation strategies
- train staff on how to respond in an asthma emergency. This includes **First Aid for Asthma** as detailed in **Attachment 2** of the DOBCEL **Asthma Management Procedure**
- follow advice and warnings from the Department of Education, Emergency Management Division associated with a potential thunderstorm asthma event; and
- make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with asthma and consult with a student's parents/carers on what reasonable adjustments may be required

DOBCEL schools are committed to providing a school environment free from discrimination. As Asthma falls within the definition of a disability, for the purposes of both the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth).

DOBCEL schools will ensure they do not unlawfully discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against students with asthma. This means:

- students will not be treated unfavourably because of they have asthma. e.g. being excluded from school excursions and camps because they have asthma

- DOBCEL schools will not impose a requirement on all student's which disadvantages asthma students. For example, setting a policy which requires all students to participate in an activity with a trigger for specific student in the class, which will impact on that student's ability to participate in the class
- DOBCEL schools will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disabilities. It is important to consult with a student's parent/carer on what reasonable adjustments are appropriate

Asthma Emergency Response Plan

- DOBCEL school staff will follow the generic *First Aid for Asthma* plan 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

- Every student with an asthma diagnosis must have a current Asthma Action Plan prepared by a medical practitioner as soon as practicable after enrolment or diagnosis
- The Asthma Action Plan will be:
 - kept on the student's file
 - easily accessible by the staff in an emergency
 - shared with all relevant staff so that they are able to properly support students diagnosed with asthma and respond appropriately
- All DOBCEL schools must complete an Annual review of the Asthma Action Plan for each student diagnosed with Asthma

Student Health Plan

- Every student with an asthma diagnosis will have a Student Health Plan prepared by the school in consultation with the parents/carers of the student at risk. This plan will detail the risk minimisation and prevention strategies to be implemented by the school in support of the Asthma Action plan
- A copy of the Student Health Form is included in the Asthma Management Procedure

Asthma Communication Plan

- The principal (or nominee) in consultation with the schools designated First Aid Officer(s) are responsible for ensuring that the DOBCEL Asthma Management policy and procedure along with risk minimisation and prevention strategies are shared with all school staff and the school community
- This policy will be made available on all DOBCEL school websites so that parents/carers and other members of the community can easily access information about our asthma management policy

Staff Training

- Staff can be divided into two different groups for asthma management training purposes. They are '**Specific**' staff and '**General**' staff
- **Specific** staff (working with students that have a history of severe asthma) are advised to complete an accredited, face-to-face course in the management of asthma. Staff advised to undertake accredited asthma management training include:
 - staff with direct student wellbeing responsibility including designated nurses or first aid officers
 - Physical education staff
 - Food technology staff
 - Staff attending school camps and leading offsite activities
- The two accredited courses recognised in Victoria for Specific staff are:
 - [Management of asthma risks and emergencies in workplace](#) (22556VIC)
 - [Course in Asthma Awareness](#) (10760NAT)
- **General** Staff (those that do not work with students that have severe asthma or do not have any of the responsibilities mentioned above) are advised to complete the online, **non-accredited** [Asthma First Aid for Schools](#) through Asthma Australia. A certificate of completion is issued and it remain valid for 3 years
- All staff are advised to participate in an asthma briefing twice per year to be facilitated by the school. The first briefing to occur in Term 1 and the second in Term 3. The briefings will:
 - update all nominated staff on students at risk
 - educate on the correct use of asthma medication including puffer/inhaler and spacer
 - the location of Asthma Emergency First Aid Kits
 - provide relevant information on how to respond to an asthma reaction occurring during sanctioned school activities
- In circumstances where training or briefing does not occur as per the schedule mentioned above, the principal will develop an interim Student Health Plan in consultation with the parents/carers of any affected student with a medical condition that relates to asthma

Training - Casual staff and Volunteers

- All volunteers and Casual Relief Teachers (CRTs) responsible for supervising students with asthma are required to provide a copy of their asthma management training qualifications and must be briefed on any students at risk prior to supervising students

Role and Responsibilities

Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- informing the school in writing when a student has been diagnosed with asthma
- providing to the school an Asthma Action Plan signed by a medical practitioner and details their condition, the required interventions
- providing current emergency contact details for students
- informing the school in writing of any changes to the student's medical condition and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan as required
- meeting with the school to discuss the Asthma Action Plan
- providing the school with appropriate medication that is current and not expired
- assisting school staff with planning and meeting all reasonable medical needs prior to camps, incursions, excursions or special events
- participating in reviewing the student's Asthma Action Plan:
 - annually; or
 - when there is a change to the student's condition; or
 - as soon as practicable after the student has an asthma attack at school

Principal

Is responsible for:

- raising awareness about the DOBCEL Asthma Management policy and procedure;
- engaging with parents/carers, staff and students in assessing Asthma risks and developing risk mitigation strategies
- completing the Annual Asthma Risk Management Checklist in consultation with relevant staff
- ensuring school staff receive an annual briefings on:
 - their responsibilities as per the Asthma Management policy and procedure
 - the identities of students diagnosed at risk of asthma and the location of their medication
 - the school's Asthma Emergency Response Procedures; and
 - the location of asthma medication for General Use that have been purchased by the school
- ensuring each student with an asthma diagnosis has a current Asthma Action Plan prepared by a medical practitioner and a current Student Health Support Plan prepared by the school. These plans will include relevant asthma medications, prevention and minimisation strategies and emergency contact details.
- ensuring an Asthma Communication Plan is provided to all school staff, students and parents/carers about asthma management at the school

- ensuring there are procedures in place for inducting volunteers and casual relief teachers of students with asthma and their role in responding to an asthma attack
- ensuring that an appropriate number of school staff have successfully completed a current asthma management training course and that records of the same are maintained
- ensuring that each student's Asthma Action Plan is reviewed by a medical practitioner annually, or following an asthma attack
- ensuring that each Student Health Support Plan is reviewed annually or following an asthma attack at school, in consultation with the student and the parents/carers;
- ensuring an appropriate amount of asthma medication for General Use is available

First Aid Officer

First Aid Officers are responsible for:

- working with the school principal (or nominee) to implement the school's Asthma Management Policy and Procedures
- maintaining asthma management qualifications to respond to asthma emergencies
- arranging face-to-face accredited asthma management training for school staff that supervise students with severe asthma
- Providing support to 'General' school staff undertaking the non-accredited online asthma management training
- maintaining a current register of students diagnosed with asthma and ensuring that each has an up to date Asthma Action Plan
- collaborating with school leadership to ensure that asthma communication plans and risk minimisation/prevention strategies are appropriate and raising awareness across the school

School staff

School staff are responsible for:

- understanding the DOBCEL Asthma Management Policy and Procedure
- completing all required Asthma Management training when/if required
- Attending the asthma management briefings twice a year on the student's at risk. This includes a refresher on the triggers and how to recognise and respond to the symptoms
- knowing the students at risk under their supervision
- knowing how to access any student's Asthma Action Plan and Student Health Support Plan
- knowing the location of student asthma medication(s) and the schools asthma medication(s) for General Use
- adequately planning and preparing for asthma management outside of the school environment (e.g. excursions, incursions, sport days, camp, fetes and parties); and
- raising awareness about asthma management in the school and the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive school environment for students with asthma

Principles

Common Good

People are fundamentally social beings. Social, political and economic organisation has, therefore, implications for the entire community. Each social group, therefore, must take account of the rights and aspirations of other groups, and of the well-being of the whole human family. The common good is reached when all work together to improve the wellbeing of society and the wider world. The rights of the individual to personal possessions and community resources must be balanced with the needs of the disadvantaged and dispossessed.

Human Dignity

Our common humanity requires respect for and support of the sanctity and worth of every human life. All other rights and responsibilities flow from the concept of human dignity. This principle is deemed as the central aspect of the Church's social teaching. The belief that each life has value is shared with International Human Rights which are universal, inviolable and inalienable.

Transparency and Accountability

Transparency demands timely and accurate disclosure/reporting concerning the performance, decision making and financial health of DOBCEL to all stakeholders.

Accountability refers to the obligation of DOBCEL to accept responsibility for its activities and to disclose the results. It also includes responsibility for money or other entrusted property.

These two principles converge in the social responsibility to care for persons, resources and our planet as precious and vital to life. Responsible stewardship is integral to the mission of the Church and is a fundamental tenet of the Church's spirituality. It entails a responsibility for service that aims to nurture a gift from another. Frequently understood in relation to care.

References

- Schedule 4, Clause 12 Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017
- Minimum Standards for school registration (and school reviews) July 2020
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (CTH)
- Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (VRQA)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (VIC)

Related Policies and Procedures

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