



# ELTHAM HIGH SCHOOL

## POLICY *Asthma Management*

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### INTRODUCTION

'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)

Asthma is a chronic health condition affecting approximately 10% of Australian children and teenagers<sup>1</sup>. Asthma is one of the most common reasons for child admissions to hospital and missed days of school<sup>1</sup>. Asthma exacerbations can commonly occur while attending schools, particularly in February and May<sup>1</sup>.

### PHILOSOPHY

Eltham High School is recognised as an Asthma Friendly School. This has been achieved by satisfying the set of criteria that establishes an Asthma Friendly environment and meets current legislation and Departmental (DET) guidelines.

Eltham High School is committed to maintaining an awareness of best practice in Asthma Management and will ensure that the Asthma Management Policy is updated accordingly. This document includes information on the implementation and operation of a policy for the best practice management of asthma in Victorian schools. It is recommended that in situations where policy alterations are required, the Principal of the school seeks the advice of The Asthma Foundation of Victoria.

### POLICY STATEMENT

In order to meet the duty of care obligations specified by the School Policy and Advisory Guide (SPAG)<sup>2</sup>, and to ensure the health and wellbeing of all students attending. Eltham High School recognises the importance of staff education in the implementation of an asthma policy. The school recognises the importance of involvement and engagement with parents and carers of students and the ability of students to self-manage their asthma where appropriate. Key points within the SPAG<sup>2</sup>, relevant to an asthma management policy, specify that schools must:

- Obtain a written asthma plan for all students diagnosed with asthma upon enrolment at the school and ensure they are updated at least annually.
- Store medical information and medications appropriately.
- Ensure that students feel safe and supported at school.
- Support student healthcare needs.
- Provide and maintain at least two asthma emergency kits, with an extra kit required for every 300 students in a large school.
- Ensure that key staff undertake Emergency Asthma Management training and that all other staff with a duty of care for students attend a free asthma education session provided by The Asthma Foundation of Victoria.

### GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

- To ensure the whole school community (principals, staff, volunteers, parents and carers and students) are aware of their obligations and the best practice management of asthma in the school setting
- To provide the necessary information to manage episodes of asthma effectively within the school

## **Responsibilities**

### **The Principal will:**

- Provide staff with access to the school's asthma management policy and ensure all staff are aware of asthma management strategies upon employment at the school.
- Provide asthma education and first aid training for staff as required.
- Provide parents and carers with access to the school's asthma policy upon enrolment of their child through the school's website.
- Identify students with asthma during the enrolment process and provide parents and carers with a written asthma plan to be completed and signed by the child's medical practitioner (Health Support Planning Strategy).
- Where possible, ensure that all students with asthma have a current written asthma plan (must be updated at least annually).
- Ensure a School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Form is completed by parents/carers for off-site activities where possible.
- Implement an asthma first aid procedure consistent with current national recommendations and ensure that all staff are aware of the asthma first aid procedure.
- Ensure adequate provision and maintenance of asthma emergency kits for the school and that each asthma emergency kit contains reliever medication, two spacer devices, instructions outlining the first aid procedure and a record form.
- Ensure that reliever medications within the asthma emergency kits are replaced regularly and have not expired, and that spacers are replaced after each use.
- Facilitate communication between management, staff, parents and carers and students regarding the school's asthma management policy and strategies.
- Promptly communicate to parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students attending the school.
- Identify and minimise, where possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students.
- Ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way.
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in all activities safely and to their fullest abilities.

### **Staff will:**

- Be aware of the school's asthma management policy.
- Be aware of the asthma first aid procedure.
- Be aware of students with asthma and where their medication and personal spacers are stored.
- Attend asthma education and training sessions when required.
- Be aware of where to access written asthma plans, School Camp and Excursion Medical Update Forms, and asthma emergency kits.
- Identify and minimise, where possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students.
- Ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way.
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in activities safely and to their fullest abilities.
- Promptly communicate to the principal, parents and carers any concerns regarding asthma and students enrolled in the school.

### **Parents and Carers will:**

- Inform the school if their child has asthma upon enrolment.
- Read the school's asthma management policy.
- Provide a signed written asthma plan to the school, and ensure that it is updated at least yearly.
- Provide a School Camp or Excursion Medical Update form as required.
- Provide the school with their child's reliever medication along with a spacer (required for 'puffer' medication) for all times the child is attending the school, unless the child is carrying the medication and spacer for self-management purposes.
- Ensure that if their child is self-managing their asthma correctly the child carries their reliever medication

and spacer at all times.

- Promptly communicate all medical and health information relevant to their child, to the principal and staff of the school.
- Communicate any changes to their child's asthma or any concerns about the health of their child.

**Students will:**

- Immediately inform staff if they experience asthma symptoms.
- Inform staff if they have self-administered any asthma medication.
- Carry asthma medication and a spacer with them at all times (if self-managing their asthma).

**Asthma Emergency Kits** Asthma Emergency Kits should contain:

- Reliever medication
- X2 small volume spacer device
- Record form and Asthma First Aid instruction card

*Please note that it is a recommendation of The Asthma Foundation of Victoria that spacers and face masks are single-person use only<sup>3</sup>. It is essential to have at least two spacers and two face masks contained in each first aid kit and that spacers and face masks are replaced each time they are used.*

## **BASIS OF DISCRETION**

The School Council has responsibility for the establishment, evaluation and review of school policies. The School Principal has the responsibility to ensure that school policies are implemented effectively.

Minor changes to the policy (changes that will not affect the spirit of the policy) may be made at the discretion of the Principal.

The Policy Review and Evaluation process will recommend any major changes to the policy to School Council.

## **RELATED POLICIES**

Eltham High School

First Aid Management

Anaphylaxis

Health Support Planning Strategy

Forms mentioned in this policy are available to download free of charge from the Resources section of The Asthma Foundation of Victoria website at [www.asthma.org.au](http://www.asthma.org.au)

DET School Policy and Advisory Guide, Asthma

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/conditionasthma.aspx>

DET Asthma Attacks – Treatment

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/asthmaattack.aspx>

DET Health Support Planning

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/supportplanning.aspx>

## Further Reading and Resources

<sup>1</sup> *Australian Centre for Asthma Monitoring (2011), "Asthma in Australia: with a focus chapter on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease", Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra 2011.*

<sup>2</sup> *School Policy and Advisory Guide, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2011), available at [http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/spag/default.htm].*

<sup>3</sup> *National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (2010), "Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare", Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2010.*

**REVIEW**

This policy should be reviewed every 3 years.

Date Endorsed: 16/08/17

**Executive Officer**

Eltham High School Council

## Consultation Process and working Party Information:

This policy was written by:

Fran Mullins

Consultation has taken place with the relevant group(s) in the following list:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Consultation</b> ✓
School Operations Committee	
Staff	✓
Students (randomly selected group)	
Parents (randomly selected group)	✓
Members of the Community	
Other (where relevant please specify)	
Planning and Policy Review Team of Council <b>(Mandatory)</b>	✓
School Council <b>(Mandatory)</b>	

**PROCESS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW**

The Policy is developed or reviewed by the Policy Writer or Policy Writing Team using the agreed "Policy Template"

The policy is presented to the Planning and Policy Review Team

Relevant groups are consulted in relation to the policy by the Policy Writer / Policy Writing Team

Feedback is addresses by the Policy Writer /Policy Writing Team

The policy is re-presented to the Planning and Policy Review Team

Approved

The policy is presented to the School Council for endorsement

The policy is endorsed by the School Council

Further Clarification

Additional Feedback

Re-presented

