ASTHMA POLICY

PURPOSE

To ensure that Plenty Parklands Primary School appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

Asthma affects up to one in four primary aged children, one in seven teenagers and one in ten adults. It is important therefore for all staff members to be aware of asthma, its symptoms and triggers, and the management of asthma in a school environment.

OBJECTIVE

To explain to Plenty Parklands Primary School parents/carers, staff and students the processes and procedures in place to support students diagnosed with asthma.
To manage asthma and provide for those diagnosed with asthma as effectively and efficiently as possible at school.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- all staff, including causal relief staff, contractors and volunteers
- all students who have been diagnosed with asthma or who may require emergency treatment for asthma and their parents/carers.

POLICY

Asthma

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 airway 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:

- exercise
- smoke (cigarette smoke, wood smoke from open fires, burn-offs or bushfires)
- colds/flu
- weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air

- house dust mites
- pollens
- chemicals such as household cleaning products
- food chemicals/additives
- laughter or emotions, such as stress
- moulds
- animals such as cats and dogs
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)
- deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)

Asthma management

Children and adults with mild asthma rarely require medication; however severe asthma sufferers may require daily or additional medication (particularly after exercise).

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrols at Plenty Parklands Primary School:

1. Parents/carers must provide the school with an Asthma Action Plan consistent with Asthma Australia's requirements which has been completed by the student's medical practitioner. Appropriate Victorian schools asthma action plan proformas are available at: https://asthma.org.au/treatment-diagnosis/live-with-asthma/asthma-action-plan/
2. The plan must outline:
    - the prescribed medication taken by the student and when it is to be administered, for example 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 flare-up or attack.

    Asthma plans will be attached to the student's records for reference.
3. Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan.
4. Plenty Parklands Primary School will keep all Asthma Action Plans:
    - on Compass
    - in the following locations: First Aid room and home group classroom
5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, parents/carers are required to complete a 'School Camp and Excursion Plan' available at: https://www.nationalasthma.org.au/health-professionals/asthma-action-plans/asthma-action-plan-library

    This form should be attached to the child's up to date Asthma Action plan.
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.

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 used)

Student asthma kits will be stored **in their classroom.**

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their children have an adequate supply of appropriate asthma medication with them at school at all times.

Asthma emergency response plan

If a student is:

- having an asthma attack
- having 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. School staff may contact Triple Zero "000" at any time.

Step	Action
1.	Sit the person upright • 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 Action 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: • 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 • If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above (or give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbiocort inhaler)
4.	If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero "000" and ask for an ambulance. • 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)
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

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

Professional development will be provided for all staff on the nature, prevention and treatment of asthma attacks. Such information will also be displayed on the staffroom wall.

Plenty Parklands Primary School will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
Group 1 General Staff	School staff with a direct teaching or support role with students affected by asthma or other school staff directed by the principal after conducting a risk assessment.	Asthma first aid management for education staff (non-accredited) One hour face-to-face or online training.	Asthma Australia	Free to all schools	3 years

Group 2 Specific Staff	Staff working with high risk children with a history of severe asthma, or with direct student wellbeing responsibility, (including PE/sport teachers, first aid and school staff attending camp)	*Course in Emergency Asthma Management 10760NAT* (accredited) or *Course in the Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace 22556VIC* (accredited)	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by Plenty Parklands Primary School	3 years

Plenty Parklands Primary School will also hold an annual briefing for new staff on:

- the procedures outlined in this policy
- the causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma
- the 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.

Plenty Parklands Primary School will also provide this policy to casual relief staff and volunteers who will be working with students.

Asthma Emergency Kit

Plenty Parklands Primary School will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. One kit will be kept on school premises in the First Aid room and one will be a mobile kit for activities, such as camps and excursions.

An additional Asthma Emergency Kit is kept in the Gym.

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 (Plenty Parklands Primary 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

The First Aid Officer will monitor and maintain the Asthma Emergency Kits. They will:

- ensure all contents are maintained and replaced when necessary
- regularly check the expiry date on the canisters of the blue or blue/grey reliever puffers and replace them if they have expired or are low on doses
- replace spacers in the Kits after each use (spacers are single-person use only)
- dispose of any previously used spaces.

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.

Parents/guardians are responsible for the cost of a replacement spacer if their child uses one from the asthma emergency kit. The used spacer becomes the property of the child.

Management of confidential medical information

Confidential medical information provided to Plenty Parklands Primary 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.

Communication plan

This policy will be available on Plenty Parklands Primary School's website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about Plenty Parklands Primary School's asthma management procedures.

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Plenty Parklands Primary School will be prepared to act on the warnings and advice from the Department of Education and Training when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Asthma Australia: Resources for schools
- Policy and Advisory Library:
  - Asthma
  - Treating an asthma attack
  - PPPS Health Care Needs Policy

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings, as required
- Hard copy available from the school office upon request

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed in line with best practice, new legislation and guidelines.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	February 2022
Consultation	PPPS Staff First Aid Officer School Council
Approved	March 2022
Next scheduled review date	February 2023