

<h1 style="margin: 0;">Asthma Attacks: Treatment Policy</h1>		 <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;">Glengala Primary School</p>
No: 2018-POL-3	Version: 1.0	
Date: 19-11-2018	Owner: Samantha Fleming	

Purpose

To ensure that Glengala Primary School responds appropriately to students suffering an asthma attack.

Prerequisite Policies

See: [Asthma](#)

Medications

Most students can control their asthma by taking medication. Asthma medication is normally:

- taken via a metered-dose inhaler (puffer) preferably in conjunction with a spacer device or via a breathe-activated dry powder inhaler
- provided by the parents or the student, and may be self administered
- self managed by the student at secondary level. This table describes the common forms of asthma medication.

Purpose Medication that

Reliever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● provides relief from symptoms within minutes ● used in an asthma emergency ● should be easily accessible to students at all times ● is preferably carried by the student ● is normally blue or grey in colour ● includes common brands such as Ventolin, Bricanyl, Airomir and Asmol.
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Note: Most relievers can be purchased from a pharmacy without a prescription - schools must have a letter of authorisation from the principal to purchase reliever medication for the school's Asthma Emergency Kits..

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| Preventer* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is used on a regular basis to prevent asthma symptoms and reduce the frequency and severity of asthma attacks ● is usually autumn or desert colours (brown, orange, rust or yellow) ● is prescribed by a doctor. |
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| Combination
* Preventer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● combines a preventer with a long acting reliever in the same device ● there are two common types of combination medications, Seretide and Symbicort ● for students aged 12 or over, Symbicort may be used in an asthma emergency if documented on the student's Asthma Action Plan ● usually white/red or purple in colour ● is prescribed by a doctor. |
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Important: Teachers should refer to the student's Asthma Action Plan to determine how to use this medication in an asthma emergency.

*Preventers and Combination Preventers should not be taken to school unless:

- the combination medication is Symbicort and has been prescribed as a reliever medication
- the student is attending a school camp or overnight excursion, and will be required to take the medication as prescribed, whilst in the care of the school.

Types of Asthma Attack

This table describes the symptoms of different types of asthma attacks. symptoms will vary from student to student.

Type	Symptoms
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| Mild/Moderate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● may have a cough ● may have a wheeze ● minor difficulty in breathing ● able to talk in full sentences ● alert, able to walk/move around ● have normal skin colour. |
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Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● cannot speak a full sentence in one breath● obvious difficulty in breathing● sitting hunched forward● tugging in of skin over the chest and throat● lethargic (children)● sore tummy (young children)● reliever medication is not lasting as long as usual.
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Life-threatening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● unable to speak, or 1-2 words per breath● drowsy/confused● collapsed, exhausted, unconscious● wheeze and cough may be absent● gasping for breath● discolouration (turning blue)● not responding to reliever medication.
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Treating an Asthma Attack

This table describes how to treat a student:

- having an asthma attack
- having difficulty breathing for an unknown cause, even if they are not a known to have asthma.

Note: For a student who is not a known to have asthma, this treatment:

- could be lifesaving if the asthma has not previously been recognised
- would not be harmful if the cause of breathlessness was not asthma.

Warning: Immediately call an Triple Zero "000" and ask for an ambulance and state a student is having an asthma attack if:

- the student is not breathing
- the student is having a severe or life threatening attack
- the student is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- you are concerned
- at any time the student's condition suddenly worsens, or is not improving
- the student is known to have anaphylaxis – follow their Anaphylaxis Action Plan, then give asthma first aid.

Delay in treatment may increase the severity of the attack and ultimately risk the student's life.

First time asthma attack

If a student appears to be having difficulty breathing, but has not been diagnosed with asthma, the school staff should follow the school's first aid procedures.

This should include immediately:

- locating the administering reliever medication from the Asthma Emergency Kit
- after the first 4 doses of reliever medication call Triple Zero “000” for an ambulance
- continue giving 4 doses of reliever medication every 4 minutes whilst waiting for the ambulance to arrive.

Step Action

Sit the person upright:

- 1
 - be calm and reassuring
 - do not leave them alone
 - seek assistance from another teacher (or reliable student) to locate the student's Asthma Action Plan and an Asthma Emergency Kit if required. If the student's action plan is not immediately available, use Asthma First Aid as described below..
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Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer:

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 - shake the blue or blue/grey reliever puffer
 - use a spacer if you have one
 - put 1 puff into the spacer.
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See: Asthma First Aid Kits within [Related policies](#)

Wait 4 minutes.

- 3 If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever as above and wait 4 minutes.

(OR give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler)

If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero “000” and ask for an ambulance.

- 4 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 more 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.

Further Information

- Asthma Foundation Victoria: [Resources for schools](#)
- School Policy and Advisory Guide:
 - [Asthma](#)
 - [Asthma Attacks: Treatment](#)
 - [Asthma Emergency Kits](#)

Related Policies and Guidelines

[Asthma Policy Glengala Primary School](#)

[First Aid Policy Glengala Primary School](#)

[Anaphylaxis Policy Glengala Primary School](#)

[Health Care Needs Policy Glengala Primary School](#)

Review of this Asthma Policy

History of Updates to Policy

Date	Comment (e.g. major review, minor review)
November 2018	Creation of Policy to support Asthma Policy as per department guidelines

Review Date

This policy does not require school council approval.
 This policy is not a requirement of the Department of Education in 2018. It is a supportive policy for the Asthma Policy.

Date of next review: 2019 November

References

- Schools can contact the Asthma Foundation of Victoria on 1800 278 462 for advice in relation to Asthma Prevention Strategies which can be implemented at a school level.