

AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

NO. 313

SUBJECT: Managing Asthma in Schools (Ryan’s Law)

Legal References: *Ryan’s Law, 2015 – Ensuring Asthma Friendly Schools; Education Act Section 265- Duties of Principal; Regulation 298 s20 – Duties of Teachers*

Related References: *Administrative Procedure 180 Medical Emergencies; AP 314 Medically At Risk Students; AP 315 Medication: Oral Administration; OPHEA Creating Asthma Friendly Schools Manual; OPHEA/Asthma Canada: Asthma Plan of Action*

1. Policy Statement

In accordance with *Ryan’s Law, 2015 – Ensuring Asthma Friendly Schools*, the Avon Maitland District School Board has established an administrative procedure for students diagnosed with asthma.

The safety of students with a medical condition such as asthma is a shared responsibility of the board, school, family, health care provider and community partners. This procedure outlines the board’s commitment to the well-being of students with asthma.

2. Definitions

What is Asthma?

People with asthma have sensitive airways that react to triggers. There are many different types of triggers; for example, poor air quality, mold, dust, pollen, viral infections, animals, smoke and cold air. Symptoms of asthma are variable and can include coughing, wheezing, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath and chest tightness. The symptoms can range from mild to severe and sometimes could be life threatening.

For the purposes of this document, the following words have the following definitions:

Emergency Medication

“Emergency Medication” refers to medication that is administered by a staff member to a student at the time of an asthma exacerbation - for example - reliever inhaler or stand-by-medication. According to the Ontario Lung Association, asthma is a very common chronic (long-term) lung disease that can make it hard to breathe.

Medication

“Medication” refers to medications that are prescribed by a health care provider and, by necessity, may be administered to a student, or taken by the student during school hours or school related activities.

Immunity

The Act to Protect Pupils with Asthma states that “No action or other proceeding for damages shall be commenced against an employee for an act or omission done or omitted by the employee in good faith in the execution or intended execution of any duty or power under this Act.”

3. Requirements and Responsibilities

The board shall:

- Add a question about asthma and asthma medication to all registration forms;
- Ensure that all students have easy access to their prescribed reliever inhaler(s) medications;
- Identify asthma triggers in classrooms, common school areas and in planning field trips and implement strategies to reduce the risk of exposure;
- Establish a communication plan to share information on asthma to parents/guardians, students, employees and include any other person who has direct contact with a student with asthma;
- Provide asthma education and regular training opportunities on recognizing and preventing asthma triggers, recognizing when symptoms are worsening and managing asthma exacerbations for all employees and others who are in direct contact with students on a regular basis;
- Include a question about asthma and asthma medication on the registration form;
- Require that every school principal establish a plan for sharing of information about students with asthma at time of registration or following diagnosis for gathering necessary asthma related information from the parents/guardians and student;
- Require that every school principal develop an individual student asthma management plan for each student diagnosed with asthma, based on the recommendation of the student's health care provider;
- Require that every school principal maintain a file for each student diagnosed with asthma. The file may contain personal medical information, treatment plans and/or other pertinent information about the student, if that information is obtained with the consent of the student or the parent/guardian, in accordance with applicable legislation, including relevant privacy legislation. This file shall also include current emergency contact information;
- Require that every school principal inform school board personnel and others who are in direct contact on a regular basis with a student with asthma about the contents of the student's asthma management plan;
- Review asthma administrative procedure as part of its regular procedure review cycle; and
- Include the asthma administrative procedure with the board procedures posted on the school and board web sites.

The Principal and staff shall:

- Establish a process to identify students with asthma.
- Establish a communication plan to share information on asthma with parents/guardians, students, employees, occasional teachers, volunteers, coaches and other persons who have direct contact with a student with asthma. Provide a copy of the *Individual Student Asthma Management Plan Form (Form 313A)* for each student with asthma to those who have direct interaction with the student as required. A sample letter to parents and a sample notice for newsletters are available in Form 313B.
- Ensure easy access to asthma medication.
- Establish a process that identifies which students can carry and administer their asthma medication. Know which students require assistance with storing and taking their medication. Students who are unable to administer their own medication should have it easily accessible. Worsening asthma can happen quickly and easy access to medication is important.
- Establish a process for handling worsening asthma.

- Adhere to policy or guideline for a school-wide approach to managing worsening asthma and emergency situations. Display OLA's poster *Managing Asthma Attacks* (see Appendix A) in key locations. Ensure that parents/guardians of students with asthma are requested to complete and submit the *Individual Student Asthma Management Plan (Form 313A)*. This form contains the student's photograph, emergency contacts, information about the student's asthma triggers and reliever medication (including where it is located) and how to recognize and respond to asthma symptoms and emergency situations.
- Identify and reduce common asthma triggers within the school environment.
- Monitor for asthma triggers on an ongoing basis and take action to reduce exposure to asthma triggers whenever possible. For example, advocate for the use of scent-free markers and cleaning products, dust free chalk, etc. Plan for building repairs or cleaning at times that reduce the possibility of exposing students to fumes, dust and other irritants.
- Encourage students with asthma to participate in physical activity and play.
- Advocate and support students with asthma to participate in all activities, including physical activities and outdoor play.
- Provide opportunities for asthma education to teachers, school staff, parents/guardians, students and volunteers. At least annually, provide education with regards to identifying and managing worsening asthma, proper use of inhalers and identifying and managing asthma triggers. Consider holding general asthma awareness education sessions for the school community.
- Collaborate with others (i.e., health care providers, public health, parents/guardians and community partners) to create asthma friendly schools. Identify an individual in the school to act as an asthma resource or Asthma Champion. This person could identify and review new asthma resources and help organize asthma-related activities.