



# Administrative Procedure: Ryan's Law (Asthma)

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## DEFINITIONS

### What Is Asthma?

According to the Ontario Lung Association, asthma is a very common chronic (long-term) lung disease that can make it hard to breathe.

People with asthma have sensitive airways that react to triggers. There are many different types of triggers. For example, poor air quality, mould, 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.

### 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 standby medication.

### Medication

“Medication” refers to medications that are prescribed by a healthcare 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.”

## ROLES

### The Board shall:

1. Ensure that all students have easy access to their prescribed reliever inhaler(s) medications.
2. Identify asthma triggers in classrooms, common school areas and in planning field trips and implement strategies to reduce the risk of exposure.

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Review the asthma policy and administrative regulation, as part of its regular policy review cycle.
6. Include the asthma policy in the Board policies posted on the Board web site.

### Role of School Administrator:

Upon registration to a school, the Principal/Vice-Principal shall ask the parent/guardian if the student has been diagnosed with asthma and, if so, what medications are used. The Principal/Vice-Principal shall ensure that all staff members (teaching, administration, support staff, including bus drivers and supply staff) be made aware that a student has asthma and may require the use of a reliever inhaler.

1. If a student has their parent's/guardian's permission, they must be permitted to carry their medication.
2. The Principal/Vice-Principal shall ensure that parents/guardians in consultation with their health care provider, develop a Student Asthma Management Plan (Appendix A) and share the plan with the staff who have regular contact with the student.
3. The Principal/Vice-Principal shall ensure that a copy of the Student Asthma Management Plan is placed in the OSR.
4. The Principal/Vice-Principal must provide teachers and staff with a copy of the student's Asthma Management Plan and ensure that they are familiar with it.
5. The Principal/Vice-Principal shall work with staff and families to identify and minimize asthma triggers in the school setting. The Principal/Vice-Principal shall inform students, parents/guardians, volunteers and coaches about the importance of understanding asthma and know the triggers. (Appendix B)

### Role of Parents/Guardians

With good asthma control, your child should not miss school because of asthma and should be able to participate fully in activities, including sports.

Regular, clear communication with the school can help your child maintain good asthma control. You can help to prevent asthma problems by talking to your child's teacher or daycare staff, and by making sure your child has a proper asthma treatment.

Meeting with your child's teacher and school staff each September and do the following:

Provide a copy of your child's Asthma Action Plan and explain what it means. List and explain your child's asthma triggers and why it's important to avoid them. Some common triggers in the classroom and daycare include furry animals, dust, mould and strong smells.

- Show teachers your child's asthma medications and how to use them properly – make sure they are well labeled.
- Make sure the teachers know which inhaler is the reliever medication that helps in an asthma emergency (usually a blue inhaler).
- Ensure that your child has the prescribed medication at all times and that it is carried by your child (if this is decided).
- Ask about policies for field trips – with a bit of extra planning most trips should be safe.
- Make sure your child's teacher and school staff know what to do in an emergency and whom to contact.
- Fill in the Student Asthma Management Plan and bring it to the school, or fill in the Child Asthma Management Plan and bring it to the daycare.
- Update the school on any changes to your child's condition and support this with documentation from the family physician.

## Role of Teachers & School Staff

Teachers and daycare staff can do a lot to help students maintain good asthma control. Students with well-controlled asthma should be able to fully participate in activities, including sports.

There are many things that can be done to help a student with asthma:

- Request a meeting with the student's parents/guardians and have them go over their child's Asthma Management Plan with you. Discuss any questions you might have with the parents/guardians.
- Ask parents/guardians about their child's asthma triggers. Each person with asthma has their own set of triggers. As much as possible, remove asthma

triggers from your classroom. Some possible triggers in the classroom include, furry animals, dust, mould and strong smells.

- All staff will participate in Board delivered asthma education and training opportunities on a yearly basis. This training will include learning about asthma medication – what they do and what they are for. Learn the difference between a reliever medication (usually in a blue puffer, taken during asthma attacks or before exercise) and a controller medication (usually taken at home every day to control symptoms, but won't help in an asthma attack).
- Talk to your class and staff about asthma so they understand it better.

## Other Sources of Information

[Ontario Lung Association Website](#)

[OPHEA Website - Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities](#)

[Ministry of Education – Ryan's Law](#)

## Appendices Attached

The following documents are being re-created.