

# Administration of Prescribed Medication and Asthma Treatments

Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate



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# Administration of Prescribed Medication and Asthma Treatments

Revised July 2007

## Director's Message

The Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate is pleased to present the 2007 edition of the Administration of Prescribed Medication and Asthma Treatment learning program for School and Administrative Support Staff.

The program encompasses information regarding Departmental policy and a range of related resources. Also included are the procedures to be followed within schools that facilitate the safe administration of prescribed medication and asthma treatments to students.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by the staff of Student Welfare Directorate and the substantial support of St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) during the revision of this program. The experience and expertise of St John's has been greatly valued.

I trust that this program will provide the opportunity for staff to further develop understanding of, and related skills in, the effective administration of prescribed medications and asthma treatments in schools.

Ann McIntyre, Director  
Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate

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# Learning overview

## Program structure

Administration of Prescribed Medication and Asthma Treatments is a self-directed and self-paced program for school administrative and support staff working in New South Wales government schools.

The program was developed as part of an agreement between the New South Wales Department of Education and Training and the Public Service Association of NSW.

Its purpose is to provide school administrative and support staff with a five year certification to carry out the storage and administration of prescribed medications and asthma treatments in schools.

The program gives an overview of health care issues in schools related to prescribed medications and asthma treatments.

The program is intended for school administrative and support staff who have voluntarily agreed to the principal's request to administer prescribed medications and asthma treatments to students.

The program consists of three parts: The Department's requirements; Administration of prescribed medications and asthma treatments in the school environment; Multiple choice test.

## Time commitment

The time taken to work through the program will depend on your level of knowledge and on the extent to which you choose to research and practice the learning materials.

## Help

If you have any questions relating to student wellbeing in schools, in relation to prescribed medications and asthma treatments, please contact Student Welfare Directorate on 02 9244 5861.

Or visit the website <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentssupport>

If you have any enquiries about the learning program you may contact a Project Officer from Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate on telephone 02 9561 8266.

# Certification

## Initial certification

To receive initial certification you will need to undertake the following steps. Note that your certificate will remain current for five years from date of issue.

1. Read through all parts of the program and complete the writing tasks. The tasks are designed as a self-test instrument. They are not required to be submitted for assessment.
2. Complete the thirty question Multiple Choice Test at the end of this publication. The test is completed by filling in the two-page answer sheet provided in Appendix 2. Your answers will be submitted for assessment to St John Ambulance Australia (NSW).
3. Ask your principal to certify and sign the Declaration form provided in Appendix 1. You must also sign this form.
4. Using an A4 envelope, post your two-page answer sheet, the completed Declaration form, and a school cheque for \$35.00 (GST exempt) to:

St John Ambulance Australia (NSW)  
9 Dean Street  
Burwood NSW 2134

## Recertification

If you have previously obtained your certificate from St John Ambulance Australia (NSW), you must also undertake the four steps listed above prior to your old certificate expiring. Your new certificate will also remain current for five years from date of issue.

## Key to symbols



Writing task



Reading

# Outcomes

At the completion of this program participants will be able to:

- locate the current NSW Department of Education and Training policy *Student Health in NSW Public Schools: a summary and consolidation of policy*
- put the policy and procedures into practice
- liaise with parents and care givers who request that their children take prescribed medications while at school
- demonstrate medically safe practices when administering prescribed medications to students
- supervise the self-administration of prescribed medications by some students.

# The Department's requirements

## Outcomes

On completion of this part of the program, participants will be able to:

- state the duties required of the person who volunteers to administer prescribed medications and asthma treatments
- implement storage requirements
- understand the role of schools in supporting students who need help with health issues
- understand the role of parents
- understand the school's procedures and practices.

## Background

All staff share a special duty of care towards students in the public education system to provide a secure and supportive environment which meets their health and safety needs.

For students, part of feeling secure at school is knowing that their health needs are recognised and catered for as part of the schools' overall provision for their welfare. Such provision includes:

- specific teaching and learning programs in the school
- school practices on issues like safety, sun protection, establishing positive relationships and the Healthy School Canteen Strategy
- a team of people with special duties related to student welfare and health.

Administering prescribed medications and asthma treatments to students and supervising students who self-administer prescribed medications, is one aspect of schools providing a secure and supportive environment.

## Managing students' health needs

School administrative and support staff are part of the team who contribute to the overall wellbeing of students. School administrative and support staff duties may, if agreed to, include the provision of first aid, the administration of prescribed medications and support for the correct delivery of asthma treatments.

Others who contribute to the overall wellbeing of students include the principal and school executive, the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education coordinator, year advisors or coordinators, the school counsellor, class teachers with broad student welfare responsibilities and representatives of other agencies.



## The policies

Requirements for managing student health needs in schools are set out in *Student Health in NSW Public Schools: a summary and consolidation of policy*. This policy can be located at:

[https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student\\_serv/student\\_health/student\\_health/PD20040034.shtml](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/student_health/student_health/PD20040034.shtml)



Locate and read the policy.

Detailed information regarding the implementation of this policy in schools is located at:

[www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/index.php](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/index.php)



Locate and read the following sections of the website:

- The role of the school community in supporting student health
- School practices and programs
- Administering prescribed medication at school
- Supply and storage of prescribed medication and consumables
- Frequently asked questions
- Forms and letters
- Summary: role of parents
- Checklist for schools for administering medication
- Individual students who need help with health issues.

## Other supporting health care documents



Locate and read these documents:

*Anaphylaxis: Guidelines for Schools*, 2nd Edition 2006 <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/conditions/anaphylaxis/index.php>

*Physical As Anything: collaborative support for students with physical disabilities and medical conditions*. NSW Department of Education and Training and The Children's Hospital at Westmead, second edition, 2002.

*Guidelines for Managing Drug Related Incidents in Schools* [https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student\\_serv/student\\_welfare/drug\\_incid/PD20020040.shtml](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/student_welfare/drug_incid/PD20020040.shtml)

*Health Care and Safety* [http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/adminsupport/trainanddev/health\\_safety.php](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/adminsupport/trainanddev/health_safety.php)

*First Aid Policy (DET Intranet Only)* [https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/staff/oh\\_s/first\\_aid/PD20050247\\_i.shtml?level=](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/staff/oh_s/first_aid/PD20050247_i.shtml?level=)

*Infection Control Policy (DET Intranet Only)* [https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/staff/oh\\_s/infec\\_ctrl/PD20050257\\_i.shtml?level=](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/staff/oh_s/infec_ctrl/PD20050257_i.shtml?level=)

*Infection Control Guidelines (DET Intranet Only)* [https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/detoh\\_s/adminandmanage/ohands/safeworklearn/injury\\_manage/infection/infec\\_guide.pdf](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/detoh_s/adminandmanage/ohands/safeworklearn/injury_manage/infection/infec_guide.pdf)

## What is in the policy and student health website?

### Student Health in NSW Public Schools: a summary and consolidation of policy



Read through the policy. Much of the content is intended for the guidance of principals. However, the following points should be noted:

- Schools are required to implement practices related to student health that comply with the NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000, Common Law obligations, and anti-discrimination and privacy legislation, and that demonstrate a commitment to collaboration with parents to support the wellbeing of students.
- Schools are required to assist students who have health support needs at school by means that include the provision of first aid, including emergency care, the provision of temporary care when students become unwell at school, the administration of prescribed medications and health care procedures, and the development of individual health care plans if required.
- The administration of prescribed medication forms part of the Department's common law duty of care to take reasonable steps to keep students safe while they attend school.
- The school's duty of care does not extend to administering medication to students who are able to administer this medication themselves. If, however, a student self-administers prescribed medication, the school has a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that the self-administration is carried out safely.
- The administration of prescribed medications in schools can be carried out by staff members who volunteer to undertake these duties and who are trained. An administration of prescribed medication allowance is paid to school administrative and support staff members to carry out this role.
- Under anti-discrimination legislation it is unlawful to discriminate against students in relation to enrolment, or once enrolled on the grounds of their disability. The definition of disability is very wide and would include students who must take prescribed medication.
- Students benefit if they are provided with opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and understandings relevant to managing their own health. Taking into account what is reasonable and safe in an individual case, schools are expected to support students to develop independence in managing their own health.
- Schools rely on and value the cooperation of parents, medical practitioners, health services, other relevant agencies and local community resources to assist them to support the health of students.
- Schools must assist with the administration of prescribed medication during school hours where this support cannot reasonably be undertaken by parents or others outside school hours.

- Students who become unwell at school are best transferred to the care of a parent/ guardian/caregiver. The aim of care given at school to such students is to make them comfortable in the interim.
- Each school needs to identify the staff who will care for students who are unwell and the procedures that are to be followed. This role can be carried out by staff members who have been asked by the principal to undertake these duties and who volunteer.
- Relevant staff must be consulted in the development of individual health care plans and in any case where their assistance in administration of prescribed medication may be called upon. It is particularly important that they are consulted regarding students diagnosed with a condition that might require an emergency response.

It is the responsibility of school staff to:

- take reasonable measures to protect students against risk of injury or harm that should reasonably have been foreseen
- take reasonable care for the health and safety of all persons in the workplace and to co-operate with the employer to ensure the health and safety of all in the workplace, including assisting in an emergency.

The staff member, who volunteers to be trained in the administration of medication, is required to administer the medication in accordance with the Department's policy and procedures.

Should a student be injured or made ill as a result of the administration of prescribed medication by a member of staff, the staff member is protected by the legal principle of vicarious liability in relation to personal injury proceedings. This means that unless the staff member has deliberately injured the student, or behaved with reckless disregard for the student's safety in the administration of the medication or health care procedures, the Department will be liable for any injury caused by the negligence of the staff member.

## The Department's student health website

The website draws together information on a wide range of student health issues and their management in schools.

It complements, expands and makes available to schools, parents and carers requirements set out in *Student Health in NSW Public Schools: a summary and consolidation of policy*. The following points should be noted:

- Parents of children who require prescribed medication to be administered at school must complete a written request. The parental request form can be downloaded from the DET website and provided to parents for this purpose. The website is located at:  
  
<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentssupport/studenthealth/individualstudentletters/index.php>
- Parents are responsible for supplying the medication and any consumables necessary for its administration in a timely way.

- Prescribed medication is usually sent on a daily basis. It must be contained in a pharmacy labelled container detailing the student's name and the prescribed dosage.
- The parent needs to provide written instructions about any special requirements for storage indicated by their medical practitioner or pharmacist.
- Students must not carry medications unless there is written agreement between the school and the student's parents.
- For some conditions, prescribed medication and equipment must be immediately accessible, eg asthma and anaphylaxis medications such as Ventolin asthma relievers; EpiPen adrenaline auto injectors. In such cases, arrangements for the carrying of medication and equipment will be devised and documented by the school.
- It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that all copies of the written medical advice and any other relevant documentation are stored in a secure and confidential manner.
- In general, schools do not administer medication which has not been specifically requested by a medical practitioner for an individual student for a specific condition. Schools should follow the same procedures for non prescription medications as for prescribed medications.
- In general, prescribed medication needs to be stored in a secure and accessible location except where students need to carry their prescribed medication for immediate access.



What advice could you give parents about the way they supply prescribed medication to the school?

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What procedures does your school have in place to check that the correct prescribed medication is given in the correct dose to the student for whom it has been prescribed?

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Where and how are prescribed medications stored in your school?

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Suppose you are the person within the school who has volunteered to administer prescribed medication. Outline the school's plan for occasions when you might be absent or for when students are off school grounds, eg excursions, athletics carnivals etc.

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What can schools do if a student refuses to take their prescribed medications?

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Can students self-administer? Briefly explain your answer.

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In an emergency should a school supply or administer medication to a student? Briefly explain your answer.

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## What do the other documents say?

### Anaphylaxis: Guidelines for Schools 2nd edition 2006

This document outlines the steps schools must follow to manage the needs of students who have been diagnosed as being at risk of a severe allergic reaction.

Schools provide support for students diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis. For this support to be effective a whole-of-school approach is important.

The guidelines focus on an individual health care plan, formulated by the principal in consultation with the parent and staff. The document outlines the steps that principals need to follow to manage the needs of students who have been diagnosed as being at risk of a severe allergic reaction. Refer to:

[http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/studentsupport/studenthealth/aguidelines\\_v2.pdf](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/studentsupport/studenthealth/aguidelines_v2.pdf)

### What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction. It occurs when a person is exposed to an allergen. Anaphylaxis is potentially life threatening and always requires an emergency response. Fortunately anaphylactic reactions are uncommon and usually preventable by implementing strategies for avoiding allergens. Locate and read the following:

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/adminandmanage/ohands/safeworklearn/riskmanage/anaphylaxis/index.htm>

Common allergens for anaphylaxis are:

- foods, eg peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, fish, milk, eggs, sesame and soy
- insect bites, eg bee, wasp, jumper ants
- medications, eg antibiotics including penicillin and aspirin
- latex, eg rubber gloves, balloons, swimming caps.

### How can you recognise an anaphylactic reaction?

Reactions usually begin within minutes of exposure and can progress rapidly at any time over a period of two hours. Common symptoms are:

- flushing and /or swelling of the face
- itching and/or swelling of the lips, tongue or mouth
- itching and/or sense of tightness in the throat, hoarseness, difficulty breathing and/or swallowing
- hives, itchy rash and/or swelling about the face, body or extremities
- nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting
- shortness of breath, repetitive coughing and/or wheezing
- faint, rapid pulse, low blood pressure
- light headedness, feeling faint, collapse
- distress, anxiety and a sense of dread.

## Providing support to students at risk of anaphylaxis

Upon notification from the parent or carer of a diagnosis of anaphylaxis, an individual health care plan incorporating an emergency plan will be developed in consultation with relevant staff, the parent and the student.

## Staff responsibility in an emergency

Schools do not supply or administer Epi-pens unless they have been provided by parents as part of a negotiated individual health care plan for a specific student.

In event of an unanticipated emergency, staff will provide a general response. For example, DIAL 000 to call an ambulance.

## Physical as Anything (2nd edition, 2002)



This publication provides information about a range of physical disabilities and medical conditions, and their educational implications.

Part One includes a short section on medication.

This advice is especially useful for those who work in schools that have students with disabilities in integrated settings.

Note the advice about the storage of medication. Medicines should be kept in a cool dry place, away from light. The storage area should not be too hot or too cold.



Part Two contains information about a range of medical conditions. You may wish to browse through the information about conditions that relate to your students.

Schools work with parents, staff and students to provide effective support to students with asthma, in line with the management recommended by their physician. Schools put in place strategies to support the whole school community in management of asthma. Refer to:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/conditions/asthma/index.php>

## Guidelines for Managing Drug Related Incidents in Schools

Advice on the misuse of over-the-counter or prescribed medications is provided in the Guidelines. Refer to:

[https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student\\_serv/student\\_welfare/drug\\_incid/PD20020040.shtml](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/student_welfare/drug_incid/PD20020040.shtml)



What is the current advice regarding the administration of analgesics to students?

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Briefly outline the advice given in the guidelines regarding the misuse of over-the-counter or prescribed medications.

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## Health Care and Safety

The Department's Health Care and Safety website clarifies training requirements and provisions as they relate to health and safety issues. Refer to:

[http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/adminsupport/trainanddev/health\\_safety.php](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/adminsupport/trainanddev/health_safety.php)

For information on the administration of prescribed medications allowance and allowance claim forms refer to:

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/humanresources/sass/sass.htm>

## First Aid Policy

The First Aid Policy sets out a common approach and responsibilities for all staff in the provision of first aid. Refer to:

[https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/adminandmanage/ohands/safeworklearn/injury\\_manage/firstaid/index.htm](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/adminandmanage/ohands/safeworklearn/injury_manage/firstaid/index.htm)

[https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/staff/oh\\_s/infec\\_ctrIPD20050257\\_I.shtml](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/staff/oh_s/infec_ctrIPD20050257_I.shtml)





Can medication be stored in first aid kits? Briefly explain your answer.

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With reference to a register of medicines, briefly explain the requirements of Departmental employees who are authorised to administer medications.

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Describe good hygiene and infection control procedures.

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## Summary

Administration of prescribed medications and asthma treatments, and the supervision of students who self-administer, is one aspect of the overall provisions for the welfare of students. Decisions regarding student welfare and the management of student health are the responsibility of the principal who may seek advice of members of the executive, the student welfare team or the learning support team, parents or health professionals as appropriate.

Your duties regarding prescribed medications may include:

- supplying parents/carers with the appropriate forms for completion and signature
- maintaining and completing student medication records
- administering and supervising prescribed medications
- securely storing prescribed medications
- contributing to prescribed medication plans for situations such as your absence from schools, students on excursions and emergency cases
- participating in the development or review of the school's prescribed medications policy and procedures.

# St John Ambulance Australia (NSW)

## Administration of prescribed medication in the school environment

### Outcomes

On completion of this part of the program, participants will be able to:

- define the term medication
- state what safety precautions need to be taken with prescribed medications
- list at least five reactions that may be caused by some prescribed medications
- administer, according to safety precautions, prescribed:
  - oral medication
  - topical medications
  - ear drops
  - eye drops
  - nose drops.

## What is medication?

A medication is a substance used to promote healing, relieve symptoms, and to prevent further illness. All medications are potentially dangerous if misused in any way.

## What are prescribed medications?

These are medications which have been prescribed by a doctor and are to be used according to the directions of the doctor.

## What safety precautions should be taken with prescribed medications?

- Store all prescribed medications out of reach of students.

Check storage instructions. Some prescribed medications need to be kept in the refrigerator or stored away from light or heat.

For some conditions, including asthma and anaphylaxis, prescribed medication such as asthma relievers, eg Ventolin, or adrenaline auto injectors, eg EpiPen, may need to be carried either by the student or by a staff member who has volunteered. Students who have cystic fibrosis require pancreatic enzyme supplements/capsules to aid digestion. These enzymes are always eaten with food and will usually need to be carried by the student in their lunch box or school bag. Students must not carry medications unless there is a written agreement between the school and the student's parent that this is a planned part of the student's health care support.

- Check the expiry date. Some prescribed medications have a very short shelf life when opened, eg eye drops.
- Do not give any prescribed medication from an unlabelled container or from a container that has a damaged label or one that cannot be read. If instructions for use are unclear, do not administer. Request parents provide written directions from the doctor or pharmacist.

The form *Letter to parents and request for support at school for a student's health condition* can be provided to parents for this purpose. This form requests detailed information about the administration of a particular medication. Refer to:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentssupport/studnethealth/individualstudentformletters/index.php>

- Never return a medicine that has been poured out, back into its container. Discard it.
- Return out of date or unused prescribed medication to parents.
- Keep a check on stock and currency of supplies kept for emergencies.

## What should you do when administering prescribed medications?

Follow the instructions outlined below:

- check the directions on the label before opening the container and again before dispensing the dose
- use a non-touch technique when dispensing, ie use a medicine glass, spoon or small dish
- check the label again before returning the container to the cupboard
- explain the procedure to the student
- give the medication
- record the dose, the time given, the method and the date of administration.

Some prescribed medications can cause a reaction. Examples may include:

- skin rashes
- breathing difficulties
- soft tissue swelling
- nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea
- undue drowsiness or excitability
- changes in pulse rate
- vision changes.

All observed or reported reactions should be noted and referred to the principal for the parent's information. In the event of a reaction being perceived as life threatening, for example, breathing difficulties, immediately DIAL 000 to call an ambulance.

Other members of staff may need to know of the possibility of adverse reactions.

## When should prescribed medications be taken/given?

Prescribed medications should be taken in accordance with the directions given by the prescribing doctor.

These directions are clearly stated on the medication container. Some drugs are required to be given before meals. In such cases they should be given one hour before the student eats or as specified on the order.

Drugs that are ordered to be given with food should be taken during the meal.

These drugs taken on an empty stomach may cause some gastric upset.

## Provision of prescribed medication

Parents and carers must provide prescribed medication and any consumables required for their administration. All prescribed medication provided for the student must have a label, clearly legible, showing the student's name, the name of the medication, the dose and the time of administration.

## Storage of prescribed medication

In general, prescribed medication needs to be stored in a secure and accessible location/s except in circumstances where students need to carry their prescribed medication for immediate access.

Decisions about where prescribed medication is to be stored should be made by the principal on a case by case basis giving due consideration to keeping the medication secure.

Prescribed medication should be stored in accordance with any special requirements for storage provided by the pharmacist or medical practitioner. Always check instructions provided by parents in the written request for administration of medication and on the label.

Schedule 8 medication must be stored in a locked repository separate from all other non-Schedule 8 medication.

All prescribed medication must be readily available for administration to the student as required.

## Administering prescribed oral medications

All prescribed medications should be checked to ensure they are the correct medications for the student. Prescribed oral medications may be in the form of a tablet, capsule or liquid. Many tablets have an outer shell. In general these tablets should not be crushed, as it may in some people cause some irritation to their stomach. Another reason for not crushing the tablets is that the taste can be unpleasant.

As with all prescribed medication, it should be carefully checked against the request for administering medication form or label to ensure that it is the correct drug, in the correct dose, to the correct student, at the correct time.

## Avoid handling prescribed medications

In the case of tablets or capsules, empty the medication from the bottle into the bottle cap and then into the student's hand.

For medication in liquid form, a recommended option is to pour the medication into a medicine container, from which the student can tip the medication into his or her mouth.

When administering a prescribed medication in liquid form, the medicine container needs to be graduated for accurate measurement of dose and the medicine should be poured with the glass at eye level to allow accuracy. Medications in suspension should be taken by inverting the bottle several times before pouring the dose.

Complete the prescribed medication chart as soon as the medication has been administered.

## Administering prescribed eye drops

It is important that the drops be checked to ensure that they are the correct medication for the student and that they are being given in accordance with the doctor's instructions, ie to the correct eye, correct number of drops and at the correct time.

Check the date of the eye drops. Out-of-date eye drops should be returned to the parents.



Before administering the drops wash your hands.

Ask the student to sit down with their head tilted slightly back.

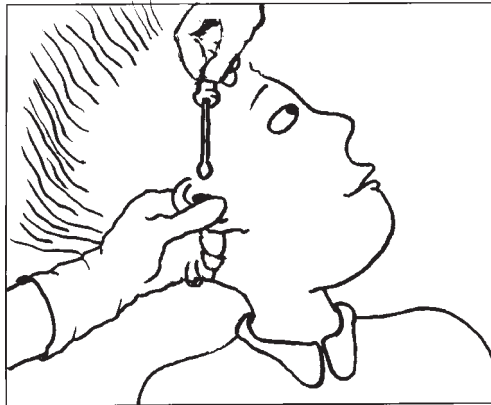
Using the forefinger, gently pull the lower lid down, instruct the student to look up and instil the drop into the centre of the lower lid making sure that the dropper does not come into contact with the eye.

Tell the student to close their eye but not to squeeze closed. Wipe off any excess solution.

Wash your hands and complete the prescribed medication chart.

## Administering prescribed ear drops

As with all medication, ear drops must be checked to ensure that they are the correct medication for the student.



The student should be asked to sit with their head tilted to one side.

To expose the auditory canal in a child under three years, the earlobe can be gently pulled downward and back.

When instilling ear drops the dropper should not touch the ear canal. Should blood be observed coming out of the ear canal the drops should be withheld and the matter reported to the parents.

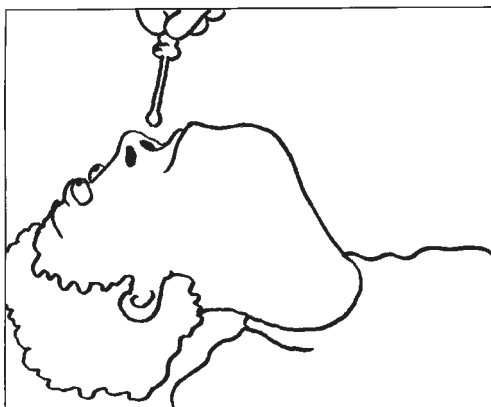
In an adult and a child over three years, the ear is gently pulled upward and back. The drops should be inserted into the ear canal and the student asked to keep his or her head in the same position for a few seconds, eg 10–20 seconds.

No plug should be placed in the ear canal after the insertion of ear drops. Excess solution draining from the ear should be simply wiped off with a tissue.

Wash your hands and complete the prescribed medication chart.

## Administering prescribed nose drops

Nose drops or sprays are most commonly used to reduce swelling of the mucous membranes or to treat infections of the nasal cavity or sinuses.



Prior to the installation of prescribed nose drops the student should be asked to blow their nose to clear the nasal passages.

The student should sit with their head tilted well back.

The dropper is held just above the nostrils and the drops are directed toward the midline.

The student should be directed to breathe through their mouth and maintain the position for approximately one minute.

Wash your hands and complete the prescribed medication chart.

## Administering prescribed topical medication

Topical medications are those applied in the form of an ointment, cream, lotion or gel. They are often used in the treatment of skin rashes or to apply an antibiotic or antiseptic to treat infection.

When applying prescribed topical medication it is recommended that the person applying the medication wears gloves.

Topical medications that have been prescribed by a doctor must be treated like any other medication. They must be confirmed as being the correct medication for the student.



# Asthma treatments in the school environment

## Outcomes

On completion of this part of the program, participants will be able to:

- demonstrate medically safe practices when administering medication to students
- supervise the self-administration of prescribed medications by students.

## About asthma

Asthma affects a significant number of children and young people. Parents should inform the school if their child has asthma.

Schools will work with parents, staff and students to provide effective support to students with asthma. Such support is in line with the management recommended by the doctor.

Students with asthma need ready access to their reliever medication when an attack occurs. In most cases formal arrangements are made between the school and parents for students to carry reliever medications while at school and on all school related excursions.

When parents wish their child to self medicate, they must complete the *Request for Administration of Prescribed Medication* form provided by the school.

Where the student with asthma is young, or needs assistance to administer the asthma medication, the school will consult with parents and staff to determine the best arrangement for administering the medication.

In cases of severe asthma, the principal will consult with parents and staff in developing an individual health care plan for the student. The individual health care plan will include a schedule for the administration of asthma medication.



Locate and read the information about asthma at the website:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/conditions/asthma/index.php>

Review the frequently asked question regarding self medication of prescribed medications located at:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/individualstud/adminmedicine/faq.php#Q4>

Locate the form *Request for Administration of Prescribed Medication* at:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/individualstud/formletters/index.php>



What procedures are in place at your school if a student forgets to bring their asthma medication?

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Assume you are the person within the school who has volunteered to administer asthma treatments. Outline the school's plan for occasions when you are absent or when the student/s are involved in school activities conducted outside of the school grounds.

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## Preventers

Preventer medication helps reduce and prevent the inflammation in the lining of the airways.

Students with moderate to severe asthma may need to take medication daily. These medications are usually taken at home and are not used in an emergency.

*Inhalers* include Flixotide, Intal, Intal Forte, Pulmicort, Qvar, Tilade

*Tablets* include Singulair

## Relievers

Relievers relax the muscle around the airways, making the airways wider and breathing easier.

Relievers are used when asthma symptoms are present. These symptoms may include cough, shortness of breath, chest tightness or wheezing.

They provide quick relief from asthma symptoms as they take only a few minutes to work.

They keep the airways open for up to three to four hours and may be used before an activity to prevent exercise induced asthma and for first aid treatment of asthma.

*Inhalers* include Airomir, Asmol, Bricanyl, EPAQ, Ventolin

## Symptom controllers

In addition to relievers and preventers, the doctor may prescribe symptom controllers, also known as long acting relievers. Symptom controllers help to relax the muscles around the airways for up to twelve hours. Note that these medications are usually taken at home and are not used in emergency situations.

Seretide is a combination medication that contains a preventer (Flixotide) and a symptom controller (Serevent) in the one inhaler (purple container).

Symbicort is a combination medication that contains a preventer (Pulmicort) and a symptom controller (Oxis) in one Turbuhaler (red container).

*Inhalers* include Foradile, Oxis and Serevent (usually green container).

## Inhalers

Aerosol inhalers, or puffers, are metered dose medications, ie a measured dose of medication is delivered when the canister is depressed within the container.

Examples of inhalers include Asmol and Ventolin.

Aerosol inhalers also include Autohalers. These are breath activated inhalers. After loading the inhaler by pressing the lever up, the medication will be delivered when the student breathes in. Examples of breath activated inhalers include Airomir and Qvar.

Other inhalers include dry powder inhalers such as Turbuhalers (Bricanyl and Pulmicort) and Accuhalers (Flixotide and Serevent).

Dry powder devices need to be loaded before administering the medication. The device should always be administered vertically.

The measured dose of the medication in dry powder inhalers is administered when the inhaler is breath activated, that is, as the student breathes in, the medication is released from the device and inhaled.

## Using the devices

Supervise the student and assist if needed by following the instructions below.

### Procedure for using prescribed aerosol inhaler/puffer

1. Remove the cover from the inhaler mouthpiece.
2. Hold the inhaler upright and shake vigorously.
3. Ask the student to breathe out.
4. Ask the student to tilt their chin up.
5. Ask the student to put the inhaler mouthpiece in their mouth, closing their lips firmly around the mouthpiece.
6. Ask the student to start to breathe in through their mouth. At the same time, fire one puff of medication whilst the student continues to breathe in slowly for a full breath. Time taken is roughly equivalent to counting to ten.
7. Ask the student to breathe out.

Inhalers require good coordination, so it is important to press down on the canister and breathe in at the same time. It is better to use an inhaler with a spacer device as more medication gets into the lungs.

## Spacer devices

A spacer is a special device shaped like a clear plastic football or tube. Aerosol inhaler medications are sprayed into this device and then inhaled through a facemask or mouthpiece.

## Procedure for using a spacer device

1. Assemble the spacer — ensure the two halves of the large volume spacer device are firmly attached.
2. Remove the cap from the inhaler and shake the inhaler well.
3. Attach the inhaler to the spacer.
4. Ask the student to place the mouthpiece of the spacer in their mouth closing their lips around the mouthpiece.
5. Ask the student to press down on the inhaler canister once to release the prescribed medication into the spacer.
6. Ask the student to breathe in and out normally for four breaths.
7. To take more medication, shake the inhaler and repeat steps 3–6.

It is prudent to have a puffer and spacer available for asthma emergencies. A student having a severe attack of asthma will have difficulty in sucking medication from a Turbuhaler, as a deep inhaled breath is required to get the medication into the lungs.

## The Nebuliser

A Nebuliser is used to deliver medication for the prevention or treatment of asthma in a vaporised form. It can only be used following prescription by the student's doctor.

The Nebuliser has a bowl that is connected to a mask with plastic tubing. The bowl is connected to a small electric pump. Each student must have his or her own mask, tubing and bowl.

It is not suggested that schools keep Nebulisers nor should they be used in a first aid situation. When parents supply Nebulisers for their own child's use the following must be adhered to:

- The Nebuliser should only be used for students whose doctor has recommended its use instead of a spacer device.
- Informed written consent by the parents must be received in advance.
- Each student must have his or her own mask, tubing, bowl and Nebuliser.
- Nebuliser and medication should be supplied on a daily basis to the school. In some cases the principal and parent may agree that it is more practical for the parent to send a week's supply of prescribed medication and/or consumables.
- Parents are responsible for maintaining the Nebuliser pump and cleaning and maintaining the mask, tubing and bowl.

After using the Nebuliser, the mask, tubing and bowl should be stored with the student's belongings and the Nebuliser returned to the parents.

## Asthma first aid

When a student has an asthma attack the following steps should be taken.

### Step 1

Sit the student down. Reassure the student by remaining calm.

### Step 2

Without delay give four puffs of reliever medication one puff at a time via a spacer device. Ask the student to take four breaths after each puff. Medications may include Airomir, Asmol, Bricanyl, EPAQ or Ventolin.

### Step 3

Wait four minutes. If there is no improvement give another four puffs as described in Step 2.

### Step 4

If there is little or no improvement, activate the school's emergency response plan for this student. DIAL 000 to immediately call an ambulance. State that a student is having an asthma attack. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until the ambulance arrives.

## What if it is a first attack of asthma?

If a student has difficulty breathing but has not previously been diagnosed as having asthma, DIAL 000 to immediately call an ambulance and follow the asthma first aid steps.

No harm is likely to result from giving a blue reliever puffer to someone without asthma.

The Department wishes to reassure staff that by following the procedures in these learning materials, they will not be exposed to any legal risk if a student is injured.

If you administer asthma medication to a student in accordance with these procedures, then you will be complying with a lawful direction of the Department, as your employer. When you do so, you are fulfilling the Department's duty of care to its students and so you will not have any legal liability to the student.

## Asthma medication and school first aid kits

No medication, including over-the-counter medicines such as relievers, are to be stored in first aid kits.

## What is an Asthma Emergency Kit?

Some schools may have an Asthma Emergency Kit supplied by The Asthma Foundation of NSW. Further information about the Asthma Foundation may be located at:

<http://www.asthmasw.org.au>

Asthma Emergency Kits contain:

- Bronchodilator inhalers, eg Airomir, Asmol, EPAQ, Ventolin
- Large volume spacer — make sure the large volume spacer fits the inhaler in the Asthma Emergency Kit
- Instructions on how to use the devices
- Information on how to assess an asthma attack
- Emergency treatment of an asthma attack
- Instructions on cleaning of shared devices — as per the Department's memos, current asthma updates.

## Care of the Asthma Emergency Kit

At least once fortnightly or as necessary, the spacer should be washed in clean warm soapy water and allowed to drip dry. Do not rinse or wipe dry.

This should also be done after each use.

The inhaler should be cleaned every week, to prevent blockage from the build-up of medication. Follow the procedure outlined below:

1. Remove the metal canister — do not wash canister
2. Wash the plastic casing only — rinse the mouthpiece through the top and bottom under warm running water for at least 30 seconds, wash mouthpiece cover
3. Allow to air dry
4. Re-assemble.

# Multiple choice test

The two-page answer sheet for the multiple choice test is located in Appendix 2.

On the first page of the answer sheet, complete the following details in block letters:

- Full name
- Home address
- Contact telephone numbers
- Date of birth.

The second page of the answer sheet provides the spaces to fill in your answers to the thirty multiple choice test questions.

## Instructions for answering multiple choice test questions

- Select the alternative 1, 2, 3 or 4 that best answers the question. Fill in the response oval completely.
- If you make an error, cleanly erase the mistake and fill in your new answer.
- Do NOT mark the answer sheet with crosses, ticks or other stray marks.
- Do NOT fold the answer sheet.

## Instructions for mailing completed answer sheet and declaration form

Using an A4 envelope, post your two-page answer sheet, the completed Declaration form, and school cheque for \$35.00 (GST exempt) to:

St John Ambulance Australia (NSW)  
9 Dean Street  
Burwood NSW 2134

The multiple choice questions commence on the following page.



#### Question 1

Where students require regular, intermittent or emergency medication during school hours, the Department requires parents to:

- 1) give prescriptions to the school for the school to obtain medications
- 2) complete and sign forms provided by the school
- 3) let students tell their teachers what they require
- 4) hand over all responsibility to the school

#### Question 2

The management of students' health needs during school hours is:

- 1) the responsibility of parents/carers
- 2) one aspect of providing students with a safe and secure environment
- 3) the sole responsibility of the principal
- 4) the responsibility of the school executive

#### Question 3

The administration of prescribed medications to students in schools is a task assigned to a volunteer staff member following:

- 1) negotiation with the principal
- 2) nomination by students
- 3) a decision by the school executive
- 4) nomination by parents/carers

#### Question 4

One basic hygiene precaution for all occasions when attending to students' health needs is to:

- 1) use bleach in a ratio of 1:2 in water
- 2) disperse blood spills on hands with hot water
- 3) clean the floor of the sick bay daily with disinfectant
- 4) wash your hands thoroughly before and after attending to students

#### Question 5

Prescribed medications to be administered during school hours should be supplied:

- 1) in students' lunch boxes
- 2) by parents/carers in refrigerated containers
- 3) by parents/carers in a suitable container clearly labelled and identified
- 4) by the school

#### Question 6

A parent/carer phones the school from work saying that her son has some ear drops in his bag and asks you to administer them at recess. What course of action do you take?

- 1) inform her that the school requires all requests to administer a prescribed medication to be put in writing
- 2) tell her that you'll inform the student to give himself the eardrops
- 3) ask her to give you clear directions over the phone about the amount to be administered
- 4) tell her that you'll do it if you can find the time

#### Question 7

Prescribed medications should be stored:

- 1) in the sick bay
- 2) in students' bags
- 3) away from the light in a cool dry secure place
- 4) in the fridge in the canteen

#### Question 8

A school staff member has administered a prescribed medication in accordance with the Department's policy. A student has an allergic reaction to this medication. In this situation:

- 1) the staff member is personally liable
- 2) the employee's union is liable
- 3) the Department, and not the individual employee, is liable
- 4) the parent/carer is liable

#### Question 9

A parent/carer informs you that his child will need to take prescribed medication six times during the school day over the next two months. This will be difficult to administer and monitor. To improve this situation, the school should:

- 1) ask the parents/carers to supply two months medication
- 2) ask the parents/carers to consult with their doctor to see if the medication is available in a form that would reduce the number of times it is administered during the school day
- 3) have a special arrangement with the local pharmacy
- 4) discuss the situation with the student's doctor

#### Question 10

Aspirin or other medications containing salicylates may be administered during school hours if:

- 1) the student prefers aspirin to paracetamol
- 2) authorised by a school staff member
- 3) written authorisation from the student's doctor states that aspirin is prescribed for a specific condition
- 4) the student has a fever

#### Question 11

A parent/carer has supplied written instructions about a prescribed medication asking it to be administered according to the directions on the packet. These directions are not clear. You should:

- 1) contact a local pharmacist and ask for clarification
- 2) phone the student's doctor
- 3) contact the parents/carers and ask them to obtain clear directions from the relevant health professionals and pass these on to you in writing
- 4) ask the student's advice

Question 12

A student prescribed medication record should:

- 1) record the dose and receipt of that dose by the student as soon as the medication is administered
- 2) be completed by the student with help from their parents/carers
- 3) record the dose and receipt of that dose by the student at the end of the day on which the medication was given
- 4) record the dose and receipt of that dose by the student at the end of the week in which the medication was given

Question 13

When the person who volunteered to administer prescribed medications is absent from school then:

- 1) students are responsible for administering their own medication
- 2) the school puts its plan for this situation into action
- 3) teachers could volunteer to administer medication
- 4) parents/carers are informed that they must come to school to do it

Question 14

Of the documents listed, which is the most useful for informing school planning on matters of student health?

- 1) Physical As Anything
- 2) Healthy Talk Time
- 3) Towards a Health Promoting School
- 4) The Premier's Handbook

Question 15

As the person who volunteered to administer prescribed medications, your responsibilities include:

- 1) administering first aid treatment to students and staff
- 2) supplying parents/carers with appropriate forms for completion and signature
- 3) ordering students' medication from the chemist
- 4) all of the above

Question 16

All prescribed medication requiring a prescription must be:

- 1) secured in a safe
- 2) ordered by a doctor
- 3) administered by a nurse
- 4) checked before administration by the principal

**Question 17**

Unwanted prescribed medications or those past their expiry date should be:

- 1) flushed down the toilet
- 2) returned to the chemist
- 3) stored in a locked cupboard
- 4) returned to the student's parents/carers

**Question 18**

All drugs in suspension form should be:

- 1) stored in the refrigerator
- 2) shaken before being poured
- 3) poured without being shaken
- 4) mixed with equal parts water before being taken

**Question 19**

A prescribed medication ordered to be taken before food should, unless otherwise directed, be given:

- 1) 10 minutes before meals
- 2) 20 minutes before meals
- 3) 40 minutes before meals
- 4) 60 minutes before meals

**Question 20**

A prescribed medicine which has been poured from its container and not taken by the student should be:

- 1) returned to the container for later use
- 2) discarded immediately
- 3) stored in a medicine cup for later use
- 4) returned to the pharmacist for use in the next prescription

**Question 21**

At the onset of asthma symptoms, a student should:

- 1) go to the clinic and lie down
- 2) take a reliever medication such as Ventolin, Asmol or Bricanyl
- 3) eat a glucose sweet
- 4) try to carry on as normal

**Question 22**

Students who have asthma should:

- 1) never play sport
- 2) keep their medication with them
- 3) stay home from school if they think they are likely to have an attack
- 4) always leave their medication at the front office

Question 23

If a student develops exercise induced asthma, they should:

- 1) continue to exercise for as long as possible
- 2) immediately stop the exercise and rest
- 3) stop the exercise, rest and take reliever medication
- 4) resolve to avoid that type of exercise

Question 24

If a student has a sudden severe asthma attack you should:

- 1) give them a dose of preventer medication
- 2) give them a dose of reliever medication and initiate the first aid asthma plan
- 3) tell them to rest and check them in five minutes
- 4) wait until a spacer is available to administer medication

Question 25

Metered dose inhalers (puffers) such as Ventolin should be:

- 1) stored in the refrigerator
- 2) discharged into an open mouth
- 3) shaken before use
- 4) breathed in very slowly then exhaled

Question 26

A student has a sudden, severe asthma attack. They do not have their Ventolin with them. You should:

- 1) walk them to the first aid room and give the medication
- 2) go to the first aid room yourself and return with their medication
- 3) lie the student down and reassure them that they will be all right
- 4) borrow another student's ventolin and give it to them immediately

Question 27

When applying a topical prescribed medication it is recommended that:

- 1) gloves be worn by the person applying it
- 2) the parents be notified
- 3) the medication be applied to gauze and then rubbed in
- 4) hands be washed before applying it with your fingers

Question 28

You are preparing to administer prescribed ear drops when you observe that there is blood coming from the ear canal. You should:

- 1) administer the ear drops as ordered
- 2) contact the principal for advice
- 3) wipe the blood out and administer the drops
- 4) not administer the drops and advise the parents/carers of the circumstances

Question 29

Prescribed eye drops should be instilled into the:

- 1) outer cheek side of the lower eyelid
- 2) middle of the lower eyelid
- 3) inner nose side of the lower eyelid
- 4) middle of the eye ball

Question 30

When giving a prescribed medicine for a student, the label should be checked:

- 1) by the staff member administering the medication
- 2) once at the beginning of each day
- 3) three times before giving the medicine
- 4) by the student

**End of multiple choice test**

# Appendix 1

## Declaration form

This form must be signed by both the school principal and the participant.

<p>I declare that _____ has completed the (full name of participant) certification requirements for the learning program Administration of Prescribed Medications and Asthma Treatments.</p> <p>School principal's name: _____</p> <p>School principal's signature: _____</p>
---

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

School mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of declaration: \_\_\_\_\_

When completed, this form is to be posted together with the participant's two-page multiple choice answer sheet and a school cheque for \$35.00 (GST exempt) to:

St John Ambulance Australia (NSW)  
9 Dean Street  
Burwood NSW 2134.







# St. John Ambulance Australia (N.S.W.)

<p><b>Instructions:</b></p> <p>-Make no stray marks</p>	<p>Shade Circles Like This--&gt; ●</p> <p>Not Like This--&gt; <del>○</del> ✓</p>
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## Answers

<b>1</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>16</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>31</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>2</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>17</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>32</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>3</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>18</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>33</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>4</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>19</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>34</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>5</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>20</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>35</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>6</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>21</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>36</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>7</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>22</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>37</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>8</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>23</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>38</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>9</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>24</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>39</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>10</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>25</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>40</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>11</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>26</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>41</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>12</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>27</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>42</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>13</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>28</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>43</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>14</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>29</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>44</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4
<b>15</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>30</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4	<b>45</b> ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4

## Office Use Only

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Attempt</b></p> <p>○ First</p> <p>○ Second</p> <p>○ Other</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Practical (Examiner to complete)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CPR</b>    ○ Competent    ○ Not Yet</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Casualty Management</b>    ○ Competent    ○ Not Yet</p>
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# Appendix 3

## Optional feedback

If you wish to submit feedback, complete this form.

Please indicate the extent to which this program has achieved its stated outcomes for you.

Please tick appropriate boxes

Agree                      Disagree

I have developed knowledge and skills to:

- locate the NSW Department of Education and Training policy and procedures related to administration of prescribed medications and asthma treatments to students
- put the policy and procedures into practice
- liaise with parents/caregivers who request their child take medication at school
- demonstrate medically safe practices when administering prescribed medications to students
- supervise the self-administration of medications by some students.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I suggest the following improvements to this learning program:

Structure .....

.....

.....

Content .....

.....

.....

Date: .....

Post your feedback to:

APMAT Project Officer  
 Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate  
 NSW Department of Education and Training  
 Level 7, 35 Bridge Street  
 Sydney NSW 2000