FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents, Carers and friends of the school community,

Welcome back to the new school year. I hope everyone had a restful break and enjoyed spending time with their family this summer. In particular a very warm welcome to our new students and their families. I hope your time at JSA is positive and rewarding. Our staff are looking forward to building a strong partnership with you during this time.

For our new families, our newsletter is published each fortnight and will provide you with important information about the school and events that may be of interest to you. I encourage you to read the newsletter that will be sent home with your child, or via email or on the school website http://www.jacanaschoolforautism.vic.edu.au/

JSA also has a Facebook Page administered by the leadership team. Please like us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/JacanaSchoolforAutism

Our core business is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and our school motto is “Learning for Life”. The foundations of ASD are embedded strongly at JSA and students will be supported to reach their full potential.

SCHOOL VISION

Jacana School for Autism fosters resilience and lifelong learning, enabling students to be active participants in family and community life.

MISSION STATEMENT

Students are supported by a committed professional multi-disciplinary team, working towards developing their personal and educational potential.

The school strives to continually develop highly customised teaching and learning programs in line with evidence based practice in a safe and supportive environment.

PEDAGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

Jacana School for Autism believes that to succeed in the world, students need to develop the capacity to:

⇒ Manage themselves as individuals and in their relations to others.
⇒ Understand the world in which they live and act effectively in their wider community.

Jacana School for Autism provides:

⇒ A curriculum that supports the individual needs of students, using specific teaching strategies
⇒ that cater to students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.
⇒ Individual Learning Plans to cater for specific learning needs and styles, focusing on communication, social / interpersonal skills, personal learning and academic skills.
⇒ A safe and secure environment that enhances students’ self-esteem and respects students’ dignity.
⇒ School wide implementation of the Positive Behaviour Support program.
⇒ Regular participation in the wider community.

Jacana School for Autism includes:

⇒ Individual and small group instruction.
⇒ Speech therapy consultation.
⇒ Occupational therapy consultation.
⇒ Psychology consultation.
⇒ Ongoing professional development for staff.
⇒ Programs that are informed by current research and evidence based practice.

2014 TERM DATES:

Term 1: 30 January — 4 April  Term 2: 22 April — 27 June  Term 3: 14 July — 19 September  Term 4: 6 October — 19 December
We have an enrolment of 197 students and a total of 25 classrooms (2 additional classrooms in 2014). There are four sub schools including: Early Years A, Early Years B, Middle Years and Later Years. I am really looking forward to leading JSA in to the new school year and into the future.

Curriculum Days – 28th & 29th January

The staff were engaged in a full day professional development activity with Maria Roberto (Psychologist) on Positive Psychology. Staff from JSA and Hume Valley School combined to enjoy this engaging and informative workshop. Maria focused on increasing the capacity and performance of individuals and teams who rely on highly tuned relationships and emotional intelligence to achieve professional, organisational and individual success.

Staff also spent the day at the school where there was opportunity to meet as a school and in teams to establish some of the protocols around building positive relationships and effective teaching and learning environments.

January Holiday Grounds Upgrade

The room 21 refurbishment was completed on January 29th by builders “Festive Homes”. An investment of $150,000 was committed to upgrading a very old relocatable including the removal of material containing asbestos. The relocatable is designed for students who do not transition well within a large and busy school. The learning space now includes a domestic kitchen, laundry, toilets and several smaller and larger learning areas. Staff designed the space according to students learning needs and we are really looking forward to providing students with greater opportunities to build independence and to work collaboratively in small groups to meet the individual learning goals.

Welcome to all the new staff – I wish you well in your new positions here at Jacana School for Autism and I’m sure you will love working with all our children and dedicated staff and families.

Staffing

A very warm welcome to our new staff for 2014.

Teachers:
Jim Wenholz
Denise Banville
Courtney Hall
Kim James
Laura Calnin
Emma Lawless
Lesleigh McCloy
Stephanie Bergin
Simon Daniel
Emma Smerke

Therapy/Admin Support Staff
Lydia Lee—Speech
Simone Ryan—Occupational Therapy (OT)
Lucy Dowd—OT
Assistant Business Manager—TBC
Therapy Team Leader—TBC

Teacher Aides
Lee Anderson
Kym Mallett
Amy Redmond
Gurminder Kaur
Nicole Davis
Leesa Birrell
Francesca Lamond
Kellie Blennerhassett

This makes 104 (97.1 Effective Full Time) staff at JSA.
I would like to introduce the leadership and administration team to you. We are here to support the teaching teams and families. Please call if you have any concerns or questions that your classroom teacher is unable to help you with.

**Leadership Team**

**Principal** – Corinne Pupillo

**Assistant Principal, Teaching & Learning** – Sue Johnston

**Acting Assistant Principal – Operations** – Dr Denise Clarke

**Student Transition & Wellbeing** – Deb Munt

**Therapy Team Leader** – Victoria Rajaratnam

**Business Manager** – Sonja Ressugan

**Sub School Leaders**

**Early Years A** – Lauren Tippett

**Early Years B** – Annette McKee

**Middle/Later Years** – Kristie Giannakis

**Later Years** – Kym Tonkin

**Administration Team**

**Business Manager** – Sonja Ressugan

**Business Manager Support** – Felicia Mete

**Finance / Transport Administration** – Glynis Lawson

**CASES Administration** – Carlee Toniolo

**Receptionist** – Julie Dojcak

**Technical Support** – Toan Truong

**Volunteer Register**

If you would like to assist in a volunteer capacity at Jacana School for Autism, then we would love to hear from you. We will require all volunteers to complete the attached form and submit it via your child’s classroom teacher.

**Contract Bus Services**

The department have very strict guidelines, which Mee’s Bus Company are bound by. The school liaises with the Department on behalf of families. If you have any questions related to the bus service, please contact Glynis Lawson on 9309 6258. All pick up and drop off points are at central locations and there is no provision for home pick up/drop off.

**Meet the Teacher afternoon**

Meet the Teacher Night is scheduled for Monday 10th February 3.30 – 4.30. Parents/Carers will get the opportunity to meet their child’s teachers and will be provided with an overview of the classroom.

We look forward to seeing you on this afternoon.

**Family Support Meetings**

Our first Family Support Meeting will be held in the Professional Learning Centre next to the general office. The invitation is extended to all family members and we cover a large range of topics and it’s a good opportunity to meet other family members.

Our term 1 meetings will be held:

**Thursday 6th February** – Early Years Programs here at JSA

**Thursday 13th March** – Young Ambassadors Program

Please contact Deb Munt for more information about the Family Support Meetings.

**Fundraising Committee**

Our first fundraising committee will meet on Thursday 6th February. It would be great to see some new faces and we welcome back some of the 2013 members. We have a busy fundraising program for 2014, with the inclusion of our very successful JSA run/walk to celebrate Autism Awareness. This will be held on Thursday, 3rd April 2014.

**Cars and young children in the summer months**

Melbourne and greater Victoria will experience extremely high temperatures for the back to school period. Parents and/or guardians are reminded that on hot days it is important never to leave children alone in a car. Temperatures inside a parked car during summer can be around 20 to 30 degrees hotter than the outside temperature. Leaving children in hot cars, even for a moment, can result in serious injury or death. Young children’s smaller body size and underdeveloped nervous system places them at a much greater risk of life-threatening heatstroke, dehydration and other serious health risks. If a parent or guardian is travelling with a child, never leave them alone in a parked car, not even for one moment.
School Uniform
Attached to the Newsletter is an Order Form for Secondary Student Uniform. For those that would like to make an order, please have the forms returned by Friday 14th February.

Stubbies online has a sale, if interested look up the website below.

School Council Elections

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. They are legally formed bodies that are given powers to set directions of a school within centrally provided guidelines. In doing this, a school council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students. The Jacana School for Autism meets twice per term on Thursday evenings at 5.30pm.

There are 3 possible membership categories:

* A mandated elected parent category – Because parents have such an important part to play in schools, there is an elected parent member category. Parent members must comprise more than one-third of council’s total membership. DEECD employees are eligible to be parent members at their child’s school, as long as they do not work at the particular school.

* A mandated elected DEECD employee category – Members of this category may make up no more than one third of the total membership of school council. As the Executive Officer, the principal of the school is automatically one of these members.

* An optional community member category – Its members are co-opted by the decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experience, for example parent club representatives, student representatives, an accountant. DEECD employees are not eligible to be community members.

The term of office for all members is two years. Half the members must retire each year, creating vacancies for the annual school council elections.

If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself in the appropriate category:

* if you are a parent, the parent category

* if you are a DEECD employee working at the school, the DEECD category

Why is parent membership so important?
Parents on school councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills that can help shape the direction of the school. Those parents who become active on school council find their involvement satisfying in itself and may also find their children feel a greater sense of belonging.

How can I become involved?
The most obvious way is to vote in the elections, which are held in term 1 each year. However, ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates that there are positions vacant. In view of this, you might seriously consider, standing for election as a member of school council or encouraging another person to stand for election.

Do I need experience to be on school council?
No. What you do need is an interest in your child’s school and the desire to work in partnership with others to help shape the school’s future.

What do I need to do to stand for election?
The principal will issue a notice and call for nominations following the commencement of term 1 each year. All school council elections must be completed by the end of March.

If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself in the Parent category. DEECD employees whose child is enrolled in a school in which they are not employed are eligible to nominate as parents for the school council where their child is enrolled. Please contact the general office for a nomination form.

Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the principal within the time stated on the notice of election. You will receive a Nomination Form Receipt in the mail following the receipt of your completed nomination. If there are more nominations received than there are vacancies on council, a ballot will be conducted during the two weeks after the call of nominations has closed.

www.jacanaschoolforautism.vic.edu.au
Remember:

* Ask the school for help if you would like to stand for election and not sure what to do
* Consider standing for election to council this year
* Be sure to vote in the elections

Rooms 1-6—Admin & Visitors Car Park, entry via Landy Road.
Rooms 7-12—Parent Car Park, entry via Bamburgh Street.
Rooms 12-21—off street parking,
Rooms 22-25—Staff Car Park, entry through Landy Road.

The vacancies for 2014 include:

4 Parent Members - 1 x 1 year/
3 x 2 years
1 DEECD Member - 1 x 2 year
1 Community Member - 1 x 1 year

I encourage parent/carers to consider standing for election.

Nominations close on Thursday 27th February 2013 at 4pm.

Please contact Corinne Pupillo for further information if you are interested in joining the school council.

Corinne Pupillo
Principal

19 - 39 Landy Road, Jacana VIC 3047
Phone 9309 6258
Fax 9309 6426
jacana.school@edumail.vic.gov.au
www.jacanaschoolforautism.vic.edu.au

Traffic Management:
Student Drop Off and Pick Up

There are three discrete carparks plus street parking on Bamburgh Street and Landy Road.

Gates for Classroom access opens at 8:50am until 9:10am each morning and opens at 2:50pm until 3:10pm in the afternoon.

Please consider your arrival times. Arriving too early in the morning can mean your child is sitting and waiting in the car and cause distress or anxiety if they are not able to go straight to the classroom.

www.jacanaschoolforautism.vic.edu.au
Schedule 4: Notice of Election and Call for Nominations

An election is to be conducted for members of the School Council of

JACANA SCHOOL FOR AUTISM

Nomination forms may be obtained from the school and must be lodged by 4.00 pm on

27 /02/2014

The ballot will close at 4.00 pm on

12 /03/2014

Following the closing of nominations a list of the nominations received will be posted at the school. The terms of office, membership categories and number of positions in each membership category open for election are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY</th>
<th>TERM OF OFFICE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF POSITIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent member</td>
<td>From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 2014 to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 2016</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 2014 to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 2015</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEECED employee member</td>
<td>From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 2014 to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 2016</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies, a notice to that effect and calling for further nominations will be posted in a prominent position at the school.

CORINNE PUPULLO

Principal
**VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home phone number:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile phone number:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child's Name:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-school you would like to support?</td>
<td>Please circle: Early Years Middle Years Later Years</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to volunteer in my child’s room?</td>
<td>Please circle: YES / NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to assist with:</td>
<td>Please circle: Fundraising Excursions Classroom help Swimming program Other:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days available:</td>
<td>Please circle day and am or pm or both: MON am:pm / TUES am:pm / WED am:pm THU am:pm / FRI am:pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a Working with Children Check card?</td>
<td>Please circle: YES / NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>If YES please provide a copy. If no please go to your local post office, collect a form and complete the process. The WWCC is free for volunteers.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Please return this form to the assistant principal at your earliest convenience*
JACANA SCHOOL FOR AUTISM

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA):
The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is provided by the Victorian Government to lower-income families to help with education-related costs.

If you have a child under 16, and you hold a valid Health Care Card, Pension Card, or are a temporary foster parent, you may be eligible to receive the EMA. The allowance is paid in two instalments, one in March and one in August.

The payment is intended to assist with education-related costs such as; uniforms, excursions, textbooks, and stationery. You can elect to have your EMA paid in one of the following ways:

- Paid by direct deposit (Electronic Funds Transfer) into your own nominated bank account; or
- Paid to the school to be held as credit which you can use towards education expenses; or
- Paid by cheque which will be posted to the school for collection.

In 2014, the annual EMA amount per student is:

- $200 for prep students
- $150 for students in years 1 – 6.
- $300 for year 7 students
- $250 for students in year 8 – until age 16*.

* A pro-rata amount is payable for students turning 16 in 2014.

How to Apply: Contact the school office to obtain an EMA application form.

Closing Date: You need to obtain an EMA application form from the school office and return by 28 February 2014.

For more information about the EMA, visit http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/financial/Pages/default.aspx
EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (EMA)
Parent/Guardian Application Form - 2014

The following details must be completed by the applicant (the concession card holder). EMA is payable by Direct Deposit (EFT) to the applicant, Direct Deposit to the school, or as a cheque payment.

**SCHOOL NAME**

**APPLICANT / PARENT DETAILS**

**SURNAME**

**FIRST NAME**

**ADDRESS**

**TOWN/SUBURB**

**STATE**

**POSTCODE**

**CONTACT PHONE NUMBER:**

**CENTRELINK PENSIONER**

**CONCESSION / HEALTH**

**CARE CARD NUMBER (CRN)**

**FOSTER**

**PARENT (*)**

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**PENSIONER**

* Foster Parents must provide a copy of the temporary care order letter from the Department of Human Services (DHS) or Courts, etc.*

**EMA PAYMENT METHOD**

Please TICK the box below for your nominated EMA payment method

- [ ] Direct Deposit to parent
  Payment will be made to your bank account by Electronic Funds Transfer (provide bank account details below)

- [ ] Direct Deposit to school
  Payment will be made to school to be held as credit which you can use towards education expenses.

- [ ] Cheque
  Payment will be made as a cheque which will be posted to the school

**ACCOUNT NAME** (e.g John Smith)

**FINANCIAL INSTITUTION (e.g Westpac) AND BRANCH**

**BSB No.**

**BANK ACCOUNT No.**

* If you are unsure of the above details check your Bank Statements or enquire at your Financial Institution.*

**STUDENT DETAILS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD'S SURNAME</th>
<th>CHILD'S FIRST NAME</th>
<th>STUDENT ID</th>
<th>DATE OF BIRTH DD/MM/YYYY</th>
<th>YEAR LEVEL</th>
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The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development collects your personal information for the purpose of administering the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) payment. Some personal information may be disclosed to other Victorian Government departments, such as the Department of Human Services, for the purpose of evaluation and monitoring of concession card services.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development may disclose some of your personal information to Centrelink to confirm that the details provided matches Centrelink's records. This is to be used for testing eligibility for EMA applications for 2014.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will provide the above bank account details to Westpac Bank for the sole purpose of making the EMA payment into your nominated bank account. The bank account details provided will not be disclosed or used for any other purpose. You are able to request access to the personal information that we hold about you, and to request that any errors be corrected, by contacting your child's school.

**SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT**

**DATE**

Health Care Card MUST be provided in parent/carers name WITH application
EMA Eligibility:

The Education Maintenance Allowance is paid to parents of eligible students under 16 years of age, and the student is enrolled at a Government or non-Government School in Victoria on census day, 28 February 2014 for instalment 1 and 1 August 2014 for the second instalment.

The Education Maintenance Allowance will be paid in two instalments and to be eligible you must:
on the first day of 1st Term (28 January 2014) for the first instalment and
on the first day of 3rd Term (14 July 2014) for the second instalment:
(a) be a parent or legal guardian of the student; and
(b) be an eligible beneficiary within the meaning of the State Concessions Act 2004, that is, be a holder of Veterans Affairs Gold Card or be an eligible Health Care Card (HCC) or Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) holder, OR
(c) be a temporary foster parent AND
(d) submit your application to the school by the date/s listed below.

Parents who receive a Carer Allowance (formerly known as Child Disability Allowance), or any other benefit or allowance not income tested by Centrelink are not eligible for the EMA unless they also comply with one of (a), (b) or (c) above.

Submission dates

The application form must be lodged at the school by:
28 February 2014 for the first instalment or
1 August 2014 for the second instalment.

Important Information

A separate application is required for each school if you have children attending different schools.
If your child transfers schools during the year, you will need to make an application at the new school.

How to Complete the Application Form

NOTE: ALL SECTIONS MUST BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT / PARENT

1. Complete the APPLICANT/PARENT DETAILS & STUDENT DETAILS section.

Make sure that the Surname, First Name, and Customer Reference Number (CRN) details match those on your Centrelink card - unless you are claiming as a Foster Parent or Veterans Affairs Pensioner. You will also need to provide your Centrelink card to the school.

If you are claiming as a Foster Parent or a Veteran Affairs Pensioner, tick the appropriate box. In this case, you will need to provide a copy of documentation confirming your status as a temporary Foster Parent or provide your Veterans Affairs Pensioner card to the school.

2. Nominate your payment method for EMA. You can choose to have your EMA payment;
• Paid by direct deposit (EFT) into your nominated bank account or
• Paid by direct deposit (EFT) to the school to be held as credit which you can use towards education expenses.
• Paid by cheque which will be posted to the school for collection or

3. Complete the STUDENT/S DETAILS section for students at this school.

Enter Surname and First Names in full.
Enter the DATE OF BIRTH e.g. 15/09/2007.
Enter the YEAR LEVEL, unless the student is ungraded, e.g. attending a Special School or Language Centre, then enter 'UNGRADED' in the YEAR LEVEL column.

4. Sign and date the form and return it to the school office.

LATE APPLICATIONS CANNOT BE PROCESSED

Queries relating to eligibility and payments of EMA should be directed to your school.

© 2014 Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Northern ASD Network

Teaching children with Autism Spectrum Disorder toileting skills and other related toileting issues

Presented by Victorian Continence Resource Centre

Presentation: Session content primarily designed for parents. Professionals welcome to attend

Venue: Norparrin
152 Mill Park Drive
Mill Park
Melway 10 A4

Date: Wednesday 26th February 2014
Time: 6.30 - 8.30pm

Cost: Parents: donation, Professionals: $30
Bookings: Jenny Orso on 9435 8311
Mon- Thurs 8.30am - 3.30pm
during school terms

Cheques payable to: 'Kalparrin N-ASD Network'
Direct Debit available ABN: 61 827 714 605
Invoice/Receipt available upon request.
Payment requested at time of booking
Note: Refunds not provided for cancellations
Secondary Student Uniform Order Form

Black Poly/Cotton Contrast Pique Short Sleeve Polo with red trimming. Available from JSA.

*Please note the t-shirt on this form is just an example and not the exact replica*

Product Code: PS08
Cost: $20.00

Sizes:
XS
S
M
L
XL
XXL
XXXL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>Half Chest</th>
<th>Body Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XS</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>69.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>71.5</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>74.0</td>
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<td>L</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4XL</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5XL</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>89.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Orders Due: Friday 14th February 2014

Delivery: Approximately 12th March 2014

Name: ____________________________ Room Number: __________

Size: ________________ Quantity: ______ Amount: $______

Method of Payment: ________________

Please call the school if you have any questions 9309 6258
New approach to working with schools across Australia

The Australian Government Department of Health has provided ongoing funding for Asthma Australia and its member Asthma Foundations to continue to provide training for staff in schools, as well as other education settings (e.g. Child Care staff; Trainee teachers & Child Care Workers).

In addition we have been asked to develop approaches to engage both students with asthma and their parents/carers in the scope of our work. Through a short survey of 70 schools nationally, it was clear that a flexible approach was needed to be able to work meaningfully with the diverse range of school communities.

We are developing a variety of ways to work through schools and engage with students with asthma and their parents/carers, including face-to-face and online options.

It is our intention to target the whole student group (this was strongly stated in the survey responses), including a focus on how to help a friend/classmate in case of an asthma attack.

For parents/carers of students with asthma we are exploring options such as Expert Q&A sessions in local health/community settings (including webinar access) and Live Well with Asthma sessions at various venues and online. The ultimate aim is to connect parents/carers with their local Asthma Foundation through the new Asthma Assist initiative.

These and other approaches will be in place from 1 April 2014. As part of providing staff training for your setting, Asthma Foundation staff and trainers will also be making contact about these new opportunities and working with you to identify suitable ways to engage meaningfully with your school community.

National Young People and Asthma Strategy

Additionally, Asthma Australia has also been funded to implement this strategy for 12-25 year olds with asthma across Australia. We will work with secondary school students to contribute to achieving this. A major focus will be to develop a tool to encourage better medication adherence through self-management.

Survey including secondary students

A starting point for young people with asthma is a survey we will distribute to gather baseline information and to identify young people who want to contribute to our processes. This will inform our research and provide opportunities for respondents to join a forum and to become members of a reference group for the project evaluators.

This survey will be sent to schools following ethics approval. We will encourage you to inform secondary students with asthma about this and for them to contribute to this worthwhile research that will have international significance.

Asthma Australia

asthmaaustralia.org.au
1800 ASTHMA (1800 278 462)
Back to School in 2014! Be prepared for an Asthma Spike

What is the February asthma spike?
Throughout the year there are significant increases, or 'spikes', in asthma presentations to hospitals and emergency departments. Approximately 1 in 10 children in Australia have asthma, and for children and adolescents with asthma these 'spikes' usually occur towards the end of holiday periods as they return to school and preschool. A significant 'spike' in asthma presentations and admissions to hospital of children and adolescents, experiencing severe asthma exacerbations, occurs throughout the first few weeks of February.

Triggers that can be encountered are:
- Dust and mould spores from poorly ventilated, or insufficiently cleaned school rooms
- Respiratory viruses, such as cold and flu viruses
- Cleaning products that leave behind strong smells, aerosols or airborne dust
- Anxiety and stress due to returning to school

What can we do to avoid asthma exacerbations in our school?
- Ensure your school has a sufficient number of Asthma Emergency Kits
- Ensure that each Asthma Emergency Kit contain fresh and in-date reliever medication (e.g. Ventolin, Asmol or Airomir), spacers, record sheet and instructions detailing the emergency procedure
- Ensure student Asthma Action Plans are updated and returned to school
- Ensure staff education and training is current, arranging a free staff asthma education session as required for all new and ongoing staff
- Ensure your school's asthma policy is current for both onsite and offsite situations, and first aid posters are displayed in key locations
- Ensure staff are aware of which students in their class have asthma, and know where Asthma Emergency Kits are stored
- Ensure all classrooms are opened, cleaned and aired out in the weeks before students return to school. A helpful technique can be to turn on all fans, as well as any heating/cooling systems, to begin to clear dust before students arrive

Why does the spike occur?
While there have not been direct links established, the February 'asthma spike' is believed to be largely due to children and adolescents coming into contact with asthma triggers that they have had time away from, as they are now returning to school. Forgetting to take their medication, and poor medication adherence, also places students at an increased risk of asthma attacks when exposed to triggers.
What can parents and carers do to help their child’s asthma at school?

- If your child is self-managing their asthma, or capable of taking their asthma medication independently, ensure that your child is always carrying their reliever medication (e.g. Ventolin, Aptomol, Airomir and Bricanyl) as well as a spacer while at school
- Ensure that you have provided your child’s school/preschool with an updated Asthma Action Plan
- Ensure that your child knows how to recognise early symptoms of an asthma attack and check to make sure they are using their reliever medication properly
- Ensure your child will seek help from school/preschool staff if they experience asthma symptoms
- Ensure that your child’s asthma is being well managed and that their medication and management is reviewed annually by your GP (this is a good opportunity to also update the Asthma Action Plan required by your child’s school/preschool)

For more information, please contact The Asthma Foundation of Victoria on 1800 278 462 or www.asthma.org.au

Respiratory experts talk to parents about asthma

Ever wondered what the experts would say about a cure for asthma?

Or how to get your teenager to take their medication?

If you want to find out the answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about children and asthma, watch The Asthma Foundation’s new video series – available from http://forum.asthma.org.au/

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