

Asthma Policy

North Melbourne Primary School

Errol Street Campus and Molesworth Street Campus

Issue Date: June 2024

Review Date: June 2025

ASTHMA POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact North Melbourne Primary School front office on 9329 6902.

PURPOSE

To ensure that North Melbourne Primary School – Errol St Campus and Molesworth Street Campus – appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

OBJECTIVE

To explain to North Melbourne Primary School parents/carers, staff and students the processes and procedures in place to support students diagnosed with asthma.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- all staff of all campuses, including casual relief staff, contractors and volunteers
- all students of all campuses, who have been diagnosed with asthma or who may require emergency treatment for asthma and their parents/carers.

POLICY

Asthma

Asthma is a long-term lung condition. People with asthma have sensitive airways in their lungs which react to triggers, causing a 'flare-up'. In a flare-up, the muscles around the airway squeeze tight, the airways swell and become narrow and there is more mucus. This makes it hard to breathe. An asthma flare-up can come on slowly (over hours, days or even weeks) or very quickly (over minutes). A sudden or severe asthma flare-up is sometimes called an asthma attack.

Symptoms

Symptoms of asthma can vary over time and often vary from person to person. The most common asthma symptoms are:

- breathlessness
- wheezing (a whistling noise from the chest)
- tight feeling in the chest
- persistent cough

Symptoms often occur at night, early in the morning or during/just after physical activity. If asthma is well controlled, a person should only have occasional asthma symptoms.

Triggers

A trigger is something that sets off or starts asthma symptoms. Everyone with asthma has different triggers. For most people with asthma, triggers are only a problem when asthma is not well controlled with medication. Common asthma triggers include:



- exercise
- smoke (cigarette smoke, wood smoke from open fires, burn-offs or bushfires)
- house dust mites
- pollens
- chemicals such as household cleaning products
- food chemicals/additives
- laughter or emotions, such as stress
- colds/flu
- weather changes such as thunderstorms and cold, dry air
- moulds
- animals such as cats and dogs
- deodorants (including perfumes, after-shaves, hair spray and aerosol deodorant sprays)
- certain medications (including aspirin and anti-inflammatories)

Asthma Management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at North Melbourne Primary School – Errol St Campus and Molesworth St Campus:

1. Parents/carers must provide the school with an Asthma Action Plan which has been completed by the student's medical practitioner. The plan must outline:
 - the prescribed medication taken by the student and when it is to be administered, for example as a pre-medication to exercise or on a regular basis
 - emergency contact details
 - the contact details of the student's medical practitioner
 - the student's known triggers
 - the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack
2. Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan. If a photo is not provided, the student's most recent school photo will be used.
3. North Melbourne Primary School will keep all Asthma Action Plans:
 - *Errol St Campus* - in the First Aid Room, on the student's Compass medical file and their classroom teacher will have a copy
 - *Molesworth St Campus* – in the First Aid Room, on the student's Compass medical file and their classroom teacher will have a copy
4. School staff may also work with parents/carers to develop a Student Health Support Plan if their child requires additional asthma management while at school. The Student Health Support Plan include details on:
 - how the school can provide individualised support for the student's specific needs
 - identify specific strategies
 - allocate staff to assist the student

Any Student Health Support Plan will be developed in accordance with North Melbourne Primary School's Healthcare Needs Policy.

5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, parents/carers are required to provide any updated medical information
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parents/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.
7. School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Action Plans (and Student Health Support School Plans) on an annual basis, or as prescribed by their doctor in their Asthma Action Plan. It is the parents/carers' responsibility to ensure that they have plans reviewed in a timely manner when due for review, and that plans that have not been reviewed may impede students from involvement in off-site activities such as camps.



Student Asthma Kit

All students diagnosed with asthma are required to have a student asthma kit at school which contains:

- their own prescribed reliever medication labelled with the student's name
- their spacer (if they use one)
- their asthma action plan

Student asthma kits will be stored:

- Both Errol St & Molesworth St campuses will store student asthma kits within the First Aid Room at that campus the student attends for their regular learning.

Some students may be permitted to keep their asthma medication within their school bag. All students who store medication on their person/within their school bag will require their parents/carers to complete the following [online form](#).

Asthma Emergency Response Plan

If a student is:

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

School staff will endeavour to follow the Asthma First Aid procedures outlined in the table below. School staff may contact Triple Zero "000" at any time.

Step	Action
1.	Sit the person upright <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be calm and reassuring • Do not leave them alone • Seek assistance from another staff member or reliable student to locate the student's reliever, the Asthma Emergency Kit and the student's Asthma Action Plan (if available). • If the student's action plan is not immediately available, use the Asthma First Aid as described in Steps 2 to 5.
2.	Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shake the puffer • Use a spacer if you have one • Put 1 puff into the spacer • Take 4 breaths from the spacer <p>Remember – Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths</p>
3.	<p>Wait 4 minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above. <p>(or give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler)</p>
4.	If there is still no improvement, call Triple Zero "000" and ask for an ambulance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the operator the student is having an asthma attack • Keep giving 4 separate puffs every 4 minutes until emergency assistance arrives. <p>(or 1 dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort every 4 minutes – up to 3 doses of Symbicort)</p>
5.	If asthma is relieved after administering Asthma First Aid, stop the treatment and observe the student. Notify the student's emergency contact person and record the incident

Staff will call Triple Zero "000" immediately if:



- the person is not breathing
- if the person’s asthma suddenly becomes worse or is not improving
- if the person is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- if they are not sure if it is asthma
- if the person is known to have anaphylaxis

Training for Staff

North Melbourne Primary School – Errol St Campus and North Melbourne Primary School – Molesworth Street Campus, will arrange the following asthma management training for staff:

Staff	Completed by	Course	Provider	Cost	Valid for
Group 1 General Staff	School staff with a direct teaching role with students affected by asthma or otherschool staff directed by the principal after conducting arisk assessment.	Asthma first aid management for education staff (non-accredited) One hour face-to-face or online training.	Asthma Australia	Free to all schools	3 years
Group 2 Specific Staff	Staff working with high-risk children with a history of severe asthma, or with directstudent wellbeing responsibility, (including nurses, PE/sport teachers, first aid and school staff attending camp)	Course in Asthma Awareness 10760NAT (accredited)	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by North Melbourne Primary School	3 years

North Melbourne Primary School will also conduct an annual briefing and training for staff on:

- the procedures outlined in this policy
- the causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma
- identities of the students diagnosed with asthma
- how to use a puffer and spacer
- the location of:
 - the Asthma Emergency Kits
 - asthma medication which has been provided by parents for student use

North Melbourne Primary School – Errol St Campus and Molesworth St Campus – will also provide this policy to casual relief staff and volunteers who will be working with students and may also provide a briefing if the principal decides it is necessary depending on the nature of the work being performed.

Asthma Emergency Kit

North Melbourne Primary School – Errol St Campus and Molesworth St Campus – will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. There will be kits that will be kept on school premises:

- Errol Street Campus - the First Aid Room, school kitchen (SAKGP), Flex Building
- Molesworth Street Campus - the First Aid Room and on each teaching level in staff rooms



Each campus will also have another kit available for mobile activities such as:

- yard duty
- camps and excursions

The Asthma Emergency Kit will contain:

- at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Asmol or Ventolin
- at least 2 spacer devices (for single person use only) to assist with effective inhalation of the blue or blue/grey reliever medication. North Melbourne Primary School – Errol St Campus and Molesworth St Campus – will ensure spare spacers are available as replacements. Spacers will be stored in a dust proof container.
- clear written instructions on Asthma First Aid, including:
 - how to use the medication and spacer devices
 - steps to be taken in treating an asthma attack
- A [record sheet/log](#) for recording the details of an asthma first aid incident, such as the number of puffs administered.

The school nurse or staff member tasked with First Aid duties will monitor and maintain the Asthma Emergency Kits. They will:

- ensure all contents are maintained and replaced where necessary
- regularly check the expiry date on the canisters of the blue or blue/grey reliever puffers and place them if they have expired or a low on doses
- replace spacers in the Kits after each use (spacers are single-person use only)
- dispose of any previously used spacers.

The blue or blue/grey reliever medication in the Asthma Emergency Kits may be used by more than one student as long as they are used with a spacer. If the devices come into contact with someone's mouth, they will not be used again and will be replaced.

After each use of a blue or blue/grey reliever (with a spacer):

- remove the metal canister from the puffer (do not wash the canister)
- wash the plastic casing
- rinse the mouthpiece through the top and bottom under running water for at least 30 seconds
- wash the mouthpiece cover
- air dry then reassemble
- test the puffer to make sure no water remains in it, then return to the Asthma Emergency Kit.

Management of Confidential Medical Information

Confidential medical information provided to North Melbourne Primary School – Errol St Campus and Molesworth St Campus – to support a student diagnosed with asthma will be:

- recorded on the student's file, electronically accessible by North Melbourne Primary School staff via Compass
- shared with all relevant staff so that they can properly support students diagnosed with asthma and respond appropriately if necessary
- classroom teachers are provided with a copy of medical plans for students in their cohort with additional medical needs. Student's individual plans remain confidential and are not on display.



Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

North Melbourne Primary School will be prepared to act on the warnings and advice from the Department of Education and Training when the risk of epidemic thunderstorm asthma is forecast as high.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be available on North Melbourne Primary School's website so that parents/carers and other members of the school community can easily access information regarding North Melbourne Primary School's asthma management procedures. It will also be included in staff induction processes and staff training, including North Melbourne Primary School's bi-annual first aid information sessions and training.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- The Department of Education's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):
 - [Asthma](#)
 - [Treating an asthma attack](#)

- Related policies:
 - Medication Policy
 - First Aid Policy
 - Health Care Needs Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2024
Approved by	Principal, Sarah Nightingale
Next scheduled review date	June 2025 to ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed annually.