



ASTHMA POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy is in place to ensure that Greenvale North West Primary School (interim name) appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

OBJECTIVE

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

COMMUNICATION

Students will be informed of relevant content of this policy at the commencement of each school year, and will be reminded of aspects as required.

Parents will be provided with a copy of this policy on enrolment and the policy will be available on the school website. Regular newsletter items throughout the year will refer to aspects of the policy.

Staff will be referred to this policy during induction and at the start of each school year. A copy of this policy will be available on the Sentral Student Management System for staff access.

CRTs and volunteers will be provided with a copy of this policy on induction.

Public facing collateral such as posters communicating aspects of this policy will be displayed in high traffic areas in the school.

Following review and any changes to this policy, all those with a vested interest will be informed through appropriate avenues such as the newsletter, Sentral Student Management System, staff forums and class activities.

POLICY

1. Asthma Information

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 emotion, 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)

2. Asthma Management

If a student diagnosed with asthma enrolls at Keelonith Primary School:

a) 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.

b) Parents/carers should also provide a photo of the student to be included as part of the student's Asthma Action Plan.

c) Keelonith Primary School) will keep all Asthma Action Plans at the front office, in each classroom, the staffroom, sick bay, in the Sentral Student Management System, in CRT information folders and in yard duty bags.

d) School staff may also work with parents/carers to develop a Student Health Support Plan in accordance with the school's Health Care Needs Policy which will include details on:

- how the school will provide support for the student
- specific strategies for the individual student
- staff allocation to assist the student.

e) If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, Greenvale North West Primary School parents/carers are required to provide updated medical information.

f) If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/carers must notify the school and provide an updated Asthma Action Plan.

g) School staff will work with parents/carers to review Asthma Action Plans (and Student Health Support Plans) at least once a year.

3. Student Asthma Kits

a) 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).

b) Student asthma kits will be stored in each student's neighbourhood area and taken to specialist lessons.

c) Generic asthma kits will be kept in the gym.

4. 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 the person alone ▪ Seek assistance from another staff member or adult 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 Remember – Shake, 1 puff, 4 breaths
3.	Wait 4 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If there is no improvement, give 4 more separate puffs of blue/grey reliever as above (or give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler)
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 (or 1 dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort every 4 minutes – up to 3 doses of Symbicort)
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.

5. Staff Training

a) Keelonith Primary School 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 other school staff directed by the principal after conducting a risk 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 direct student wellbeing responsibility, (including nurses, PE/sport teachers, first aid and school staff attending camp)	<i>Course in Management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace</i> 22282VIC (accredited) OR <i>Course in Emergency Asthma Management</i> 10392NAT (accredited)	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by the school	3 years

b) Keelonith Primary School will also conduct an annual briefing for staff as part of the start of year activities 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 and asthma medication which has been provided by parents for student use.

c) Keelonith Primary School 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.

6. Asthma Emergency Kits

a) Keelonith Primary School will provide and maintain at least two Asthma Emergency Kits. One kit will be kept on school premises in the first aid room and one will be a mobile kit for activities such as yard duty, and camps and excursions.

b) Additional kits will be established for every 300 students.

c) The Asthma Emergency Kits will contain:

- at least 1 blue or blue/grey reliever medication such as Airomir, Admol 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. Greenvale North West Primary School (interim name) 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.

d) The first aid officer 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 are low on doses
- dispose of any previously used spacers.

e) 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.

f) 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.

7. Management of Confidential Medical Information

Confidential medical information provided to Keelonith Primary School to support a student diagnosed with asthma will be:

- recorded on the student's file
- shared with all relevant staff so that they are able to properly support students diagnosed with asthma and respond appropriately if necessary.

8. Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Keelonith 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.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Asthma Australia

- Resources for schools

Department Policy Advisory Library

- Asthma
- Asthma Attacks: Treatment
- Asthma Emergency Kits

School Policies

- Anaphylaxis Policy
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Health Care Needs Policy
- First Aid Policy

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

Department guidelines recommend this policy is updated annually.

This policy was last updated in July 2020 and is scheduled for review in February 2024.