



# Northcote Primary School

## Asthma Policy

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| <b>Background:</b> | Asthma is a chronic health condition affecting approximately 10% of Australian children and teenagers. Asthma is one of the most common reasons for child admissions to hospital and missed days of school. Asthma exacerbations can commonly occur while attending schools, particularly in February and May. <sup>1</sup>  |
| <b>Aims:</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To ensure the health and wellbeing of all students attending the School.</li><li>• To meet the duty of care obligations specified by the Victorian Government's School Policy and Advisory Guide (SPAG).<sup>2</sup></li><li>• To ensure the whole school community (principals, staff, parents/carers and students) is aware of its obligations.</li><li>• To provide the whole school community with the necessary information to enable the best practice management of asthma in the School.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Scope:</b>      | Whole school community.  |
| <b>Statement:</b>  | <p>Northcote Primary School recognises the importance of staff education and the implementation of an asthma policy. The School also recognises the importance of involvement and engagement with parents/carers of students and the ability of students to self-manage their asthma where appropriate.</p> <p>Key points within the SPAG, relevant to an asthma management policy, specify that schools must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obtain a written Asthma Plan for all students diagnosed with asthma upon enrolment at the school and ensure they are updated at least annually.</li><li>• Store medical information and medications appropriately.</li><li>• Ensure that students feel safe and supported at school.</li><li>• Support student healthcare needs.</li><li>• Provide and maintain at least two asthma emergency kits, with an extra kit required for every 300 students in a large school.</li><li>• Ensure that key staff (e.g. School Nurses, First Aid Officers, P.E. and Sport Teachers) undertake Emergency Asthma Management training and that all other staff with a duty of care for students attend a free asthma education session provided by The Asthma Foundation of Victoria.</li></ul> <p><b>Asthma Emergency Kits</b></p> <p>Asthma Emergency Kits should contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reliever medication</li><li>• x2 small volume spacer devices</li><li>• Record form and Asthma First Aid instruction card</li></ul> <p>Please note that it is a recommendation of The Asthma Foundation of Victoria that spacers and face masks are single-person use only.<sup>3</sup> It is essential to have at least two spacers and two face masks contained in each first aid kit and that spacers and face masks are replaced each time they are used.</p> |

**Implementation:****The School will:**

- Ensure all staff are aware of the School's Asthma Policy and management practices through annual professional learning.
- Ensure staff undertake the Asthma Education training provided by Asthma Foundation Victoria every three years.
- Ensure that the Physical Education and Sports teachers have up to date first aid, including asthma, training.
- Identify diagnosed students upon enrolment and provide parents/carers with a copy of the School's Asthma Policy.
- Ensure students with asthma have a current written Asthma Plan (must be updated at least annually) attached to the students' records for reference.
- Ensure that students without an asthma plan and/or who are not known asthma sufferers, and who experience asthma symptoms, are treated using the School asthma first aid procedures. This could be life saving if the asthma has not previously been recognised and would **not** be harmful if the cause of breathlessness was not asthma.
- Ensure all children on school camps have a Confidential Medical Information for School Council Approved Excursions form completed by parents/carers.
- Ensure existing information is collated for children on all other excursions.
- Ensure that asthma first aid procedures are consistent with current national recommendations, are carried out in the event of an asthma attack, and all staff are aware of the asthma first aid procedure.
- Provide and maintain two asthma emergency kits and ensure that each asthma emergency kit contains reliever medication, two spacer devices, instructions outlining the first aid procedure and a record form.
- Ensure that reliever medications within the asthma emergency kits are checked by the nominated first aid officer, are replaced regularly before expiry, and spacers and face masks are replaced after each use.
- Facilitate communication between management, staff, parents/carers and students regarding the School's Asthma Policy and strategies.
- Contact parents/carers if a student experiences asthma and requires asthma medication and management.
- Identify and minimise, as possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students.
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in all activities safely and to their fullest abilities.
- Maintain its status as an Asthma Friendly School (Asthma Foundation Victoria) through adherence to the Asthma Friendly School criteria.

**Staff will:**

- Be aware of the School's Asthma Policy and asthma first aid procedure.
- Be aware of students under their care with asthma and where their medication and personal spacers are stored.
- Attend asthma education and training sessions when required.
- Be aware of where to access written Asthma Plans and asthma emergency kits.
- Identify and minimise, as possible, triggers of asthma symptoms for students.
- Ensure that students with asthma are not discriminated against in any way.
- Ensure that students with asthma can participate in activities safely and to their fullest abilities.
- Promptly communicate to the principal and parents/carers any concerns regarding asthma and students.

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|                           | <p><b>Parents and Carers will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the School if their child has asthma upon enrolment or as soon as possible if their child is later diagnosed with asthma.</li> <li>• Read the School’s Asthma Policy.</li> <li>• If their child has asthma, provide a signed written Asthma Plan to the School and ensure that it is updated at least yearly.</li> <li>• Provide details about their child’s asthma on Confidential Medical Information for School Council Approved Excursions forms used for children attending school camps, or otherwise as required.</li> </ul> <p><b>Students will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately inform staff (if they can) if they experience asthma symptoms.</li> <li>• Inform staff if they have self-administered any asthma medication.</li> <li>• Carry asthma medication and a spacer with them at all times (if self-managing their asthma).</li> </ul>      |
| <p><b>References:</b></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Australian Centre for Asthma Monitoring (2011), “Asthma in Australia: with a focus chapter on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease”, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra 2011.</li> <li>2 School Policy and Advisory Guide, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2011), available at:<br/><a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/spag/default.htm">www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/spag/default.htm</a></li> <li>3 National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (2010), “Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare”, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2010, available at:<br/><a href="http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/cd33_infection_control_healthcare_0.pdf">www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/cd33_infection_control_healthcare_0.pdf</a></li> </ol> |
| <p><b>Date:</b></p>       | <p>This policy was last ratified by School Council in 2013.</p>   |