

ASTHMA POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you require assistance with understanding this policy, please do not hesitate to contact the College and someone will organise a multicultural aide or the relevant person to assist you.

PURPOSE

To ensure that Mount Ridley P-12 College appropriately supports students diagnosed with asthma.

OBJECTIVE

To explain to Mount Ridley P-12 College 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.

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 Mount Ridley P-12 College:

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 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, this will apply for newly enrolled students. For existing students, their photos will be downloaded from Compass.
3. Mount Ridley P-12 College will keep all Asthma Action Plans:
 - in the Main Administration First Aid room, student enrolment file in the main office and pinned to the individual student's Compass profile.
4. School staff may also work with parents/carers to develop a Student Health Support Plan which will include details on:
 - how the school will provide support for the student
 - identify specific strategies
 - allocate staff to assist the student

Any Student Health Support Plan will be developed in accordance with Mount Ridley P-12 College's Healthcare Needs Policy.

5. If a student diagnosed with asthma is going to attend a school camp or excursion, Mount Ridley P-12 College parents/carers are required to provide any updated medical information.
6. If a student's asthma condition or treatment requirements change, parent/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 Plans) once a year, at the beginning of the school year].

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)

Emergency asthma kits will be stored in the relevant mini school offices ie Early Years office for Years Prep – 4, Junior mini school office (Midland) for Years 5 – 7 students and Middle / Senior school office (Willandra) for Years 8 – 12 students. Additionally, students are highly encouraged to keep their asthma kits with them while

at school. Parents of Years Prep – 4 are asked to keep their child’s asthma kit in their bags.

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.	<p>Sit the person upright</p> <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.	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>If using Ventolin: Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: Shake the puffer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>If using Bricanyl or Symbicort:</p> <p><u>Do not shake this inhaler</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and twist the bottom one full rotation • Student/individual takes a direct breath from the inhaler • Repeat this process (two inhalations in total) </td> </tr> </table>	<p>If using Ventolin: Give 4 separate puffs of blue or blue/grey reliever puffer: Shake the puffer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>If using Bricanyl or Symbicort:</p> <p><u>Do not shake this inhaler</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and twist the bottom one full rotation • Student/individual takes a direct breath from the inhaler • Repeat this process (two inhalations in total)
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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 (or give 1 more dose of Bricanyl or Symbicort inhaler) 		
4.	<p>If there is still no improvement call Triple Zero “000” and ask for an ambulance.</p> <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.	<p>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</p>		

Staff will call Triple Zero “000” immediately if:

- the student is not breathing
- the student is having a severe or life threatening attack (reliever medication not working at all; cannot speak a full sentence; extreme difficulty breathing; feeling asthma is out of control; lips turning blue)
- the student is having an asthma attack and a reliever is not available
- the student is known to have anaphylaxis – staff will follow their Anaphylaxis Action Plan then give asthma first aid
- at any time the student’s condition suddenly worsens or is not improving
- staff are otherwise concerned about the student’s health and safety.

Training for staff

Mount Ridley P-12 College 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 online training.	Asthma Australia	Free to all schools	3 years
Group 2 Specific Staff (optional)	Nurses and PE/sport teachers	<i>Course in Asthma Awareness 10760NAT</i> OR <i>Course in the management of Asthma Risks and Emergencies in the Workplace 22556VIC</i> (accredited)	Any RTO that has this course in their scope of practice	Paid by Mount Ridley P-12 College	3 years

Mount Ridley College will also conduct an annual briefing for staff on: (even though this is optional, it will be conducted at a mid year briefing with the Anaphylaxis training briefing)

- the procedures outlined in this policy
- the causes, symptoms and treatment of asthma [schools can refer to the introductory information at the start of this policy]
- 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.

Asthma Emergency Kit

Mount Ridley P-12 College will provide and maintain at least thirty eight Asthma Emergency Kits. These kits will be kept at each of the mini school offices, the main administration first aid office and in each of the excursion / camp backpacks as well as various offices through the college.

The Asthma Emergency Kit 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 (Mount Ridley P-12 College 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 of an asthma first aid incident, such as the number of puffs administered will be entered on the student's Compass profile.

The college nurse / 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 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 Mount Ridley P-12 College to support a student diagnosed with asthma will be:

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

Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma

Mount Ridley P-12 College 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

Communication plan

This policy will be available on Mount Ridley P-12 College's website so that parents and other members of the school community can easily access information about Mount Ridley P-12 College's asthma management procedures.

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Included in staff handbook/manual (USB drive) / Staff MRC Portal
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Asthma Australia: [Resources for schools](#)
- Asthma Australia: [Asthma emergency kits](#)
- Policy and Advisory Library:
 - [Asthma](#)
 - [Treating an asthma attack](#)
- The following local policies (Health Care Needs, First Aid Policy, Medication) can be found on the college website: <https://www.mountridleycollege.vic.edu.au/page/7/A-Z-Policies>

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2026
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	This policy will be reviewed and presented annually to College Council at the second meeting for the year