



Ventilation and Air Purification Policy

Policy

This policy describes how to cross ventilate indoor school spaces, maximise the use of outdoor spaces and operate air purifiers to reduce the risk of airborne infectious disease transmission (including COVID-19).

Summary

- Glen Huntly Primary School can reduce the risk of transmission of airborne infectious diseases (including COVID-19) through the way they use outdoor and indoor spaces
- To reduce the risk of catching or passing airborne infectious diseases to others, Glen Huntly Primary School:
 - is required to maximise fresh air flow into all indoor spaces (such as, by opening windows and doors)
 - should increase the use of outdoor learning areas wherever practicable
 - will use air purifiers alongside natural and mechanical cross ventilation
 - will minimise the use of indoor space that can't be cross ventilated with outside air
- Glen Huntly Primary School will aim to implement measures for a safe and comfortable learning environment (such as, considering thermal and noise comfort) with cross ventilation strategies in place
- Staff who move or lift air purifiers must follow the occupational health and safety measures, in this policy to minimise the risk of injury. Refer to the [Guidance tab](#).
- Resources are available, including printable fact sheets and a poster to display in classrooms and other school spaces, accessed at the [Resources tab](#).

Details

Airborne diseases are caused by pathogenic microbes small enough to be discharged from an infected person via coughing, sneezing, laughing and close personal contact or aerosolization of the microbe. The discharged microbes remain suspended in the air on dust particles, respiratory and water droplets. Illness is caused when the microbe is inhaled or contacts mucus membranes or when secretions remaining on a surface are touched.

Glen Huntly Primary School can reduce the risk of airborne infectious disease transmission through increasing cross ventilation of indoor spaces, reducing the use of spaces that can't be ventilated with fresh air and using air purifiers to assist cross ventilation, particularly in areas which pose a higher transmission risk.

Cross ventilation and air purification are important strategies in the broader suite of controls, to reduce the risk of airborne infectious disease transmission in school settings including vaccination, physical distancing, good hygiene, cleaning and mask use, but should not be considered in isolation of these other measures.

There are 2 ways indoor air quality can be improved:

- Cross ventilation – bringing in outside air by opening windows and doors or by using mechanical systems (such as air-conditioning systems and fans)
- air purification – using air purifiers to filter the air.

The level of transmission risk varies between different types of indoor school spaces, as do the most effective strategies for reducing this risk. Refer to [Room risk ranking and management strategies](#) for more information, which presents information regarding the levels of potential risks in each type of indoor area in a school, in terms of high, medium and low risks.

Ventilation

Glen Huntly Primary School will aim to encourage and maximise fresh air flow into all indoor spaces. The school will ensure that staff understand that adequate cross ventilation is one of the most effective measures to keep our school safe. The most effective strategies for using cross ventilation to improve indoor air quality will vary, depending on the room and the equipment available to the school. If inclement weather does not permit open windows and doors all day, staff will consider opening them intermittently for short durations, such as for ten minutes every hour.

Refer to [Using ventilation to improve indoor air quality](#) using the Guidance tab for further information.

Window maintenance

Glen Huntly Primary School will adopt a policy of fixing windows that are designed to be opened but do not open, through their general maintenance processes. This should be funded by a school's Student Resource Package maintenance funding.

In some instances, the schools are required to balance the requirement to bring in outside air with the risk of students absconding from their learning spaces. Schools are encouraged to consider and implement solutions such as installing fly screens for windows, mesh security doors for doorways, and indoor safety gates. In relation to these aspects, Glen Huntly Primary School will consult with our regional provision and planning manager for further advice and assistance on window maintenance.

Use of air purifiers alongside natural and mechanical cross ventilation

Air purifiers complement cross ventilation methods by removing infectious particles from the air. They do not replace other cross ventilation methods. Air purifiers filter existing air within a space and do not bring in outside air.

Air purifiers should be used alongside open windows and doors and with mechanical cross ventilation in operation. Additionally, schools are strongly encouraged to use air purifiers if it is not possible to keep doors and windows open all day, as in the case of inclement/cold/windy/severe weather.

For information about the operation, placement, cleaning and maintenance of department-supplied air purifiers, please refer to [Operation and placement of air purifiers](#).

Other strategies to reduce airborne infectious disease transmission

Maximise the use of outdoor learning areas:

Alongside the use of various cross ventilation methods, schools are strongly encouraged to conduct outdoor learning whenever and as much as practicable, noting that there may be less opportunity in winter months.

Glen Huntly Primary School will identify spaces within the school that could be used for outdoor learning. These spaces could be areas that are already sheltered and shaded. The use of this space could be rotated between classes.

The school will aim to consider options to set up different spaces, depending on weather conditions.

Aerosolised disinfectants

The use of products which introduce particles into the air to 'disinfect' indoor air, such as gels, liquids, spray bottles, aerosols or vaporisers, is not recommended.

There can be allergen concerns with the introduction of particles, chemicals or oils into the air. Aerosols are not a proven method to reduce the risk of transmission of airborne infectious disease in indoor environments.

Definitions

Air purifier:

An air purifier is an indoor portable device that filters domestic or industrial air, and which is used primarily to remove pollution, improve air quality and purify the air.

Cross Ventilation:

The circulation of fresh air.

Other considerations and resources

- [How to use an air purifier – accessible version \(DOCX\)](#)
- [How to use an air purifier – printable version \(PDF\)](#)
- [Where to put your air purifiers – accessible version \(DOCX\)](#)
- [Where to put your air purifiers – printable version \(PDF\)](#)
- [Ventilation advice for the classroom – accessible version \(DOCX\)](#)
- [Ventilation advice for the classroom – printable version \(PDF\)](#)
- [Poster on promoting air flow in schools – accessible version \(DOCX\)](#)
- [Poster on promoting air flow in schools – printable version \(PDF\)](#)

Where determined as necessary by the Principal and/or the Leadership PLC team, some indoor spaces or classrooms will have a colour version of each type of printable poster listed above on display.

The Principal/Assistant Principal and/or the Leadership PLC team will oversee policy implementation for unique events such as: Excursions, Camps, Parent Information Sessions, Special Person's Day, Mother's Day Stall, Kids' Disco, Musical Soirees, Graduation events etc.

It is also important to highlight the following:

In inclement weather consider opening windows and doors at intervals for short durations only – such as, in between classes, or during morning recess and lunch time, including while using air purifiers.

Related policies

- Air Quality – Impact of Smoke on Health
- Asthma
- COVID-19 – School Operations
- Cleaning
- Environmental Hygiene
- Manual Handling
- Noise Management
- School Maintenance Plans and Rolling Facilities Evaluations
- Testing and Tagging of Electrical Equipment

Relevant legislation

[Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#) – section 21(1) requires an employer to, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain for employees of the employer a working environment that is safe and without risks to health.

REVIEW:

This policy was ratified by School Council in July 2023 and will be reviewed again in July 2025 or earlier if required.