

## POLICY & PROCEDURAL STATEMENTS

**Topic:** Early Learning – Asthma Management

**Policy:** It is generally accepted that children under 6 years-of-age do not have the ability to recognise and manage their own asthma effectively.

Avenue Neighbourhood House at Eley Inc. (ANH@E) recognises the need to educate its staff and parents/carers about asthma and to promote responsible asthma management strategies.

**Aims:**

This policy aims to:

- Raise the awareness of asthma amongst those involved with ANH@E Early Learning Centre.
- Provide the necessary strategies to ensure the health and safety of all persons with asthma involved with the Early Learning Centre.
- Provide an environment in which children with asthma can participate in all activities to the full extent of their capabilities.
- Provide a clear set of guidelines and expectations to be followed with regard to the management of asthma.

**Legislation:**

The *Children’s Services Regulations 2020* (Vic) Regulation 59 requires proprietors of licenced children’s services to have a policy that sets out practices in relation to asthma management. This policy is required whether or not there is a child diagnosed at risk of asthma enrolled at the service. It will apply to children enrolled at the service, their parents/guardians, staff, and licensee as well as to other relevant members of the service community, such as volunteers and visiting specialists.

Under the *Children’s Services Regulations 2020* (Vic) Regulations 95 (1) (c) and 95 (2) (c), at least one staff member or one nominated supervisor at the service who has approved emergency asthma management training must attend the premises and immediately available in an emergency, at all times.

**Definitions:**

**Approved emergency asthma management training** means emergency asthma management training approved by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). Approved emergency asthma management training and qualifications are available at the [Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority](https://www.acecqa.gov.au) (ACECQA) website.

**Asthma** is a chronic health condition affecting one (1) in four (4) children and is the major cause for childhood admission to hospital. While an average of four (4) people die in Victoria each week from asthma, many of these deaths are preventable. Community education and correct management will assist to both reduce the incidence and minimise the impact of asthma.

**Risk minimisation and communication plan** is a plan specific to the service for a child with a medical condition, allergy, or specific health care need. The risk minimisation and communication plan must be developed with staff at the service and the parent/guardian of the child at risk of asthma. The plan must be reviewed at least annually, but always upon the enrolment or diagnosis of each child who is at risk of asthma.

The plan will state:

- How the service will minimise risks.
- How it will communicate with parents/guardians and staff.
- Who is responsible for implementing the strategies.
- How parents and staff will continue to be informed about the child at risk of asthma and emergency procedures to be followed.

**Thunderstorm asthma** (1 October-31 December) can be very serious for people with asthma. Thunderstorm asthma events are believed to be triggered by an uncommon combination of high grass pollen levels and certain thunderstorm conditions, causing pollen grains from grasses to be swept up in the wind and carried long distances. Some pollens can burst open and release tiny particles that are concentrated in the wind just before the thunderstorm. These small particles get deep into the airways and can trigger asthma symptoms.

**Thunderstorm Asthma Symptoms** are shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, wheezing when breathing, and persistent coughing.

#### **Code of Practice:**

Asthma management is viewed as a shared responsibility. To ensure this, each of the key groups within Avenue Neighbourhood House at Eley Inc. will give the following undertakings:

- Providing, as far as practicable, a safe and healthy environment in which children at risk of asthma can participate equally in all aspects of the children's program and experiences.
- Raising awareness about asthma amongst the service community and children in attendance.
- Ensuring each staff member and other relevant adults are appropriately informed of and understand asthma and emergency procedures.
- Facilitating communication to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children at risk of asthma.

#### **Management will:**

- Ensure that at least one (1) Early Learning staff member or one (1) nominated supervisor holds current emergency asthma management training and attends the premises and immediately available in an emergency at all times.
- Ensure that at least one (1) staff member holds a current Bronchodilator Accreditation Number (BAN).
- Ensure any new/or temporary staff are fully briefed on asthma procedures upon their appointment to the Early Learning Centre.
- Ensure a risk minimisation and communication plan is in place which involves the parents/guardians of each child at risk of asthma in assessing risks, management, and communication strategies for their child.
- Ensure that a child's individual asthma action plan is provided to the Centre, is signed by a Registered Medical Practitioner and inserted into the enrolment record for each child diagnosed at risk from asthma. This plan will provide clear instructions on what to do in response to an asthma attack.
- Contact 000 (triple zero) to seek advice on the administering of an emergency blue reliever puffer in the instance of a child who has not been diagnosed with asthma but is exhibiting breathing difficulties and parents/guardians are uncontactable.
- Provide parents with a copy of the Asthma Management Policy at time of enrolment.
- Identify children with asthma during the enrolment process.
- Where appropriate, organise information sessions on asthma for the parents/carers.
- Ensure that all staff are informed of the children with asthma in their care.
- Formalise and document the internal procedures for emergency asthma management.

- Ensure that an emergency asthma first aid poster is displayed in a prominent location in the Early Learning Centre.
- Ensure that the First Aid kit contains a blue reliever puffer (e.g., Airomir, Asmol, Bricanyl, Ventolin), a spacer device, and concise written instructions on asthma first aid procedures.
- Ensure that the asthma component of the First Aid kit is correctly maintained by an accredited staff member.
- Encourage open communication between parents/carers and staff regarding the status and impact of a child's asthma.

**Early Learning Staff will:**

- Ensure they maintain current emergency asthma management training.
- Ensure they are aware of the children with asthma in their care.
- Ensure an Asthma Action Plan signed by a Registered Medical Practitioner is provided to the Centre upon enrolment or at the time of diagnosis. The Action Plan will outline triggers, signs and symptoms, the prescribed medication for that child and the circumstances in which the medication should be used.
- Complete a risk minimisation and communication plan in consultation with the parents/guardians to minimise the risk of asthma whilst the child is in the care of the service, develop strategies to minimise the risk, and ensure ongoing communication between the Centre and the family.
- Ensure that no child who has been prescribed asthma medication and a reliever is permitted to attend the Early Learning Centre without their medication and reliever.
- Identify and, where practicable, minimise asthma triggers.
- Ensure that all staff in the Early Learning Centre know the location of the Asthma Action Plan and the child's medication with reliever.
- Ensure that all regular prescribed asthma medication is administered in accordance with the information on the child's Asthma Action Plan.
- Administer emergency medications if appropriately trained and if required according to the child's Asthma Action Plan.
- Ensure that the staff member accompanying children outside the service (including in emergency evacuations) carries the asthma medication and a copy of the child's Asthma Action Plan.
- Where necessary, modify activities in accordance with a child's needs.
- Be aware of thunderstorm forecasts particularly on HIGH or EXTREME pollen count days and where possible avoid being outside prior to a thunderstorm in the grass pollen season (1 Oct-31 Dec), especially in the wind gusts that come before the storm. To minimise asthma, children will stay indoors with doors and windows closed and air conditioner turned to 'recirculate'. Thunderstorm asthma forecasts and alerts will be checked and monitored on the [Vic Emergency website](#). Up-to-date pollen levels will be checked and monitored on the [AusPollen website](#)
- Any concerns that a child's asthma is limiting his/her ability to participate fully in all activities **must** be communicated promptly to parents/guardians.
- Ensure that children with asthma are treated equally with all other children when participating in activities.

**Parents/guardians will:**

- Inform Early Learning staff, either upon enrolment or on initial diagnosis, if their child has a history of asthma.

- Provide the Centre with an Asthma Action Plan signed by the Registered Medical Practitioner giving written consent to use the appropriate medication (e.g., reliever) in line with the action plan.
- Be involved in the development of a risk minimisation and communication plan with service staff for their child at risk of asthma.
- Provide staff with their child's medication (e.g. reliever) to be with the child whilst being cared for at the Centre.
- Regularly check the expiry date of the medication.
- notify the service staff of any changes to a child's asthma status and provide a new Asthma Action Plan in accordance with these changes.
- Communicate all relevant information and concerns to staff; for example, any matter relating to the health of the child.
- Comply with this policy that no child who has been prescribed asthma relieving medication is permitted to attend the service or its programs without their reliever.
- Read and be familiar with this policy and comply with the procedures
- Always ensure that their child has an adequate supply of appropriate medication (e.g., reliever).
- Ensure that they comply with all requirements and procedures in relation to the Medications Book.
- Communicate all relevant information and concerns with the Early Learning staff as the need arises (e.g., if asthma symptoms were present the previous night or in the morning).
- Ensure, in consultation with the Early Learning staff, the health and safety of their child through supervised management of the child's asthma.

**Children will:**

- Wherever practical, be encouraged to seek their reliever medication as soon as their symptoms develop.

**Related Policies**

This Policy must be read in conjunction with ANH@E's:

- Early Learning - Administration of First Aid
- Early Learning - Child Health
- Early Learning - Enrolment
- Early Learning - Medical Conditions and Administering Medication

**This policy was reviewed in October 2021 and will be reviewed again in October 2023.**