

POLICY & PROCEDURAL STATEMENTS

Topic: Early Learning – Asthma Management

Definition: 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.

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 Conditions are shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, wheezing when breathing, and persistent coughing.

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. With this in mind, Avenue Neighbourhood House at Eley Inc. (a Registered Training Organisation - RTO) 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 Avenue Neighbourhood House at Eley Inc. 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.

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:

Management will:

- Contact Triple Zero (000) 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.
- Ensure any new/or temporary staff are fully briefed on asthma procedures upon their appointment to the Early Learning Centre.
- Ensure that at least one (1) paid Early Learning staff member has a current accreditation in emergency asthma management.

- Ensure that at least one (1) staff member holds a current Bronchodilator Accreditation Number (BAN).
- Provide parents with a copy of the Asthma Policy at time of enrolment.
- Identify children with asthma during the enrolment process.
- Provide an Asthma Record Card to all parents of children with asthma at time of enrolment. (The completed Asthma Record Card is to be returned within seven (7) days of the enrolment.)
- Ensure that Asthma Record Cards are stored securely in the Early Learning Supervisor's office.
- 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 that they maintain current accreditation in asthma management.
- Ensure that they are aware of the children with asthma in their care.
- Ensure, in consultation with the parent/carer, the health and safety of each child through supervised management of the child's asthma.
- Identify and, where practicable, minimise asthma triggers.
- 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](#).
- Ensure that all regular prescribed asthma medication is administered in accordance with the information on the child's Asthma Record Card.
- Administer emergency medications (if appropriately trained by Asthma Victoria) if required according to the child's Asthma Record Card. If no Asthma Record Card is available, the steps outlined in Appendix B should *immediately* be followed.
- 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 all relevant information regarding the child's asthma via the Asthma Record Card.
- Notify the Early Learning staff, in writing, of any changes to the Asthma Record Card during the year.
- Ensure that their child has an adequate supply of appropriate medication (e.g., reliever) at all times.

- 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.

(Source: Asthma Victoria).

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