


Policy

Early Years Policy - Asthma

Date of Adoption	June 2018		
Adoption Method	<input type="checkbox"/> Council	<input type="checkbox"/> CEO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director Community
Director Signature	Signed by:  <small>A4566C08D5B4450...</small>		Date 06-09-2024
Responsible Officer and Unit	Samantha Waymouth, Coordinator Early Years Services		
Nominated Review Period	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annually	<input type="checkbox"/> Every 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>)
Last Endorsement Date	October 2020		
Next Endorsement Date	September 2025		

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

DOCUMENT HISTORY	Version	Date	Author
Initial Draft			
Second Draft			
Final Draft			
Approval			

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Purpose/Objective

This policy will outline the procedures to:

- ensure educators, staff and parents/guardians are aware of their obligations and the best practice management of asthma at Council's Early Years Services
- ensure all necessary information for the effective management of children with asthma is collected and recorded so that these children receive appropriate attention when required
- respond to the needs of children who have not been diagnosed with asthma, yet experience breathing difficulties (suspected asthma attack)
- ensure educators, staff and families follow the advice from Emergency Management Victoria associated with thunderstorm asthma event.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Early Years Policy - Dealing with Medical Conditions.

Asthma management should be viewed as a shared responsibility. Whilst Council recognises its duty of care for children with asthma, the responsibility for ongoing asthma management rests with the child's family and medical practitioner

Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider, nominated supervisor, contractors, educators, staff, students on placement at kindergartens, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Council's Early Years Services.

Background/Reasons for Policy

Asthma is a chronic, treatable health condition which affects approximately one in nine Australian children and is one of the most common reasons for childhood admission to hospital. With good asthma management, people with asthma need not restrict their daily activities. Community education assists in generating a better understanding of asthma within the community and minimising its impact.

Symptoms of asthma include wheezing, coughing (particularly at night), chest tightness and difficulty in breathing and shortness of breath with symptoms varying between children. It is generally accepted that children under six years of age do not have the skills and ability to

recognise and manage their own asthma without adult assistance. With this in mind, a service must recognise the need to educate staff and parents/guardians about asthma and promote responsible asthma management strategies.

Legislation which governs the operation of approved early years services is based on the health, safety and welfare of children, and requires that children are protected from hazards and harm. The approved provider will ensure that there is at least one educator on duty at all times who has current approved emergency asthma management training, in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Regulation 136(c)). As a demonstration of duty of care and best practice, all teachers and educators have current, approved emergency asthma management training (refer to Definitions)

Gender Impact Assessment

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this policy.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Approved emergency asthma management (EAM) training	Training that is approved by the national authority, in accordance with Division 7 of the National Regulations, and is listed on the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website. EAM training provides knowledge about the underlying causes of asthma, asthma triggers, and the recognition and treatment of an asthma attack.
Asthma Care Plan	A record of information on an individual child's asthma and its management, including contact details, what to do when the child's asthma worsens and the treatment to be administered in an emergency. An Asthma Care Plan template specifically for use in children's services can be downloaded from the resources section of The Asthma Foundation of Victoria website: www.asthma.org.au
Asthma emergency	The onset of unstable or deteriorating asthma symptoms requiring immediate treatment with reliever medication.

Asthma first aid kit	<p>Kits should contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● reliever medication ● 2 small volume spacer devices ● 2 compatible children's face masks (for children under the age of four) ● record form ● asthma first aid instruction card <p>The Asthma Foundation of Victoria recommends that spacers and face masks are for single-use only. It is essential to have at least two spacers and two face masks in each first aid kit, and these should be replaced once used.</p>
Asthma triggers	<p>Things that may induce asthma symptoms, for example pollens, colds/viruses, dust mites, smoke and exercise. Asthma triggers will vary from child to child.</p>
Duty of care	<p>A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury.</p>
Medication record	<p>Contains details for each child to whom medication is to be administered by the service. This includes the child's name, signed authorisation to administer medication and a record of the medication administered, including time, date, dosage, manner of administration, name and signature of person administering the medication and of the person checking the medication, if required (Regulation 92). A sample medication record is available on the ACECQA website: https://www.cecqa.gov.au/media/22731</p>
Metered dose inhaler (puffer)	<p>A common device used to administer reliever medication.</p>

Puffer	The common name for a metered dose inhaler.
Reliever medication	This comes in a blue/grey metered dose inhaler containing salbutamol, a chemical used to relax the muscles around the airways to relieve asthma symptoms. This medication is always used in an asthma emergency. Reliever medication is commonly sold by pharmacies as Airomir, Asmol, or Ventolin.
Risk minimisation plan	Provides information about child-specific asthma triggers and strategies to avoid these in the service (refer to Attachment 4). A risk minimisation plan template specifically for use in children's services can be downloaded from the resources section of The Asthma Foundation of Victoria website: https://asthma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Individual-Asthma-Risk-Minimisation-Plan.docx
Spacer	A plastic chamber device used to increase the efficiency of delivery of reliever medication from a puffer. It should always be used in conjunction with a puffer device and may be used in conjunction with a face mask.
Staff record	Must be kept by the service and include details of the nominated supervisors, the educational leader, other staff members, volunteers and the responsible person. The record must include information about qualifications, training and details of their Working with Children Check (Regulations 146–149). A sample staff record is available on the ACECQA website: https://www.acecqa.gov.au/media/22741

References

- > Asthma Australia: www.asthmaaustralia.org.au or phone 1800 278 462 (toll free)
- > Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority: www.acecqa.gov.au
- > Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, ACECQA

Related Policies

- > Early Years Policy - Administration of Medication
- > Early Years Policy - Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions
- > Early Years Policy – Dealing with Medical Conditions
- > Early Years Policy - Excursions and Service Events
- > Early Years Policy - Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- > Early Years Policy – Staffing Requirements
- > Privacy Policy (Council)

Related Legislation

- > *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 167, 169, 174*
- > *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 136, 137*
- > *Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)*
- > *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
 - *Standard 2.1: Each child's health is promoted*
 - *Element 2.1.1: Each child's health needs are supported*
 - *Standard 2.3: Each child is protected*
 - *Element 2.3.3: Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented*
- > *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- > *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*
- > *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)*

> *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 (Vic)*

Policy

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

Responsibilities

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Families	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Providing all staff with access to the service's Early Years Policy - Asthma, and ensuring that they are aware of asthma management strategies (refer to Attachments) upon employment at the service	R	✓			
Providing families with access of the service's Early Years policies: Asthma; and Dealing with Medical Conditions upon enrolment of their child (Regulation 90, 91)	R	✓			
Ensuring that induction procedures for casual and relief staff include information about children attending the service who have been diagnosed with asthma, and the location of their medication and action plans	R	R			

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Families	Contractors, volunteers and students
Providing approved Emergency Asthma Management (EAM) training (refer to Definitions) to staff as required under the National Regulations 136	R	✓			
Ensuring at least one staff member with current, approved Emergency Asthma Management training is on duty at all times	R	✓			
Ensuring that all educators' approved first aid qualifications, anaphylaxis management training and Emergency Asthma Management training are current, meet the requirements of the National Law (Section 169(4)) and National Regulations (Regulation 137), and are approved by ACECQA	R	✓			
Maintaining current approved Emergency Asthma Management qualifications		R	R		✓
Ensuring the details of approved Emergency Asthma Management training are included on the staff record (refer to Definitions)	R	✓			

Responsibilities	Contractors, volunteers and students	Families	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Approved provider and persons with management or control
Organising asthma management information sessions for families of children enrolled at the service, where appropriate				✓	R
Acting on advice and warnings from the Victorian Government associated with a potential thunderstorm asthma activity, and implement a communication strategy to inform families				✓	R
Implementing procedures to avoid exposure to potential thunderstorm asthma, such as staying indoors with windows and doors closed				✓	R
Identifying children with asthma during the enrolment process and informing staff				✓	R

Responsibilities	Contractors, volunteers and students	Families	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Approved provider and persons with management or control
Ensuring families provide a copy of their child's Asthma Care Plan (refer to Definitions and Attachment 2), in consultation (if possible) with their registered medical practitioner, following enrolment and prior to the child commencing at the service (Regulation 90). The Asthma Care Plan should be reviewed and updated at least annually		✓		✓	R
Developing a Risk Minimisation Plan (refer to Definitions and Attachment 4) for every child with asthma, in consultation with families		✓	✓	✓	R
Ensuring all details on their child's enrolment form and medication record (refer to Definitions) are completed prior to commencement at the service		✓			
Ensuring that all children with asthma have an Asthma Care Plan and Risk Minimisation Plan filed with their enrolment record		✓		✓	R

Responsibilities	Contractors, volunteers and students	Families	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Approved provider and persons with management or control
		✓			
		✓			
		✓		✓	R
			✓	✓	✓
			✓	✓	✓

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Families	Contractors, volunteers and students
Ensuring that they can identify children displaying the symptoms of an asthma attack and locate their personal medication, Asthma Care Plans and the asthma first aid kit	R	✓	✓		
Ensuring that medication is administered in accordance with the child's Asthma Care Plan and the Early Years Policy - Administration of Medication	R	R	R		
Ensuring a medication record is kept for each child to whom medication is to be administered by the service (Regulation 92)	R	✓	✓		
Ensuring families of all children with asthma provide reliever medication and a spacer (including a child's face mask, if required) at all times their child is attending the service	R	✓		R	
Implementing an asthma first aid procedure (refer to Attachments) consistent with current national recommendations	R	R	R		

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Families	Contractors, volunteers and students
Ensuring that all staff are aware of the asthma first aid procedure	R	✓			
Ensuring adequate provision and maintenance of asthma first aid kits (refer to Definitions)	R	✓			
Ensuring the expiry date of reliever medication is checked regularly and replaced when required, and that spacers and face masks that are from the services first aid kits are replaced after every use	R	✓	✓		
Facilitating communication between management, early childhood teachers, educators, staff and families regarding the service's Early Years Policy – Asthma and strategies	R	✓			
Identifying and minimising asthma triggers (refer to Definitions) for children attending the service as outlined in the child's Asthma Care Plan, where possible	R	✓	✓		
Ensuring that children with asthma are not discriminated against in any way	✓	✓	✓		✓

Responsibilities	Contractors, volunteers and students	Families	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Approved provider and persons with management or control
	✓		✓	✓	✓
	✓		✓	✓	✓
			✓	✓	R
				✓	R
			R	R	R

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Families	Contractors, volunteers and students
Ensuring that, when medication has been administered to a child in an asthma emergency without authorisation from the parent/guardian or authorised nominee, medical practitioner or emergency services, the parent/guardian of the child and emergency services are notified as soon as is practicable (Regulation 94)	R	R	R		
Following appropriate reporting procedures set out in the Early Years Policy - Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness in the event that a child is ill, or is involved in a medical emergency or an incident at the service that results in injury or trauma	R	R	R		✓
Ensuring an asthma first aid kit is taken on all excursions and other offsite activities (refer to Early Years Policy - Excursions and Service Events)	R	R	✓		

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback regarding this policy and its effectiveness

- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify all stakeholders, including parents/guardians, at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (Regulation 172 (2))

Attachments

- **Attachment 1: Asthma Action Plan**
(download from the Asthma Australia website: <https://asthma.org.au/treatment-diagnosis/asthma-action-plan/>)
- **Attachment 2: Asthma First Aid poster**
(download from the Asthma Australia website: <https://asthma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Individual-Asthma-Risk-Minimisation-Plan.docx>)
- **Attachment 3: Asthma Risk Minimisation Plan**
(download from the Early Learning Association Australia website: <https://elaa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/asthma-risk-minimisation-plan.docx>)