POLICY NO 04: ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

Key Policy Contact Person: Manager, Our Village Family Childcare

POLICY STATEMENT:

In accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations, (current version September 1,2025), Part 4.2 Children's Health and Safety, Regulation 90 the key prevention is having the knowledge of the children who have been diagnosed at risk, awareness of triggers (allergens), and prevention of exposure to these triggers. Partnership between the childcare service, the Educator and the parents is important in ensuring that certain food or items are kept away from the child whilst in care.

It is generally accepted that children under the age of 6 years do not have the skills and ability to recognise and manage their own asthma effectively. With this in mind, Our Village Family Childcare (OVFC) recognises the need to educate staff, Educators, and parents about asthma and to promote responsible asthma management strategies.

CRITICAL INFORMATION:

HOW OFTEN SHOULD AND ASTHMA ACTION PLAN BE UPDATED?

Be sure to ask your doctor to review your Asthma Action Plan whenever asthma medicine or your symptoms change. Otherwise, aim for:

- **Once a year for adults or**
- **Every six months for children** **(Ref. Asthma Australia)**

Contents

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide, as far as practicable, a safe and supportive environment in which children with asthma can fully participate in all aspects of their care and education. It aims to raise awareness about asthma and the asthma service policy within the Family Childcare community, while actively engaging families in assessing risks and developing tailored risk minimisation and management strategies for their children. Additionally, the policy ensures that all Coordination Unit staff and Educators possess adequate knowledge of asthma, related allergies, and the service's procedures for effectively responding to asthma attacks.

SCOPE/RESPONSIBILITIES:

This document applies to all Educators, Families, Coordination Unit Staff, Volunteers and Students of OVFC.

STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY

Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health is committed to improving the health of our community and being accessible to all, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, people with a disability, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) people and other socially vulnerable groups and supporting their communities across the lifespan from birth to older age.

DEFINITIONS:

Asthma	is a medical condition that affects the airways (the breathing tubes that carry air into our lungs). From time to time, people with asthma find it harder to breathe in and out, because the airways in their lungs become narrower – like trying to breathe through a thin straw. At other times, their breathing is normal. There is no cure for asthma, but it can usually be well controlled. Most people with asthma can stay active and have a healthy life. (https://www.nationalasthma.org.au/understanding-asthma/what-is-asthma)

PROCEDURES:

Shared Responsibility

Asthma management within Our Village Family Childcare (OVFC) is recognised as a shared responsibility between Educators, Coordination Unit staff, and parents/guardians. This collaborative approach ensures the health, safety, and inclusion of children diagnosed with asthma.

To support this commitment:

- **Individual Planning -** Educators, with support from the Coordination Unit, will develop an Individual Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan for each child diagnosed with asthma. This plan will be created in consultation with the child's parents/guardians and tailored to the child's specific needs.
- **Awareness and Education -** OVFC is committed to raising awareness of asthma among all individuals involved with the service, including staff, Educators, and families.
- **Health and Safety Strategies -** The service will implement and support strategies that promote the health and safety of all individuals with asthma, ensuring appropriate risk management and emergency preparedness.
- **Inclusive Environment -** Children with asthma will be supported to participate fully in all activities, with reasonable adjustments made to accommodate their individual capabilities and health needs.
- **Clear Guidelines and Expectations -** OVFC provides a clear framework of policies, procedures, and expectations to guide the consistent and effective management of asthma across all areas of the service.

Individual Asthma Action Plan

An Individual Asthma Action Plan must be provided by the parent/guardian for any child diagnosed with asthma. This plan is a critical component of the child's health management while in care and must include:

- **Diagnosis and Triggers -** Clear information regarding the child's asthma diagnosis, including known triggers that may cause or worsen symptoms.
- **Emergency Procedures -** Specific instructions outlining the emergency response steps to be taken in the event of an asthma attack.
- **Medication Details -** A list of prescribed medications to be used in managing asthma symptoms

and attacks, including dosage and administration guidelines.

- **Medical Practitioner Endorsement -** The plan must be completed, signed, and dated by a registered medical practitioner.
- **Child Identification -** An up-to-date photograph of the child should be included on the plan, if relevant to the form, to assist in accurate identification during emergency situations.

Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of children diagnosed with asthma, Educators are responsible for implementing the strategies outlined in the child's Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan, which includes:

- **Trigger Management -** Implement strategies to minimise the child's exposure to known asthma triggers across all care settings, including:
  - Indoor and outdoor environments
  - Excursions and off-site activities
- **Medication Storage -** Clearly identify and communicate the location where the child's asthma medication is stored, ensuring it is easily accessible in case of emergency.
- Emergency Contact Information - Maintain up-to-date emergency contact details for the child, readily available for use in urgent situations.
- **Communication Strategies -** Establish and document communication strategies to ensure all relevant parties are informed, including:
  - Coordination with other age-appropriate members (typically 13 years and older) residing in the Family Day Care home
  - Inclusion of information and consent within the Educator Family Agreement

Service and Educator Communication

Effective communication between Educators and the Coordination Unit is essential to ensure the safe care of children diagnosed with asthma. To support this, the following procedures must be followed:

- **Notification of Diagnosis** - Educators must promptly notify the Coordination Unit if a child in their care is diagnosed with asthma.
- **Record Keeping -** Coordination Unit staff will document the asthma diagnosis and related information in the child's enrolment records to ensure accurate and accessible health documentation.
- **Educator Support and Briefing -** The Coordination Unit will support Educators caring for children with asthma by:
  - Providing a comprehensive briefing on the Asthma Policy
  - Offering guidance on the causes, symptoms, and treatment of asthma
  - Reviewing the Educator's capacity and confidence to administer reliever medication
  - Ensuring the Educator understands the Asthma First Aid emergency response procedure

Staff and Educator Training & Emergency Response

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of children with asthma, Our Village Family Childcare (OVFC)

requires the following standards for training and emergency response:

- **Asthma Management Training**
  - All staff who work directly with children, as well as those supporting Educators caring for children with asthma, must maintain current training in asthma management, to be renewed at least every three (3) years.
  - All Educators must also complete and maintain up-to-date asthma management training every three (3) years, in accordance with regulatory requirements and service policy.
- **Emergency Response Protocol**
  - In the event of an asthma attack, staff and Educators must follow the procedures outlined in:
    - OVFC Policy No. 14 – Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
    - The child's individual Asthma Action Plan, as provided by the parent/guardian and signed by a medical practitioner
    - In the absence of a written Asthma Action Plan, the standard asthma emergency procedure must be followed immediately.

Reference: National Asthma Council – What is a Written Asthma Action Plan

Coordination Unit Responsibilities

Our Village Family Childcare (OVFC) is committed to supporting the safe and effective management of asthma for all children in care. To uphold this commitment, the service will:

- **Policy Distribution and Induction -** Provide Educators with a copy of the Asthma Policy and brief them on asthma procedures during their registration with OVFC.
- **Training and Professional Development -** Where appropriate, coordinate Emergency Asthma Management training for Educators and staff to ensure preparedness and compliance with best practice standards.
- **Identification and Communication - I**dentify children with asthma during the enrolment process and promptly inform the relevant Educator to ensure appropriate care arrangements are in place.
- **Parent Information -** Provide parents/guardians with a copy of the Asthma Policy and the Asthma Action Plan template upon enrolment to support accurate and timely documentation.
- **Documentation and Accessibility -** Store Asthma Action Plans securely under each child's enrolment record. Copies of the plan, along with relevant medication, must be taken on all excursions as part of the First Aid Kit.
- **Emergency Preparedness -** Ensure that an Asthma First Aid poster is prominently displayed in key locations within the Educator's residence and any approved venues.
- **First Aid Kit Requirements -** Confirm that each Educator's First Aid Kit contains:
  - In-date blue reliever medication
  - Spacer device and mask
  - Concise written instructions for Asthma First Aid procedures
  - 70% alcohol swabs

- **Annual Audits -** Conduct annual audits of First Aid Kits as part of the OVFC Annual Re-registration process to ensure compliance and readiness.
- **Communication and Collaboration -** Promote open and ongoing communication between parents/guardians and Educators regarding the child's asthma status, symptoms, and care needs.
- **Education and Support -** Offer asthma-related fact sheets and/or information sessions to parents/guardians to enhance awareness and understanding of asthma management.
- **Monitoring and Feedback -** Promptly communicate any concerns to parents/guardians if a child's asthma is observed to be limiting their ability to fully participate in care activities**.**

Educators Responsibilities

Educators play a critical role in supporting the health and safety of children with asthma. To ensure effective asthma management within the care environment, Educators are required to:

- **Awareness and Attendance** - Be fully aware of which children in their care have asthma and ensure these children attend care only when they have their complete asthma medication, including a reliever and spacer.
- **Medication Monitoring** - Confirm that each child with asthma has an adequate supply of in-date asthma medication, including a reliever and spacer, available at all times during care.
- **First Aid Kit Preparedness** - Maintain a well-stocked first aid kit that includes:
    - In-date blue reliever medication
    - Spacer device and mask
    - Concise written instructions for Asthma First Aid procedures
    - 70% alcohol swabs
- **Collaborative Health Management** - Work in partnership with parents/guardians to ensure the child's asthma is managed safely and appropriately while in care.
- **Trigger Identification and Minimisation** - Identify known asthma triggers and, where practicable, take steps to minimise exposure within the care environment.
- **Activity Modification** - Modify or adapt activities as necessary to accommodate the child's individual needs and abilities.
- **Medication Administration** - Administer all prescribed asthma medication in strict accordance with the child's written Asthma Action Plan.
- **Emergency Response** - In the absence of a written Asthma Action Plan, follow the standard asthma emergency procedure immediately.
- **Communication of Concerns** - Promptly communicate any concerns regarding a child's asthma—particularly if it is impacting their ability to participate in activities—to both the parents/guardians and the Coordination Unit.
- **Inclusive Practice** - Ensure children with asthma are treated equitably and inclusively, with the same level of care and opportunity as all other children.
- **Training and Professional Development** - Participate in relevant asthma management training provided by the service or arrange suitable alternative training to maintain competency.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents/guardians must inform Our Village Family Care (OVFC), either at the time of enrolment or upon initial diagnosis, if their child has a history of asthma. A current Asthma Action Plan, completed and signed by a medical practitioner, must be provided. This plan must clearly outline:

- The child's known asthma triggers
- Signs and symptoms of worsening asthma
- Emergency procedures to follow in the event of an asthma flare-up or attack

To support the safe care of children with asthma, parents/guardians are required to:

- Submit the Asthma Action Plan to the Coordination Unit and/or Educator prior to the child commencing care.
- Notify the Coordination Unit and Educator in writing of any changes to the Asthma Action Plan throughout the year and provide an updated plan as soon as possible.
- Ensure the child has an adequate supply of in-date asthma medication, including a reliever and a spacer, available at all times while in care.
- Communicate any relevant information or concerns to the Educator and Coordination Unit as needed (e.g., if asthma symptoms were present the previous evening).
- Collaborate with the Educator to ensure the child's asthma is managed safely and effectively while in care.
- Ensure the Asthma Action Plan is reviewed annually (or sooner if required) by a medical practitioner to remain valid for care attendance.
- Provide an updated Asthma Action Plan to the Coordination Unit and Educator when required.

Please note: children cannot attend care without a current Asthma Action Plan on file.

How often should an asthma action plan be updated?

Be sure to ask your doctor to review your Asthma Action Plan whenever asthma medicines or your symptoms change.

Otherwise, aim for:

- once a year for adults or
- every six months for children (Ref. Asthma Australia)

Children will

Wherever practical (age-appropriate expectations), be encouraged to seek their reliever medication as soon as their symptoms develop.

APPENDICES:

- Emergency Treatment of an Asthma Attack – First Aid Plan
- Spacer Use and Care
- Asthma Action Plan (template)
- Our Village Family Childcare – Risk Minimisation Plan and Communication Plan
- Our Village Family Childcare Medication Form

REFERENCES:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations, (current version September 1, 2025) 90
- Asthma Australia
- Allergy Facts - Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia
- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy
- ASCIA Action Plans
- Asthma Action Plan
- National Asthma Council - What is Asthma?

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES/ WORK INSTRUCTIONS:

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- SCCH Code of Conduct

VERSION CONTROL AND LEGISLATION:

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