

Epilepsy and Seizures Policy – Children’s Services

Date adopted	25 September 2025
Adopted by	Executive Leadership Team (ELT)
Review due	September 2028
Responsible officer	Manager Child, Families and Youth
Records reference	11630302

1. Purpose

Melton City Council is committed to:

- ensuring that educators, staff and parents/guardians are aware of their obligations and required strategies in supporting children with epilepsy and no-epileptic seizures to safely and fully participate in the program and activities of Melton City Council children’s services
- ensuring that all necessary information for the effective management of children with epilepsy and non-epileptic seizures enrolled at Melton City Council is collected and recorded so that these children receive appropriate attention when required
- providing a safe and healthy environment for all children enrolled at the service
- providing an environment in which all children with epilepsy and non-epileptic seizures can participate to their full potential
- involving families in developing the policy and management plan for children with epilepsy or non-epileptic seizures
- providing a clear set of guidelines and procedures to be followed with regard to supporting children with epilepsy and the management of seizures
- educating and raising awareness about epilepsy and non-epileptic seizures, its effects and strategies for appropriate management, among educators, staff, families and others involved in the education and care of children enrolled at the service

This policy has been adapted from PolicyWorks Catalogue by the Early Learning Association Australia.

2. Application And Scope

This policy applies to services responsible for the direct education and care of children at Melton City Council programs including offsite excursions and activities. This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Person in day-to-day charge / Responsible Person’s, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending Melton City Council programs and activities.

3. Background

Epilepsy is a common, serious neurological condition characterised by recurrent seizures due to abnormal electrical activity in the brain. While about 1 in 200 children live with Epilepsy, the impact varies with some children greatly affected and others not.

“Epilepsy is unique: There are virtually no generalisations that can be made about how

Epilepsy may affect a child. There is often no way to accurately predict how a child's abilities, learning and skills will be affected by seizures. Because the child's brain is still developing, the child, their family and doctor will be discovering more about the condition as they develop. The most important thing to do when working with a child with Epilepsy is to get to know the individual child and their condition. All children with Epilepsy should have an Epilepsy Management Plan" (*Children with epilepsy: A Teacher's Guide, Epilepsy Foundation*).

Most people living with epilepsy have good control of their seizures through medication, however it is important that all those working with children living with epilepsy have a good understanding of the effects of seizures, required medication and appropriate first aid for seizures.

Epilepsy Smart Australia (ESA) has a range of resources and can assist with the development of an Epilepsy Management Plan. ESA and its national partners provide training and support to families and educators in the management of epilepsy, and in the emergency administration of Midazolam, Clonazepam or rectal Diazepam.

Legislation that governs the operation of approved children's services is based on the health, safety and welfare of children, and requires that children are protected from hazards and harm. Regulation 136 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 requires the Approved Provider to ensure that there is at least one educator on duty at all times who has a current approved First Aid qualification.

4. Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy and related procedures. For commonly used terms . Approved Provider, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *Glossary of Terms*.

Term	Definition
Absence Seizure	Occurs mostly in children, this consists of brief periods of loss of awareness, most often for less than 10 seconds. Some children can experience these types of seizures multiple times during the day which may compromise learning. Absence Seizures can be mistaken for daydreaming. They are no longer called 'petit mals'.
Approved First Aid Qualifications	First Aid Qualifications that meet the requirements of National Regulation 136 and have been approved by the National Authority.
ASMs	Anti-seizure medications used for the treatment of many epilepsy syndromes. ASMs do not cure epilepsy but most seizures can be prevented by taking medication regularly one or more times a day. For many people, medication makes it possible to live a normal, active life, free of seizures. Others may continue to have seizures, but less frequently.

Term	Definition
Emergency epilepsy medication	Medication that has been prescribed for the treatment of prolonged seizures or a cluster of seizures. The most common type of emergency medication prescribed is buccal or intranasal midazolam. Clonazepam drops are a less commonly prescribed emergency medication and rectal Diazepam has been used in the past but is no longer often prescribed for use as an emergency epilepsy medication. Medication information is included in a child's Emergency Medication Management Plan, and this must be kept up to date. Only staff who have received child-specific training in the emergency administration of emergency epilepsy medication within the past 2 years can administer this medication.
Emergency Medication Management Plan (EMMP)	Completed by the prescribing doctor in consultation with the individual and/or their family/carer. This medication plan must be attached to the individual's Epilepsy Management Plan which has been signed by the child's treating doctor. The preferred template to be used by the prescribing doctor can be found: www.epilepsyfoundation.org.au
Epilepsy	A neurological disorder marked by sudden recurrent (two or more) episodes of sensory disturbance, loss of consciousness, or convulsions associated with abnormal electrical activity in the brain.
Epilepsy Management Plan (EMP)	Designed to help people recognise when seizures are occurring and gives clear directions about appropriate First Aid. The plan is developed by the person who has the most knowledge and experience of the individual's Epilepsy and seizures and should be less than 12 months old. The management of Epilepsy requires a team approach and the plan should be reviewed and signed by the individual's treating doctor. An Epilepsy Management Plan and Support Package has been designed by The Epilepsy Foundation: www.epilepsyfoundation.org.au
Focal seizure (previously called simple or complex partial)	<p>Focal seizures (previously called partial seizures) start in one part of the brain and affect the area of the body controlled by that part of the brain. The symptoms experienced will depend on the function that the focal point controls (or is associated with). Focal seizures may or may not cause an alteration of awareness. Symptoms are highly variable and may include lip smacking, wandering behaviour, fiddling with clothes and feeling sick, 'edgy' or strange.</p> <p>Focal seizures where a person has full awareness were previously called simple partial seizures. Focal seizures where a person has an altered sense of awareness were previously called complex partial seizures. Focal seizures can progress into a generalised seizure.</p>

Term	Definition
Generalised seizure	Both sides of the brain are involved, and the person will lose consciousness. A Tonic-Clonic seizure is one type of generalised Seizure.
Ketogenic diet	A high fat, low carbohydrate, restricted-calorie diet that may be prescribed as additional therapy. This is an effective therapy for some children, although its mechanisms are not well understood. When introducing this diet, a child is usually hospitalised, as such radical dietary changes have the potential to cause serious problems for the child. Once the child is stabilised on a ketogenic diet, they can return home, with the diet managed by the families or care.
Medication Record	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 (National Regulation 92). A sample Medication Record is available on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website.
Midazolam	<p>Belongs to a group of pharmaceuticals called benzodiazepines. Its main purpose is as a sedative or hypnotic, and it is used for medical and surgical procedures. In Epilepsy, Midazolam is used for emergency management of seizures, as it can stop the seizures quickly. Once absorbed into the blood, Midazolam travels to the brain, attaching to brain receptors that control electrical impulses that are firing at an unusually rapid rate. Midazolam also works by relaxing muscles, which is particularly beneficial in many types of seizures. The effect of Midazolam should occur rapidly.</p> <p>Not all individuals living with Epilepsy require emergency medication, but for a small group of people whose seizures are difficult to control, or for people who are isolated from emergency care, Midazolam is an excellent medication. It is most commonly administered buccally (orally) or nasally.</p> <p>Midazolam is fast-acting and can be easily administered by family and carers in a variety of settings. Only staff specifically trained to the requirements of a child's Emergency Medication Management Plan can administer Midazolam.</p>

Term	Definition
Midazolam kit	An insulated container with unused, in-date Midazolam ampoule/s, a copy of the child's Emergency Medication Management Plan and Epilepsy Management Plan (which includes a picture of the child), and telephone contact details for the child's families, doctor/medical personnel and the person to be notified in the event of a seizure requiring administration of midazolam if families cannot be contacted. Midazolam must be stored away from light (cover with aluminium foil) and in temperatures of less than 25°C. EFV Administration flyer – e.g., buccal, gloves, tissues, pen and paper, +/- stopwatch.
Non-epileptic seizures (NES)	Also known as dissociative seizures. There are 2 types of non-epileptic seizures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organic NESs which have a physical cause • psychogenic NESs which are caused by mental or emotional processes
Seizure Record	An accurate record of seizure activity, which is important for identifying any seizure patterns and changes in response to treatment.
Seizure Triggers	Seizures may occur for no apparent reason, but common triggers include: forgetting to take medication, lack of sleep, other illness, heat, stress/boredom, missing meals and dehydration. Flashing or flickering lights can trigger seizures in about 5% of people living with Epilepsy.

5. Related Documents

Name	Location
Local Government Act 2020	https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/local-government-act-2020
Relevant legislations and standards include but are not limited to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 • Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 • Health Records Act 2001 (Vic) • National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety • Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) • Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) • Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic) • Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 (Vic)

Name	Location
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Epilepsy Support Service phone 1300 761 487 Monday – Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm (AEST) • Epilepsy Foundation: www.epilepsyfoundation.org.au • Epilepsy Smart Schools: www.epilepsysmartschools.org.au
Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration of First Aid • Administration of Medication • Dealing with Medical Conditions • Emergency and Evacuation • Excursions, Regular Outings and Service Events • Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness • Inclusion and Equity • Privacy and Confidentiality • Staffing

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