EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for emergency and evacuation and take reasonable steps to ensure policies and procedures are followed. (ACEQUA, 2021)

Emergency and evacuations situations in early education and care services may arise for a variety of reasons, often suddenly and unexpectantly. It is vital that if an emergency situation arises, staff are confident to manage the situation effectively and efficiently, maintaining the safety and wellbeing of children, families and visitors.

Ensuring that educators and children know what to do in an emergency situation requires vigilant planning and practice. Regularly practicing the drills for emergency situations also provides an opportunity to help support and build on children’s coping mechanisms and resilience.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

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|  QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY |
| 2.2 | Safety  | Each child is protected.  |
| 2.2.1 | Supervision  | At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard. |
| 2.2.2 | Incident and emergency management  | Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented. |
| QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP |
| 7.1.2 | Management Systems | Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service. |
| 7.1.3 | Roles and responsibilities  | Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.  |

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| EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS |
| Sec 174(2)(a) | Serious incident – any emergency for which emergency services attended |
| Sec 174(2)(b)  | Any incident that requires the approved provider to close, or reduce the number of children attending the service for a period |
| Sec 174 (2)(c)  | Any circumstance at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child attending the service |
| 4 | Definitions “mutli-storey building and “storey” |
| 12(d) | Meaning of a serious incident- any emergency for which emergency services attended |
| 97 | Emergency and evacuation procedures |
| 98 | Telephone or other communication equipment |
| 99 | Children leaving the education and care service premises |
| 136 | First aid qualifications |
| 168 | Education and Care Services must have policies and procedures  |
| 170 | Policies and procedures are to be followed |
| 175 | Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority |

RELATED POLICIES

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Acceptance and Refusal Authorisation Policy Administration of First Aid PolicyBush Fire PolicyChild Safe Environment PolicyDelivery of Children to, and collection from Education and Care Services PremisesFamily Communication Policy  | Health and Safety PolicyIncident, Injury, Trauma and Illness PolicyLockdown PolicyRecord Keeping and Retention PolicySun Safety PolicyRetention of Records Policy Supervision Policy  |

PURPOSE

Our Service has a duty of care to maintain the safety and wellbeing of each child, educator, and all persons using or visiting the Service during an emergency or evacuation situation. We are committed to identifying risks and potential hazards of emergency and evacuation situations by conducting thorough risk assessments on an annual basis and continually plan for further risk minimisation and improvement to our policy and procedures.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, students, volunteers. the Board of Directors and visitors of the Service

IMPLEMENTATION

We define an emergency as an unplanned, sudden or unexpected event or situation that requires immediate action to prevent harm, injury, or illness to persons, or damage to the Service’s premises. Emergency situations may pose a risk to an individual’s health and safety. It is important that Services identify potential emergencies that may be specific to their location and environment. Severe heat or heatwaves, also pose an immediate risk to babies and young children and require risk mitigation strategies to be implemented (see Sun Safety Policy)

Circumstances under which an emergency evacuation will occur may include:

* Fire within the building or playground
* Fire in the surrounding area where the Service may be in danger
* Flood
* Cyclone, severe storm or dust storm or other natural weather event
* dangerous animal, insect or reptile
* Terrorist threat
* Other circumstances may include:
	+ gas explosion, traffic accident, or any event which could render the building unsafe (eg: earthquake).

(Our Bushfire Policy contains specific information about Bushfire Risk Management Plans and evacuation plans for Bush Fires)

The approved provider in conjunction with the educators of the service, will conduct comprehensive risk assessment in order to identify any risk/s or hazards associated with potential emergencies that may affect the safe evacuation of children from the service.

The risk assessment will be reviewed at least annually or after being aware of an incident or circumstance that may affect the safe evacuation of children. All risk assessments will be regularly assessed and evaluated as to facilitate continuous improvement in our service. If a risk concerning the safe evacuation of a child is identified during the risk assessment, the approved provider must update the Emergency and Evacuation Policy and procedure as soon as possible. The risk assessment is to be stored safely and securely and kept for a three year period.

**THE AUSTRALIAN WARNING SYSTEM (AWS)**

The Australian Warning System (WAS) is a nationally consistent, three tiered approach designed to make warnings clearer and lead people to take action during emergencies like bushfire, flood, storm, extreme heat and sever weather. The warning system comprises of levels, action statements, hazard icons colours and shapes. <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-warnings>.

The three warning levels are:

**Advice (Yellow):** An incident has started. There is not immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes. Monitor conditions.

**Watch and Act (Orange)** : There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now. Prepare to leave/evacuate. Do not enter flood water.

**Emergency Warning (Red) :** An Emergency Warning is the highest level of warning. You need to take action immediately. Leave/Evacuate (immediately by am/pm, hazard timing.

, The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and Educators will ensure that:

* obligations under the Education and Care National Law and Regulations are met
* emergency and evacuation policies and procedures are available for inspection at the Service’s premises at all times
* the Approved Provider will conduct an annual risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that are relevant to the Service
* the approved provider will review the risk assessment after becoming aware of any circumstances that may affect the safe evacuation of children from the service.
* relevant stakeholders/authorities are consulted for advice and guidance to improve risk mitigation strategies as part of our emergency and evacuation plan (police, fire, parents/families)
* an Emergency Management Plan (EMP) is developed and updated
* all staff and educators have a thorough understanding of the Australian Warning System (WAS)
* the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) will be checked regularly to monitor emergency situations and warnings relevant to our service location.
* consideration is made to evacuate infant/s and non-ambulant children evacuating the premises resulting in enhanced ratios
* emergency evacuation plans are displayed in prominent positions near each exit at the Service premises including both the indoor and outdoor learning areas
* emergency evacuation plans include a floor plan for ease of reference with clearly defined assembly points and clearly marked exit routes from all locations within the Service
* all exits have exit signs clearly visible
* there are no obstructions in hallways, stairways or emergency exits
* all educators, including casual/relief educators, are familiar with our *Emergency Evacuation Policy*, procedures and regulatory requirements
* new educators, volunteers and students are provided with information and training about our *Emergency Evacuation Policy* and procedures during induction
* all educators, visitors and students are aware of emergency evacuation points and assembly areas
* educators are trained how to use emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, fire blankets, hoses etc.
* National Regulations state that emergency evacuation rehearsals (drills) are to be practiced and reviewed *every three months* by the responsible person, all educators, volunteers, and children present on the day. However, to ensure best practice our Service will conduct emergency evacuation drills in a weekly block every 3 months once a term so that all children and educators experience an evacuation on a regular basis.
* spontaneous rehearsals also take place during the year to assist in refining risk management procedures and evacuation procedures
* a record will be kept ensuring that all children participate in the emergency evacuation rehearsal at least 4 TIMES per year.
* each time a planned or spontaneous emergency evacuation drill is performed it is to be timed and documented in the *Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Record* completed by each room and filed together in the Emergency
* after reflection, notes on any areas that need improving or revising are to be documented in the *Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Record*. Educators will discuss and implement strategies to make continuous improvement to procedures which will be documented in the Service’s Educators Meeting minutes and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) or Self Assessment.
* in the event of limited educators (e.g. early morning or late afternoon), educators are to work together to perform the duties as per the evacuation plan (the roster must include a Responsible Person being on the premises at all times to take responsibility and delegate duties). This scenario will be discussed and documented in the Service’s Educators Meeting Minutes (WHS).
* children are provided with age-appropriate support and information before, during and after emergency and evacuation rehearsals (drills)
* all educators are aware of their roles and responsibilities in event of an emergency situation
* regular communication with families includes information about emergency and evacuation procedures
* families are informed when a rehearsal or drill has occurred
* each room has an *Emergency Evacuation Bag* located in a prominent position
* *Emergency Evacuation Bags* are regularly audited and restocked as required
* an up-to-date register of emergency telephone numbers for children is maintained. A copy of the current list will always be available in the *Emergency Evacuation Bag*
* portable First Aid Kits are also kept in *Emergency Evacuation Bags*
* at least one educator or one Nominated Supervisor who holds current ACEQCA approved first aid qualifications.
* Medical Management Plans for children are copied and kept in the *Emergency Evacuation Bag*
* children’s medication is collected during an evacuation where possible
* all fire extinguishers, fire blankets, fire hoses, and other emergency equipment located throughout the Service will be inspected and tested at six monthly intervals by an authorised company as per the Australian Safety Standard AS 1851-2012: *Maintenance of Fire Protection Systems and Equipment*.
* extinguishers will be emptied, pressure tested, and refilled every five years
* all tests performed on emergency equipment and the date on which it was tested will be recorded on a label or metal tag attached to the unit. Certificates to verify testing will be filed.
* ensure smoke detectors are regularly tested and batteries replaced annually
* nominated supervisors and educators have access to an operating telephone or other means of communication at all times (mobile phone, walkie talkies)
* emergency telephone numbers will be displayed prominently throughout the Service in the kitchen, office, staff room and each area where children are educated and cared for.
* In the event of a telephone not operating or no other means or communication the Service will consider closure of the Service (see Closure of Service below)
* our emergency telephone list (located next to the telephone) includes the numbers for:
	+ Police
	+ Local fire station
	+ Rural Fire Service
	+ State Emergency Services (SES)
	+ Poisons Information Centre
* Following the emergency evacuation or an incident that poses a risk to the health and safety of children attending the service, and Emergency Evacuation Incident Report and an Incident, Injury, Truama and Illness Record will be completed.
* The approved provider will make a notification of a serious incident to a regularatory authority (within 24 hours) thourgh the NQA IT System when emergency services have attended an education and care service in response to an emergency, rather than as a precaution or for any other reason or following an incident that poses a risk to the health and safety of children attending the service.
* The approved provider will notify the regulatory authority and Department of Education (CCS) if the service is required to close for a period of time as a result of a local emergency (Reg.175 (2)(b)

Emergency and Evacuation Procedure Guidelines

* the Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person will make the final call to whether to evacuate the premises due to an emergency situation
* contact 000 for local emergencies- provide name, address and nearest cross street, reason for evacuation, phone contact number, number of children and adults evacuating
* guidance will be provided by the relevant emergency service (Fire service, SES, Police)
* move all children and visitors to identified evacuation/emergency assembly area as indicated on the *Emergency and Evacuation Plan*
* collect Emergency Evacuation Bag, Medical Management Plans and associated children’s medication
* check daily attendance record, staff sign in and out on back of attendance sheets and visitor record
* once children are safely evacuated, administer first aid if required
* remain calm and reassure children
* once emergency services arrive, contact families/emergency contacts
* await instructions from relevant emergency services for re-entering premises or alternative evacuation procedure
* FAMILIES WILL:ensure contact details are kept up to date
* provide emergency contact details on their childs enrolment form and advise of any change of name and phone numbers
* ensure the attendance record for their child is completed each day
* ensure they are aware of the services Emergency and Evacuation Policy and procedures
* follow the directions of the approved provider in the event of an emergency or evac

CLOSURE OF THE SERVICE

There may be times where the normal operation of the service is disrupted, and the service is required to close temporarily during a planned or unplanned emergency occurrence. Situations that affect the normal operation include a local emergency which poses a risk to the health and safety of children attending the service, or where the service is inaccessible or us unsafe for children or staff or the emergency services/authority have directed the service to close.

Situations where the service may consider closure include

* A period of local emergency, or emergency event
* Flooding
* Health emergency (i.e pandemic )
* Bushfire
* Cyclone
* Unexpected absence of staff where ratios are unable to be met
* Severe outbreak of illness or disease
* Lack of access to operating phone/communication means
* Damage or vandalism to the service
* Chemical Hazard
* Earthquake
* The Board of Directors or Nominated Supervisor will consult with emergency services/local authorities regarding the closure of the service
* Our service will ensure families are informed of emergency closures as soon as practicable to ensure immediate collection of children
* In the event of a planned closure, management will advise families as reasonably practicable through SMS/Social Media/phone calls/email to provide details of the planned closure including the period of closure
* Our service will notify the regulatory authority of the service closure within 24 hours.
* Our service will notify the Department of Education through CCS Software or PEP of the Service closure within 24 hours

**In Case of Flood (Mobile Preschool Service Only)**

BEFORE A FLOOD

EDUCATORS WILL:

* be familiar with the warning levels and what action needs to be taken during a flood
* become familiar with the emergency evacuation plan identifying routes and safe locations if evacuation is required (note: this may be different for a flood situation)
* place chemicals on a high shelving to reduce contamination of flood water
* talk to the children about the flood, using simple words that children can understand
* contact families to come and collect their child/ren once emergency services have confirmed it is safe to do so.

DURING A FLOOD

EDUCATORS WILL:

* act quickly
* monitor current flood warnings in the local area
* liaise with the school and Emergency Services instructions and react to changing conditions
* place sandbags in the toilet bowls to prevent backflow of sewerage into the Service
* lock all doors and take recommended evacuation routes for the local area
* evacuate the Service in accordance with the school evacuation plan
* keep families updated regularly of the relocation site

IF IT’S TOO LATE TO LEAVE DURING A FLOOD

Important: calm and logical thinking will be required. The following points are options depending on the circumstances within your own context. Seeking safe options to move children and staff above rising waters levels will be the primary objective.

EDUCATORS WILL:

* continue to seek advice from emergency services
* remain calm
* move to higher ground and avoid standing in flowing or rising water
* if time permits, stack possessions, equipment and resources onto benches and tables
* ensure that if flowing water is above the ankles, STOP! Turn around and go another way
* avoid entering flood waters

AFTER THE FLOOD

EDUCATORS WILL:

* do not enter the Service until permitted by the school
* do not let children play in or near floodwater
* stay away from drains
* contact families or emergency contacts to confirm the location and safety of the children
* when safe and convenient, clean or discard contaminated toys & equipment
* complete a serious incident notification to the regulatory authority within 24 hours when there has been an emergency that has posed a risk to the safety and wellbeing of the children
* notify the regulatory authority if the service is required to close for a period of time as a result of a local emergency (evacuation due to flooding or to repair damage caused by flooding)

**Important:**

Following the emergency evacuation, the educator will complete an *Emergency Evacuation Incident Report* and an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*. The approved provider will make a notification of a serious incident to a regulatory authority (within 24 hours) through the [NQA IT System](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/national-quality-agenda-it-system) when emergency services have attended an education and care service in response to an emergency, rather than as a precaution or for any other reason.

Dealing with Trauma

Emergencies and natural disasters are extremely stressful, and it is normal for children and adults to feel overwhelmed and distressed. People cope with trauma in many different ways. Children look to adults for reassurance, care and opportunities to share their feelings. It is important for educators to understand the impact of disasters and seek help when needed.

The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will support educators to provide information to parents and families following any emergency or natural disaster including:

* will the service be open in the days and weeks ahead?
* how to find alternative care and education
* how to contact services for support with dealing with trauma

Several organisations offer support for educators in these situations:

[Emerging Minds](https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/toolkits/parents-carers-and-families-toolkit/bushfires-drought-and-community-trauma/)

BeYou- [Trauma informed practice](https://beyou.edu.au/resources/events/trauma-informed-practice-in-your-learning-community)

Preparing for an emergency

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment Resources

https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-package/help-emergency

Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology <http://www.bom.gov.au/>

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION**

The Emergency and Evacuation Policy will be review on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, educators, staff and Management.

|  |
| --- |
| NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW) |
| * NSW Police: [www.police.nsw.gov.au](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au)
* NSW Rural Fire Service: [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)
* NSW State Emergency Services: [www.ses.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au)
 |

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The Emergency and Evacuation Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, staff, educators and management.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP RESOURCES

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Emergency Bag AuditEmergency Evacuation IncidentEmergency Evacuation ProcedureEmergency Evacuation Rehearsal RecordEmergency Management Plan | Emergency Support Services TemplateEMP Evacuation diagrams- imagesExtreme weather procedure |

SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). Policy and procedure guidelines- [*Emergency and evacuation guidelines.*](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/PolicyGuidelines_EmergencyAndEvacuation.pdf)

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [*Guide to the National Quality Framework.*](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-03/Guide-to-the-NQF-March-2023.pdf)

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Multi Storey Buildings: Evacuations and Approvals](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/Info_FactSheet_Multi-storeyBuildingsEvacuationsAndApprovals.pdf)

Australian Government Department of Education. (2023). [Help in an emergency](https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/help-emergency#:~:text=Help%20is%20available%20for%20families,and%20support%20for%20service%20closures.)

Australian Government Department of Home Affairs. [Emergency Management](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/emergency-management) [~~http://www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/public-safety-and-law/emergency-services~~](http://www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/public-safety-and-law/emergency-services)

Australian Government. National Emergency Management Agency. Australian Warning System. https://www.australianwarningsystem.com.au

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653?query=((Repealed%3DN+AND+PrintType%3D%22act.reprint%22+AND+PitValid%3D@pointInTime(20200831000000))+OR+(Repealed%3DN+AND+PrintType%3D%22reprint%22+AND+PitValid%3D@pointInTime(20200831000000))+OR+(Repealed%3DN+AND+(PrintType%3D%22epi.reprint%22+OR+PrintType%3D%22epi.electronic%22)+AND+PitValid%3D@pointInTime(20200831000000)))+AND+Content%3D(%22early%22+AND+%22childhood%22)&dQuery=Document+Types%3D%22%3Cspan+class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3EActs%3C/span%3E,+%3Cspan+class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3ERegulations%3C/span%3E,+%3Cspan+class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3EEPIs%3C/span%3E%22,+Search+In%3D%22%3Cspan+class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3EAll+Content%3C/span%3E%22,+All+Words%3D%22%3Cspan+class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3Eearly+childhood%3C/span%3E%22,+Point+In+Time%3D%22%3Cspan+class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3E31/08/2020%3C/span%3E%22). (Amended 2023).

Fire Protection Association Australia: [www.fpaa.com.au/](http://www.fpaa.com.au/)

Fire System Services: <http://www.firesys.com.au/Fire-Extinguisher-Service-and-Maintenance-pg14686.html>

NSW Department of Education. (2023). [Emergency Planning, Management, Response and Recovery](https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/current-service-providers/emergency/plan)

NSW Rural Fire Service: [www.rfs.com.au](http://www.rfs.com.au)

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011.*

*Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations*

REVIEW

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| POLICY REVIEWED BY | LORRAINE HARVEYSON | OPERATIONS CO-ORDINATOR | 14TH MARCH 2024 |
| POLICY REVIEWED | MARCH 2024 | NEXT REVIEW DATE | MARCH 2025 |
| VERSION NUMBER | V17.01.24 |
| MODIFICATIONS | * Annual review of policy
* Additional information added re closure of a service due to an emergency or evacuation situation
* Merged important information section with AP responsibilities
* New resources from DDC added
* Sources updated
* Continuous Improvement/Reflection section added
* Childcare Centre Desktop Resources added
 |
| POLICY REVIEWED | JULY 2023 | NEXT REVIEW DATE | JULY 2024 |
| VERSION NUMBER | V15.01.23 |
| MODIFICATIONS | * annual policy maintenance
* additional information Australian Warning System
* hyperlinks checked and repaired as required
* continuous improvement/reflection section added
* link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in “Sources”
* update to DESE to Department of Education
 |
| POLICY REVIEWED | JANUARY 2022 | NEXT REVIEW DATE | JANUARY 2023 |
| MODIFICATIONS | Added: **In Case of Flood (Mobile Preschool Service Only)**BEFORE A FLOOD EDUCATORS WILL:* be familiar with the warning levels and what action needs to be taken during a flood
* become familiar with the emergency evacuation plan identifying routes and safe locations if evacuation is required (note: this may be different for a flood situation)
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* complete a serious incident notification to the regulatory authority within 24 hours when there has been an emergency that has posed a risk to the safety and wellbeing of the children
* notify the regulatory authority if the service is required to close for a period of time as a result of a local emergency (evacuation due to flooding or to repair damage caused by flooding)
* Restructure of policy- some sections moved for better flow
* deleted repetitive points
* procedure guidelines modified and extended
* additional section- Dealing with Trauma
* sources checked for currency
 |
| POLICY REVIEWED | PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS | NEXT REVIEW DATE |
| JANUARY 2020 | * Additional information added to introduction
* Purpose modified
* Additional information added to content
* Sources checked for currency- small edits highlighted
 | JANUARY 2021 |
| JANUARY 2019 | * Rearranged the order of some points for better flow.
* Sources/references corrected, updated, and alphabetised.
* Sources/references alphabetised.
* Minor formatting (line spacing & paragraph spacing) for consistency throughout policy.
 | JANUARY 2020 |
| JANUARY 2018 | * Minor adjustment in Education and Care Services National Regulations section
* Added related policy section
* Adjustment on page two in respect of revised NQS
 | JANUARY 2019 |
| OCTOBER 2017 | * Updated the references to comply with revised National Quality Standard
 | JANUARY 2018 |
| AUGUST 2017 | * Updated to meet the National Law and/or National Regulations in respect of a serious incidents and notification purposes.
 | JANUARY 2018 |