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## **Policy Statement**

Our Organisation aims to ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children and Educators from harm and hazards likely to cause injury, including potential injury from bushfires. This Policy outlines the strategies and procedures Lapstone Activity Centre will adhere to in the event of a bush fire, including information about closures during an emergency evacuation.

## **Risk Ratings and School Closures**

NSW Department of Education Bushfire Risk Register was reviewed and updated in 2022. Each NSW Public School has a risk rating from Category 1 (extreme risk) to Category 4 (low risk). The Department, in consultation with NSW Rural Fire Service, will direct Schools and Education and Care Services to temporarily cease operations on days when a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating has been declared for their Fire Area.

The Australian Fire Danger Rating System has four ratings: Moderate, High, Extreme and Catastrophic. The Bushfire danger period is from 1 October to 31 March each year, but the dates can vary due to local conditions.

At approximately 4.00pm each day the Fire Danger Rating is issued for the following day. This means that Schools and Education and Care Services will be notified that it will be non-operational the following day.

Lapstone Activity Centre will notify families as soon as possible by the preferred method of communication.

*Lapstone Public School has been rated at Category 1 therefore Lapstone Activity Centre is Category 1.*

## **What is a period of emergency?**

- ✓ A period of emergency applies for an event which:
  - affects a widespread area
  - has a severe impact on the lives of a significant number of the people in that area
  - prevents children from attending the Service or may make attending dangerous
- ✓ All 3 conditions must be met to qualify as a period of emergency.
- ✓ Events that are not considered a period of emergency include:
  - break-ins
  - vandalism
  - localised storm damage or minor flooding.

## **Declaring a period of emergency**

- ✓ Australian Government - Department of Education:
  - will notify the Service when a period of emergency is declared.
  - will notify the Service what regions the period of emergency covers and the dates that it applies.
  - will notify the Service that help is available for families and the Service in the event of an emergency, like bushfires, storms, or floods.
  - will notify the Service that when a period of emergency is declared: Providers, Services and families can access a range of support measures.

## **Support during a period of emergency**

- ✓ Gap fees:
  - Families who receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) must ordinarily make a co-contribution to their child care fees under Family Assistance Law. Families do this by paying the gap fee.
- ✓ During a period of emergency, the Service can waive the gap fee for families if:
  - a child does not attend care
  - the service is closed as a direct result of the emergency.
- ✓ Gap fee waivers do not apply for partial closures or if children have attended part of the day.

## **Procedures**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Management will:**

- ✓ In an emergency, Management must make decisions that prioritise the health and safety of Educators and children at the Service.

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## **Coordinator/Responsible Person will:**

- ✓ Coordinator/Responsible Person will be the Chief Warden and in charge of an evacuation.
- ✓ Ensure all families contact numbers are in Service mobile phone for messages to be sent.
- ✓ Ensure the OOSH Emergency Management Plan is completed. The purpose of the Emergency Management Plan is to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all Educators, children and visitors at the Service in the event of an emergency.
- ✓ Consult with relevant authorities for guidance and advice on the management of bushfire risk and emergencies.
- ✓ Conduct a Bushfire Risk Assessment to identify any potential bushfire risk to LAC.
- ✓ Ensure local Emergency Services have current contact details, including mobile number for emergency contact after hours.
- ✓ Ensure a clear and effective communication procedure during an emergency is implemented.
- ✓ Ensure Emergency response drills, including a bush fire drill and shelter in place on site are practiced with Educators and children every three months.
- ✓ Organise and communicate with off-site evacuation sites about emergency arrangements.
- ✓ Conduct an emergency first aid kit / backpack audit to ensure emergency contact information and supplies are current.
- ✓ Conduct an audit of emergency supplies stored in shelter in place meeting point. (School Hall)

## **Educators will:**

- ✓ Examine the Service grounds during the daily indoor and outdoor safety checks to ensure flammable and/or combustible materials (e.g., dead leaves and bark, chemicals) have been removed.
- ✓ Ensure the Fire Danger Rating (FDR) is checked daily (through book marked page on computer) of NSW Rural Fire Service during Term time and Vacation Care.
- ✓ Ensure to check each area of the Service, including outdoor play spaces and equipment, to ensure all children are gathered and evacuated.
- ✓ Ensure the emergency first aid kit / backpack is organised and stored in an area that is easily accessible.
- ✓ Become familiar and confident with the Service's emergency evacuation policies and procedures.
- ✓ Become familiar with the Service's emergency exits.
- ✓ Be aware of the designated shelter in place meeting point.
- ✓ Be familiar with their role and responsibilities in the event of a bush fire.

## **Families & Community will:**

- ✓ Provide up to date home and after-hours contact details with child's enrolment.
- ✓ Provide emergency contact details on the child's enrolment and ensure this is kept up to date.
- ✓ Stay up to date with news and local media through the Bushfire period.
- ✓ Ensure they have downloaded and have access to the Service's communication apps - KT connect, SeeSaw and text message.
- ✓ Whether it is Before School Care, After School Care or Vacation Care – LAC will notify parents via above apps by 4pm for the following day or as soon as possible. If the FDR rating is checked at 3pm and states Catastrophic for the following day, families will be notified of the Service closure.

## **Bushfire Emergency Evacuation Procedures – as listed under External Emergencies in LAC Emergency Procedures Manual:**

- ✓ In the event of LAC needing to evacuate off site, the evacuation site will be the shelter in place meeting point in the School Hall or emergency travel by Penrith Mini Buses to Glenbrook Bowling Club as a second point of evacuation
- ✓ Coordinator/Responsible person are to notify all Educators that the Service will be evacuating and sound the alarm, so children are aware it is time to evacuate.
- ✓ Coordinator/Responsible Person will gather the evacuation bag and mobile phone and the First Aid Officer will gather all medications.
- ✓ Educators are to help gather the children to the LAC emergency exit and check all areas of the environment- if safe to do so, all doors and windows will be closed.
- ✓ Once all children are gathered, as a group, walk to the shelter in place point. Upon arrival the Coordinator/Responsible Person will call emergency services, who will advise of next steps. All evacuations will be coordinated by NSW Police Force.

- ✓ Educators will assist in keeping children safe and calm, administering first aid if required and possible assistance in contacting parents to collect children.

## **Risk Management**

- ✓ Identifying and managing risk is an integral part of our Organisation's operations. Policies and Procedures and other relevant Regulations, Laws and Legislation guide the development and implementation of our Risk Assessment and Management processes.
- ✓ Bushfire Risk Assessment will be carried out and reviewed as required.

## **Considerations**

### **Education and Care Services National Law**

167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
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### **Education and Care Services National Regulations**

97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures must be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies and procedures

### **Education and Care Services National Quality Standards**

Quality Area	Standard	Element
QA 2 Children's health and safety	2.2 Safety	2.2.1 Supervision 2.2.2 Incident and emergency management 2.2.3 Child protection
QA 3 Physical Environment	3.2 Use	3.2.1 Inclusive environment
QA 4 Staffing arrangements	4.1 Staffing arrangements	4.1.1 Organisation of educators 4.1.2 Continuity of staff
QA 7 Governance and Leadership	7.1 Governance	7.1.2 Management systems 7.1.3 Roles and responsibilities

### **Activity Centres Inc. Policies and Procedures**

Child Safe Environment	Orientation
Enrolment	Physical Environment
First Aid Policy – Management of Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma	Supervision
Medical Conditions	Work Health and Safety

### **My Time, Our Place**

<u>Learning Outcome 1</u> Children have a strong sense of identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children feel safe, secure and supported</li> <li>• Children develop their autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency</li> <li>• Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities</li> <li>• Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect</li> </ul>
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### **Early Years Learning Framework**

<u>Learning Outcome 1</u> Children have a strong sense of identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children feel safe, secure and supported</li> <li>• Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-</li> </ul>
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	dependence, resilience and sense of agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities</li> <li>• Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect</li> </ul>
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## The Child Safe Standards

Standard 1	Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
Standard 2	Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
Standard 3	Families and communities are informed and involved
Standard 5	People working with children are suitable and supported
Standard 7	Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
Standard 9	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved
Standard 10	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

## Legislation

Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology	<a href="http://bom.gov.au">New South Wales Weather and Warnings Summary (bom.gov.au)</a>
Australian Government – Department of Education	<a href="#">Help in an emergency - Department of Education, Australian Government</a>
Fire and Rescue NSW	<a href="#">Fire and Rescue NSW</a>
NSW State Emergency Service	<a href="#">Home   NSW State Emergency Service</a>
Rural Fire Service	<a href="http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au">www.rfs.nsw.gov.au</a>

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Policy is only endorsed if initialled by 2 members of the Management Committee

Endorsed by the Management Committee on 19 February 2024

Bushfire Policy is to be reviewed by 19 February 2027