

EMERGENCY AND 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. (ACECQA, 2021).

Emergency and evacuation situations may arise for a variety of reasons, often suddenly and unexpectedly. 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 rehearsals for emergency situations also provides an opportunity to help support and build on children's coping mechanisms and resilience.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

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 is child safe.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children
S. 3A	Paramount consideration
S. 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children.
S. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
S. 174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority



S. 219A	Power of Regulatory Authority to close services because of emergency
4	Definitions “multi-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
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
175	Prescribed information to be notified to regulatory authority
176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

Related Child Safety Standards	
1	Child Safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
3	Families and Communities are informed and involved
4	Equity is upheld and diversity is taken into account.
5	People working with children are suitable and supported.
7	Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.
10	Policies and Procedures document how the organisation is Child Safe

RELATED POLICIES

Acceptance and Refusal Authorisation Policy First Aid Policy – Management of Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Bush Fire Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Communication Policy Delivery & Collection of Children Policy Enrolment Policy	First Aid Policy – Management of Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Maintenance of Records Policy Transport Policy – Safe Transportation of children Sun Safety Policy Supervision Policy Work, Health and Safety Policy
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PURPOSE

Activity Centres Incorporated (ACI) has a duty of care to maintain the safety and wellbeing of each child, educator, and all using or visiting our Services 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. We believe that children's safety, rights, and best interests are the paramount consideration for all Service operations, decisions and functions.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, Educators, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, students, volunteers, visitors and Management of the Organisation.

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 young children and require risk mitigation strategies to be implemented.

An emergency is any event or situation where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children at the Service. Education and Care Services National Regulations state that emergency evacuation rehearsals are to be practiced and reviewed every three months by the Responsible Person, all staff members, volunteers, visitors and children present on the day.

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
- natural weather event
- Dangerous animal, insect or reptile
- Under any other circumstances as directed by Emergency Services
- Other circumstances may include:
 - gas explosion, traffic accident, or any event which could render the building unsafe (e.g.: earthquake).

Management, in conjunction with Educators of the Service, will conduct a comprehensive Risk Assessment in order to identify any risks 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 every 12 months 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 Services. If a risk concerning the safe evacuation of a child is identified during the review of the Risk Assessment, the Approved Provider/Coordinator of the Service, 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 3 years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the Service.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
- emergency and evacuation Policies and Procedures are always available for inspection at the Service's premises
- the Approved Provider/Coordinator will conduct an annual Risk Assessment to identify potential emergencies that are relevant to the Service
- the Approved Provider/ Coordinator will review the Risk Assessment after becoming aware of any circumstance/s that may affect the safe evacuation of children from the Service
- relevant stakeholders/authorities may be consulted for advice and guidance to improve risk mitigation strategies as part of our emergency and evacuation plan (School Principal, police, fire, parents/families)
- an Emergency Procedures Manual (EPM) is developed and updated
- consideration is made to evacuate 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
- the emergency and evacuation procedures include instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency
- the plan includes a floor plan for ease of reference with clearly defined assembly points and clearly marked exit routes from all locations
- all exits have exit signs clearly visible
- all emergency exit doors must be unlocked and ready to ensure safe evacuation of children and staff.
- there are no obstructions in hallways, stairways or emergency exits
- all Educators, including casual/relief educators and staff members, are familiar with our *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*, procedures and regulatory requirements



- new staff, volunteers and students are provided with information and training about our *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* and procedures during induction
- all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in event of an emergency situation
- emergency evacuation rehearsals will be practiced **every three months** by the Responsible Person, all staff members, volunteers, and children present on the day
- National Regulations state that evacuation rehearsals are to be practiced **every 3 months**: However, to ensure best practice our Service will conduct emergency evacuation drills in a weekly block every 3 months so that all children and staff experience an evacuation on a regular basis.
- each time a planned emergency evacuation rehearsal is performed it is to be timed and documented in the *Practice Evacuation/Lockdown* report in the Service software system
- after reflection, notes on any areas that need improving or revising are to be documented in the *Practice Evacuation/Lockdown* report. Educators will discuss and implement strategies to make continuous improvement to procedures which will be documented in the Service's *Team Meeting Minutes* and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and RA (if required)
- in the event of limited Educators (e.g., early morning or late afternoon), staff members 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).
- families are informed when a rehearsal has occurred
- at least one staff member or one nominated supervisor who holds current ACECQA approved first aid qualifications, approved anaphylaxis management and emergency asthma management training is in attendance at all times
- each Service has an *Emergency Evacuation Kit* located in a prominent position
- *Emergency Evacuation Kit* 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 Kit*
- portable First Aid Kits are readily available in case of an emergency evacuation
- medical management plans for children are able to be accessed easily
- children's medication is collected during an evacuation (when safe to do so)
- 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*
- 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.
- ensure smoke detectors are regularly tested and batteries replaced annually



- any transportation provided by the Service is cancelled or postponed during a severe storm warning or cyclone warning event
- staff and educators have access to an operating telephone or other means of communication at all times (mobile phone)
- in the event of an operating telephone or no other means of communication the Service will consider closure of the Service
- emergency telephone numbers will be displayed prominently throughout the Service
- Our emergency telephone list (located next to the telephone) includes the numbers for:
 - Police
 - Local fire station
 - Rural Fire Service
 - State Emergency Services (SES)
- following the emergency evacuation or an incident that poses a risk to the health and safety of children attending the Service, an *Emergency Evacuation Record* and an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* will be completed
- the Approved Provider will make a notification of a serious incident to the regulatory authority (within 24 hours) through the [NQA IT System](#) when emergency services have attended an education and care service in response to an emergency, other 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 the 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

(include who is responsible for the implementation of each step)

As per Reg. 97, the emergency and evacuation procedures must set out

- a) instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency; and
- b) an emergency and evacuation floor plan
- the Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider/Chief Warden will make the final call as to whether to evacuate the premises due to an emergency situation
- Roles and Responsibilities during an emergency will be determined by the Emergency Control Organisation (ECO) that is completed by the Coordinator/ Responsible Person prior to the session of care commencing
- 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 the identified evacuation/emergency assembly area as indicated on the *Emergency and Evacuation Plan and in the Emergency Procedures Manual*
- collect Emergency Evacuation Kit, medical management plans and associated children's medication
- collect First Aid Kit
- check daily attendance record and visitor record to ensure all children, staff and visitors are accounted for
- once children are safely evacuated, administer first aid if required
- remain calm and reassure children
- once emergency services arrive, contact parents/emergency contacts
- await instructions from relevant emergency services for re-entering premises or alternative evacuation procedure.

EVACUATING NON-AMBULATORY CHILDREN

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor will:

- complete a detailed Risk Assessment specifically considering the safe evacuation of non-ambulatory children from the Service including:
 - additional staffing requirements to safely evacuate non-ambulatory children from multi-storey buildings
 - the location of emergency equipment which may include- wheel chairs or walkers
 - ensuring this equipment can travel through the evacuation route to the assembly area without obstruction
- ensure non-ambulatory children are included in ALL evacuation rehearsals
- ensure staff assess children's physical mobility during an emergency to ensure children who cannot walk independently or require assistance will be identified and prioritised for evacuation
- ensure weight restrictions and maximum capacity requirements are maintained at all times when using emergency equipment during an emergency evacuation
- reflect and assess evacuation rehearsals with all staff considering time taken to safely evacuate non-ambulatory children
- ensure all equipment is easily accessible in an emergency situation
- ensure all staff have knowledge of how to use emergency equipment for transporting non-ambulatory children.

FAMILIES WILL:

- ensure contact details are kept up to date
- provide emergency contact details on their child's enrolment form and advise the Service of any change of name or phone number
- ensure the attendance record for their child is completed each day
- ensure they are aware of the service's *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* and procedures



- follow the directions of the Approved Provider/Chief Warden in the event of an emergency or evacuation

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 is unsafe for children or staff or the emergency services/regulatory authority have directed the service to close.

Situation where the Organisation may consider closure, for one of the Services, 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 Approved Provider, Management 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/ /phone calls/email to provide details of the planned closure including the period of closure
- Management will notify the Regulatory Authority of the Service closure within 24 hours of an incident including if the Service is required to close for a period of time due to an emergency via the NQA ITS
- Management- will notify the Department of Education (CCS) through the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or our third-party software of the Service closure within 24 hours.

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/Management/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](#)

BeYou- [Trauma informed practice](#)

PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

Australian Government Department of Education Resources- [Help in an emergency Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology](#)

JURISDICTION SPECIFIC WEBSITE DETAILS FOR EACH STATE

NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)
• NSW Police: www.police.nsw.gov.au • NSW Rural Fire Service: www.rfs.nsw.gov.au • NSW State Emergency Services: www.ses.nsw.gov.au

SOURCES

ABAC & ACECQA Joint statement on early childhood centres. (2023). [Joint NCC and NQF Reforms Statement](#)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). Policy and procedure guidelines- [Emergency and evacuation guidelines.](#)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Multi Storey Buildings: Evacuations and Approvals](#)

Australian Government. Business. (2024). [Emergency management.](#)

Australian Government Department of Education. (2023). [Help in an emergency](#)

Australian Government. National Emergency Management Agency. [Australian Warning System](#).

Early Childhood Australia. (2016). *Code of Ethics*.

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2025)

Fire Protection Association Australia: 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](#)

NSW Rural Fire Service: www.rfs.com.au

Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Jessie McCulloch, Rachael Bajo & Natasha Foenander	Role: Head Office Team	Date: 30 June 2026
ENDORSED BY 2 PARENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS (initial/date)	K.K & M.S (7/7/26)	UPDATES/MODIFICATIONS	-Moved to Childcare desktop policy
NEXT REVIEW DATE: June 2027			