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 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 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 that is child safe.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children (commencing 2026)
S. 3A	Paramount consideration
S. 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S. 165A	

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. 216D	Regulatory Authority may close services because of emergency event [VIC] [commencing 2026]
4	Definitions "multi-storey building" and "storey"
12	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 POLICIES

Acceptance and Refusal Authorisation Policy	Health and Safety Policy
Administration of First Aid Policy	Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
Bush Fire Policy	Lockdown Policy
Child Safe Environment Policy	Record Keeping and Retention Policy
Delivery of Children to, and collection from Education and Care Service Premises Policy	Safe Transportation Policy
Enrolment Policy	Sun Safety Policy
Family Communication 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. 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, management 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*].

An emergency is any event, situation or event 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. (Guide to the NQF).

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 (e.g.: earthquake).

[Our Bushfire Policy contains specific information about Bushfire Risk Management Plans and evacuation plans for Bush Fires.]

The approved provider, 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 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 3 years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the Service.

For definitions and key terms used within this policy, refer to *Key Terms – Policies and Procedures*.

THE AUSTRALIAN WARNING SYSTEM (AWS)

The Australian Warning System (AWS) 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 severe weather. The warning system comprises of levels, action statements, hazard icons, colours and shapes.

The three warning levels are:

Advice (Yellow): An incident has started. There is no 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.

When there is an Emergency Warning, educators need to prepare for possible emergency evacuation and implement the procedures effectively to ensure the safety of all children, staff, families and visitors in the Service.

Services must refer to their state/territory website for information on any current warnings and incidents in their community (Vic)

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

- obligations under the Education and Care National Law and National Regulations are met and understood by all staff and educators
- all educators, including casual/relief educators and staff members, are familiar with our *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*, procedures and regulatory requirements
- emergency and evacuation policies and procedures are available for inspection at the Service's premises at all times
- the approved provider will conduct a risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that are relevant to the Service
- the approved provider will review the risk assessment every 12 months or after becoming aware of any circumstance 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 [Vic] see: business.gov.au
- all staff and educators have a thorough understanding of the Australian Warning System (AWS)
- 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 infants and non-ambulant children evacuating the premises resulting in enhanced ratios (see *Evacuating Infants and non-ambulatory children* section below)
- additional consideration is made for services operating in multi-storey buildings (assembly areas, lifts not being used, stairwells, non-ambulant children, staffing implications, supervision) [Reg. 97(1)(b)]
- emergency rehearsals should involve other building tenants and building manager (if applicable)
- 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
- 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
- all emergency exit doors must be unlocked and ready to ensure safe evacuation of children and staff. Exit doors must be accessible from the inside with an emergency push bar or device
- there are no obstructions in hallways, stairways or emergency exits

- new staff, volunteers and students are provided with information and training about our *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* and procedures during induction
- all staff, visitors and students are aware of emergency evacuation points and assembly areas
- staff are trained how to use emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, fire blankets, hoses etc
- 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.
- 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.
- families are informed of the purpose and importance of regular emergency evacuation rehearsals upon enrolment
- families are encouraged to provide authorisation for their child to participate in emergency evacuation rehearsals where children move off Service premises to an external emergency assembly point (recommended by ACECQA)
- an *Emergency Evacuation Risk Assessment* will be conducted for regular outings involving emergency evacuation rehearsals that require children to move to an external emergency assembly point
- that the risk assessment for emergency evacuation rehearsals is reviewed every 12 months or following any changes to the emergency evacuation rehearsal, such as changes to the location of emergency assembly point.
- spontaneous rehearsals also take place during the year to assist in refining risk management procedures and evacuation procedures
- each time a planned or spontaneous emergency evacuation rehearsal is performed, it is to be timed and documented in the *Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Evaluation*
- after reflection, notes on any areas that need improving or revising are to be documented in the *Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Evaluation*. 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).
- 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). This scenario will be discussed as part of the WH&S review and documented in the Service's *Team Meeting Minutes*.
- children are provided with age-appropriate support and information before, during and after emergency and evacuation rehearsals.

- all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency situation
- regular communication with families includes information about emergency and evacuation procedures
- families are informed when a rehearsal has occurred
- each room has an *Emergency Evacuation Kit* located in a prominent position
- *Emergency Evacuation Kits* 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
- 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
- medical management plans for children are able to be accessed easily
- children's medication is collected during an evacuation
- 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
- 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 a telephone not operating or no other means of communication the Service will consider closure of the Service (See *Closure of Service* below)
- 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.
- 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 Department of Education (CCS) if the Service is required to close for a period of time as a result of a local emergency.

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; and

c) if the education and care service premises is located within a multi-storey building shared with other occupants and on a storey with no direct egress to an assembly area

I. all possible evacuation routes from each storey on which the premises is located; and

II. the evacuation routes that are proposed to be used in an evacuation; and

III. how all children will be safely evacuated from the premises, including non-ambulatory children; and

IV. the stages in which an evacuation will be carried out; and

V. the identity of the person in charge of an evacuation; and

VI. the roles and responsibilities of staff members during an evacuation; and

VII. the arrangements made with the other occupants of the multi-storey building in relation to the evacuation of the multi-storey building.

- the nominated supervisor/approved provider will make the final call as 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 the identified evacuation/emergency assembly area as indicated on the *Emergency and Evacuation Plan*
- 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 INFANTS AND NON-AMBULATORY CHILDREN

The approved provider and nominated supervisor will:

- complete a detailed risk assessment specifically considering the safe evacuation of infants and non-ambulatory children from the Service including:
    - additional staffing requirements to safely evacuate all children from single storey and multi-storey buildings
    - the procedure to safely evacuate multiple infants and/or non-ambulatory children at once
    - the location of emergency equipment which may include- emergency cots, prams, baby carriers or wagons to safely transport children
    - ensuring staff are aware of the maximum capacity of emergency equipment, including weight limits for emergency cots, prams or wagons
    - ensuring this equipment can travel through the evacuation route to the assembly area without obstruction
    - specific procedures required for evacuating infants and non-ambulatory children in multi-storey buildings via stairs
    - collection of emergency supplies for infants including breast milk/formula, nappies, blankets
- ensure infants and non-ambulatory children are included in ALL evacuation rehearsals
- ensure staff assess children's developmental milestones and physical mobility during an emergency
- to ensure children who cannot walk independently or require assistance will be identified and prioritised for evacuation
- reflect and assess evacuation rehearsals with all staff considering time taken to safely evacuate infants and 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 infants and 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
- complete authorisation for their child to participate in regular emergency evacuation rehearsals that require children and staff move off Service premises to an external assembly point
- 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.

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 approved provider 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 of an incident, including if the Service is required to close for a period of time due to an emergency via the NQA ITS
- Our Service 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/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 - Help in an emergency

Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology

JURISDICTION SPECIFICATIONS FOR EACH STATE

VICTORIA (VIC)

- Country Fire Authority Victoria: www.cfa.vic.gov.au
- Victoria Police: www.police.vic.gov.au
- Victoria State Emergency Service: www.ses.vic.gov.au

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or any incident related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management, and notification of any change to policies will be made to families within 14 days.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP RESOURCES

Bomb Threat Checklist	Emergency Management Team Structure and Guide
Bomb Threat Procedure	Emergency Support Services Record
Emergency Evacuation Record	Extreme Weather Procedure
Emergency Evacuation Kit Checklist	Fire and Safety Equipment Checklist
Emergency Evacuation Procedure	Interruptions to Care - Risk Assessment Action Plan
Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Calendar	Medical Emergency Rehearsal Record
Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Evaluation	Planned and Unplanned Power Outage Procedure
Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Letter to Families	Potential Emergencies - Risk Assessment Action Plan
Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Procedure	Team meeting minutes
Emergency Evacuation Situation Letter	
Emergency Management Audit	
Emergency Management Plan (EMP)	

SOURCES

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

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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.
Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 [for WA services only]
Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) Act 2012

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	[NAME] Amy Flockhart	[POSITION] office admin	[DATE] 19/06/2026
POLICY REVIEWED	FEBRUARY 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	FEBRUARY 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V19.02.26		
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy maintenance • minor edits within policy • sources checked for currency and updated as required		

POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
FEBRUARY 2025	• annual policy maintenance • minor edits within policy • additional section added: Evacuating Infants and Non-Ambulatory Children • additional information added regarding the authorisation from families for children to participate in regular emergency rehearsals where the assembly point is located off Service premises (ACECQA) • sources checked and updated as required	FEBRUARY 2026