CYCLONE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Tropical cyclones and severe storms can produce hail, flooding rains, lightning and winds up to 280km/h. Experiencing a cyclone can be frightening and traumatic, causing injury and loss of life and cause major structural damage to buildings and whole communities.

The storm season in Australia is usually from November -April and requires all services providing education and care to children to be aware of their responsibility to ensure the safety and security of children, educators, staff and families by being prepared for cyclones, minimizing risks and implementing explicit management strategies. The Australian Warning System is a new national approach to information and warnings during emergencies including cyclone and severe storms.

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.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 165A	
S. 174(2)(a)	Serious incident - Any emergency for which emergency services attended
S. 219A	Power of Regulatory Authority to close services because of emergency event
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
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 the Regulatory Authority
176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

RELATED POLICIES

Acceptance and Refusal Authorisation Policy Delivery of Children to and from EEC Service Policy Emergency and Evacuation Policy Family Communication Policy Flood Management Policy	Health and Safety Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Lockdown Policy Record Keeping and Retention Policy Safe Transportation Policy Supervision Policy

DEFINITION

A cyclone is a low-pressure system that forms over warm tropical waters. They are formed by a system of winds rotating inwards to an area of low barometric pressure, in a clockwise circulation in the southern hemisphere. They are characterised by wind gusts up to 280 km/h and can cause flooding and storm surges.

PURPOSE

We recognise that our Service is positioned in a geographical location where cyclones may occur. We have a responsibility to take precautions in order to decrease the risk of damage to the Service and to ensure the safety of the children, educators and families at all times.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Cyclones are part of life for people in various parts of Australia during the months of November to

April. They have the potential to threaten lives and cause large-scale destruction with the possibility of communication being disrupted.

This policy reminds educators, staff, volunteers and students of the procedure to follow in preparing for a cyclone, what to do when a cyclone watch has been announced and/or when a cyclone strikes.

Management has a legal responsibility to provide all their employees with a safe workplace and ensure all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in case of an emergency.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL ENSURE:

- obligations under the *Education and Care National Law and Regulations* are met and understood by all staff and educators
- all educators, including casual/relief educators and staff members, are familiar with our *Cyclone Management Policy*, procedures and regulatory requirements
- all staff have a thorough understanding of the Australian Warning System (AWS)
- the nominated supervisor, management, staff, educators comply with this policy
- compliance with the Education and Care National Regulations and develop, and review annually, a risk assessment to identify risks associated with the impact of cyclones to the Service
- relevant stakeholders/authorities are consulted to improve our risk mitigation strategies for cyclone management as part of our Emergency Management Plan (EMP)- SES, parents/families
- emergency evacuation plans are displayed in prominent positions near each exit and in the indoor and outdoor learning environments
- clear procedures are in place for when a cyclone warning occurs to ensure the safety of educators, children and families
- new staff, volunteers and students are provided with information and training regarding cyclone management procedures upon induction
- emergency evacuation rehearsals will be practiced *every three months*, including identifying a designated assembly point and place of refuge in case of cyclones
- each emergency evacuation rehearsal is documented, reviewed and reflected upon each time they occur
- families are informed when a rehearsal has occurred
- emergency telephone numbers will be clearly displayed in prominent positions within the Service
- emergency contact details of all children are updated regularly
- strategies to implement emergency plans during cyclone season are discussed and documented at each staff meeting and included in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

- ~~to~~ the *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* is referred to for steps to be followed when the Service needs to close in response to an emergency
- families are informed of emergency closures as soon as practicable to ensure immediate collection of children
- all directions and instructions from emergency services, local authorities and regulatory authority are followed in relation to the possible closure of the Service
- a serious incident notification is submitted 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
- the regulatory authority is notified within 24 hours via the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS) if the Service is required to close for a period of time as a result of a local emergency (evacuation due to cyclone, or to repair damage caused by a cyclone) [Reg. 175 (2)(b)]
- the Department of Education is notified within 24 hours if the Service is temporarily closed via CCS Software or PEP
- families are notified about absences and Child Care Subsidy (CCS) due to a local emergency
- counselling services are provided to employees and their family members affected by a cyclone
- any transportation provided by the Service is cancelled or postponed during a severe storm warning or cyclone warning event.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- become familiar with the evacuation plan, including knowing the nearest safe high ground and access route
- prepare the Emergency Evacuation Bag/Kit containing
    1. a portable battery radio, torch and spare batteries
    2. water containers with clean drinking water, dried or canned food and can opener (if required)
    3. first aid kit and manual, masking tape for windows and waterproof bags
    4. emergency contact register for children
    5. mobile phone and charger and/or other satellite telephone (if required)
    6. any special equipment for babies and young children (bottles, nappies, milk formula)
    7. whistle
- ensure all portable outdoor furniture and related items are stored within the building
- not ignore warning signs
- provide resources and strategies to families for children affected by natural disasters.

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 ahead of severe weather events including cyclone and severe storm warnings. 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 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.

PRIOR TO CYCLONE SEASON

- ensure EMP is reviewed
- ensure the building structure meets cyclone required standards
- check current insurance- make sure the Service premises is covered for storm surge, flooding and cyclone damage, including clean-up and debris removal
- ensure maintenance is upheld, including trimming branches over the premises, clearing gutters, and having windows fitted with shutters or metal screens.

WHEN A CYCLONE WATCH IS ISSUED

A cyclone watch is normally issued when there are indicators that winds above gale force are anticipated in the area within 24-48 hours. The SES may issue an Advice Warning or Watch and Act Warning. Ensure all directions and instructions from emergency services, local authorities and regulatory authority are followed in relation to the possible closure of the Service.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS MAY BE WARRANTED

- remain calm
- listen to the radio/TV for further information and warnings given by Emergency Services (SES)/ Department of Fires or Emergency Service (DFES)/or other state/territory service
- check to ensure any loose materials at the Service's outdoor environment is tied down (or filled with water)
- ensure the first aid kit is well stocked and current

- remain indoors
- notify families about the cyclone watch issued and if possible, request families to collect children from the Service
- keep the children busy with games and activities
- ensure attendance information is accurate
- identify children with medical management action plans- ensure all details and emergency contact details are current
- follow the advice of emergency services.

CYCLONE WARNING OF EVACUATION / EMERGENCY WARNING

An Emergency Warning is normally issued when there are indicators that winds above gale force are anticipated in the area within 24 hours.

Based on predicted wind speeds and storm surge heights, evacuation of the Service may be required. Emergency Services will provide advice on local radio/TV regarding safe routes and when to proceed with the evacuation.

- Listen for all Emergency Services announcements regarding Service closure and evacuation
- Check radio, television and online for emergency information
- Notify families to come immediately and collect their children
- Contact emergency contact person if required
- Lock all doors, turn off power, gas and water
- Gather the Emergency Evacuation Bag
- Remain indoors
- Move any furniture and equipment away from the windows
- Follow advice of emergency services.

WHEN A CYCLONE STRIKES

- Stay calm
- Act immediately by following directions issued by Emergency Services
- Disconnect all electrical appliances and gas supply valves
- Listen to battery operated radio for updates
- Go immediately to the designated shelter area identified within the Service, away from windows. This should be the strongest part of the building.
- Ensure doors are locked

- Educators are to protect themselves and children with mattresses, rugs, helmets, blankets under strong tables or benches or hold onto solid fixtures
- Be careful of the calm 'eye'. The wind can decline, yet the cyclone may not be over, fierce winds will rapidly recommence from another direction.
- Comfort children.

AFTER THE CYCLONE

- Do not go outside until you have been advised it is safe
- Do not use electrical appliances if they are wet
- Listen to the radio/TV for official warnings and advice
- Where possible and when it is safe, take photos of any damage for insurance purposes
- Contact the required professionals to fix any broken structures, including windows etc.
- Keep families informed of Service closure/operation
- Remind families about the dangers of floodwaters caused by cyclones
    - don't ignore road closures due to floodwaters
    - don't let children play in or around floodwaters
- 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.

PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

Australian Government Department of Education. Help in an Emergency
https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-package/help-emergency
Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology http://www.bom.gov.au/
Get Ready Queensland- Cyclone and Storm Surge

RESOURCES TO ASSIST SERVICES AFTER AN EMERGENCY/NATURAL DISASTER

BeYou Educator Wellbeing after a natural disaster

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Cyclone Management Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or incidents 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

Emergency Evacuation Kit Checklist Emergency Management Plan (EMP)	Extreme Weather Procedure

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*

Australian Government – Bureau of Meteorology - http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/

Australian Government Department of Education (2020). Help in an emergency

Be You. Educator Wellbeing after a natural disaster

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) (For NSW Services only)

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2025)

Government of Western Australia. Department of Fire & Emergency Services. Cyclones

Queensland Government. (2024). *Get Ready Queensland*.

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] 18/06/2026
POLICY REVIEWED	DECEMBER 2025	NEXT REVIEW DATE	DECEMBER 2026
VERSION NUMBER	V8.12.25		
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy review • minor formatting edits • additional information added re: transportation arrangements and regulatory authority providing instructions during emergency situations for closure of services • sources checked and updated as required		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
JANUARY 2024	• annual policy maintenance- (moved from January to December) • minor formatting edits • sources checked and repaired if required		DECEMBER 2025