

Background

The death of any child can have a profound effect on those who have known that child. It is an unfortunate event that occurs rarely in early education and care services, but services need to be prepared so that they can respond in a way that upholds the dignity of the child, and the wellbeing of those affected.

Policy statement

This policy is to be followed in the event of the death or serious injury to a child at the Service. It is intended to; encourage staff to respond in a calm, professional and planned manner which prioritises the needs and dignity of the child and the family; minimise possible distress to other children, staff and bystanders; ensure all relevant people and authorities are advised in a timely manner and in accordance with the law; and ensure all required documentation is completed and stored confidentially.

Strategies and practices

In the event of a child who is not breathing being found in the Service: -

- The staff member discovering the child will strictly follow the Non-Responsive Child/Person - Procedure.
- The Nominated Supervisor will call the parents of the child, calmly advise that the child has been taken to hospital by ambulance and arrange to meet them at the hospital.
- The Nominated Supervisor – or a staff member delegated – will accompany the child in the ambulance and remain with the child until the parent(s) arrives.
- Medical staff will advise parents of the child's condition. In the event of a death, staff may not give this information to parents because only a medical professional can pronounce a death.
- If the child has been transported via ambulance to hospital, the immediate Service environment is not to be cleaned or otherwise disturbed until the Nominated Supervisor gives the clearance. The police and other relevant authorities may need to undertake a detailed investigation.
- The Nominated Supervisor will notify the Approved Provider of any death or serious injury. Either the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will notify the Regulatory Authority as soon as practicable but within 24 hours of the pronouncement of death.
- If death has been pronounced, the Nominated Supervisor will notify the police of a death in the Service and follow police instructions. The Nominated Supervisor will also notify Workplace Health and Safety, as well as the Service's insurance company.
- The Approved Provider or, if delegated, the Nominated Supervisor are the only persons to comment on the incident. No other staff member is to provide information about the incident to the family concerned, to other families, or to the media. In addition, no staff member is to make public comment or admit liability for the incident.

- The Service's Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record will be completed as soon as practicable after the event. All staff directly involved will prepare and sign statements listing the sequence of events and actions taken. All documentation including copies of forms will be filed in accordance with the Service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.
- The Service will support the family with sympathy and in every reasonable way.
- In the event of a death at the Service, the Service will provide staff with immediate debriefing and counselling from a suitably qualified professional.

Additional safe practices for babies

- No additional practices required.

Responsibilities of parents

- N/A

Procedure and forms

- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record
- Non-Responsive Child/Person Procedure

Links to other policies

- Evacuation and Lockdown Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Regs	12	Meaning of a serious incident
	85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
	99	Children leaving the education and care premises
	168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
	176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
	177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider
	181	Confidentiality of records kept by approved provider
	183	Storage of records and other documents
QA	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard

2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
4.2.2	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
5.1.2	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained
6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
6.1.3	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing
7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service

Sources

- ACECQA – Reporting Requirements: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/applications/reporting> accessed 25 June 2025
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (current version): <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653> accessed 25 June 2025
- Guide to the National Quality Framework – ACECQA: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide> accessed 25 June 2025

Further reading and useful websites

- Queensland Health – Child Death Review Board: <https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/child-death-review-board> accessed 25 June 2025
- WorkSafe Queensland: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/> accessed 25 June 2025
- WorkCover Queensland: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/about/who-we-are/workcover-queensland> accessed 25 June 2025

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service’s commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognized authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Kaylene Harper	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018. Service to modify policies to its specific needs.	January 2019
2	31 January 2019	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further reading.	January 2020

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3	29 January 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further reading.	January 2021
4	13 October 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further reading.	October 2021
5	22 September 2021	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy	September 2022
6	30 September 2022	Linda Hollard	Reviewed policy Accessed sources and further reading	September 2023
7	23 August 2023	Grace McKinstry	Reviewed policy Accessed sources and further reading	August 2024
8	9 July 2024	Tiffany Boeske	Reviewed policy Accessed sources	July 2025
9	25 June 2025	Gen Mahaki	Reviewed policy. Accessed current sources and further reading.	June 2026