

Background

Early childhood Services must always ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children are at the Service. They must also ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and anyone else on the premises. To achieve this, Services need a clear plan for the management of emergency situations so that educators are best equipped to respond calmly and effectively.

Policy statement

The Service has procedures to follow in the event of any emergency resulting in evacuation. These procedures comply with regulatory requirements and are consistent with recommendations by recognised authorities. They are designed to ensure the swift, safe, and calm evacuation of all children, staff, families, and visitors. Evacuations are rehearsed monthly to ensure educators and children are confident in knowing what to do.

The Service has lockdown procedures in response to any critical incident or foreseeable threat of harm to staff, children, or visitors. Such an event could be: -

- A hostage situation
- A siege
- Violent, intoxicated and/or drug affected persons
- Dangerous animals & snakes
- Unidentified external disturbance
- Severe storm

Strategies and practices

Evacuation

1. The *Evacuation and Lockdown Policy and Procedures* will be kept in the Services policy and procedures folder, accessible to families, educators, students, and volunteers.
2. Families are informed of the Service's emergency procedures at enrolment and orientation and throughout the year. They are also provided with educational materials e.g. fire safety.
3. The Service's Evacuation and Lockdown Policy and evacuation procedures are based on a risk assessment that identified the potential emergencies relevant to the individual Service.
4. Emergency evacuation plans are prominently displayed throughout the Service at each exit point. These plans consist of a floor plan of the Service and indicate the reader's location, the nearest exit, the route to that exit, and assembly areas. A procedure relevant to the Service, detailing evacuation instructions and staff roles is displayed alongside all Emergency evacuation plans.
5. All exit signs are clearly visible, escape routes and emergency exits are kept clear at all times.

6. The Service has the required number of fire extinguishers and fire blankets together with other emergency equipment throughout the Service. Fire extinguishers are tested and tagged, and all other equipment checked as recommended. All checks are documented.
7. All fire equipment is appropriately sign-posted and kept immediately accessible at all times.
8. The Service maintains up-to-date emergency contact details for every child and a printed copy of these is taken to the assembly point.
9. The contact numbers of emergency services are displayed near all telephone handsets and outlets in the Service. The contact numbers of emergency/relevant services are also programmed into each telephone handset.
10. All new staff must be given fire evacuation instruction within 2 days of commencing work at the Service, with elements also completed within one month of commencing work at the Service. This is documented on the Fire Evacuation Instruction Record.
11. The Service's Nominated Supervisor and Assistant Centre Manager must be given fire evacuation instruction when taking on those responsibilities. This is documented on the Fire Evacuation Instruction Record.
12. All educators complete mandatory fire training annually. Educators are trained in the use of fire extinguishers, fire blankets and other emergency fire equipment and know where these items are located throughout the Service.
13. The Services security alarm system is appropriately maintained according to the installers instructions.
14. The Nominated Supervisor ensures that all staff know the Service's policy and procedures for emergency evacuations and that they know their roles and responsibilities. Students and volunteers are informed of emergency procedures during orientation.
15. All float and non-contact staff are required to assist children and educators to evacuate promptly in the event of an emergency evacuation. With nursery, toddler and non-ambulant children being first priority for assistance, before assisting older children to evacuate.
16. When evacuating from the Services mezzanine level children will be supported to utilise the child height handrails on either the internal or external staircase while evacuating.
17. Evacuation procedures are rehearsed monthly and lockdown procedures are rehearsed every three months. Rehearsal occurs at different times on different days of the week. Everyone in the Service at the time, including visitors, are expected to participate.
18. When parents arrive to collect their children, they are purposefully informed that an evacuation rehearsal has occurred.

19. The Responsible Person present at the time oversees the rehearsals and is responsible for completing the Emergency Evacuation and Lockdown Record (in conjunction with other staff members), and for implementing any improvements identified in that report.
20. A Risk Management Plan for High-Risk Activity or Special Event is completed if concerns or improvements are recommended following an evacuation or lock down.
21. In the event of a power failure, the Service has a mobile phone.
22. Educators intentionally teach children about fire safety through discussions, songs, games, role-play, and fire service visits. Parents are provided with educational material about fire safety in the home and are encouraged to work in partnership with educators by continuing the fire safety message at home.
23. The Nominated Supervisor arranges for an external fire and safety service to visit the Service annually to assess the rehearsal and all emergency and evacuation documentation and procedures. Any recommendations in the assessment are followed and the evacuation plans adjusted accordingly.
24. The Regulatory Authority and any other government health and safety authority concerned are notified of any incident requiring evacuation at the Service.
25. After any incident requiring evacuation of the Service, counselling/debriefing is available to anyone affected. Children are likely to role-play the event afterwards, so any debriefing will include preparing educators to respond appropriately.
26. The service maintains an Emergency Evacuation Bag at the exit point of each room for use during rehearsals or real emergency events. The bags contain appropriate items for each age group to use whilst involved in a rehearsal or unable to re-enter the building during a genuine emergency. Services use the Emergency Evacuation Bag Contents Checklist to create suitable bags in each room, bags are checked monthly to ensure use by dates and contents are suitable.
27. Transportable medication bags are utilized to store children's medication at the Service and are collected before evacuating to ensure children have access to their required medications at all times. The staff in each child's room are responsible for collecting the medication bag prior to evacuating.

Lockdown

28. The Service has a signal – distinct from the evacuation signal – to alert staff of the need for lockdown. The signal has been chosen taking into account the need for discretion that could accompany such an event e.g. a parent acting against a court order.

Initial notification

29. If lockdown is initiated due to a dangerous person being present at the Service, the staff who becomes aware of the person, if safe to do so, is to do their best to calm the person down and handle the situation.
30. The witness to the event alerts the Nominated Supervisor immediately.
31. The Nominated Supervisor determines whether or not lockdown is appropriate.
32. If yes, the Nominated Supervisor activates the lockdown signal, if possible, if not possible the witnessing educator activates the lockdown.
33. Dials 000 for police/emergency services assistance and follows the operator's instructions.
34. Staff follow all directions of the Nominated Supervisor explicitly.

During lockdown

35. All educators and children inside the rooms are to remain in their rooms and those in the enclosed outdoor space are to go inside the nearest room immediately and follow lockdown procedures.
36. The Service has two labelled evacuation cots to be used for babies and non-ambulant children during lockdown. Educators are to position the evacuation cots towards to back of the cot room and place a maximum of 6 children in each evacuation cot.
37. All educators and children on the mezzanine level are to remain in this space. The most senior educator present is to lock the top gate to the mezzanine level with the key located near the exit, but out of reach from the other side of the gate and encourage children to lay as low as possible towards the back of the mezzanine level, away from all windows and glass panels.
38. Educators are to lock all doors and ensure children are kept secure e.g. under tables, in prep rooms.
39. Educators check the rolls and ensure that all marked children are present, and as soon as it is safe to do so, inform the Nominated Supervisor of the names of any children unaccounted for.
40. Do not use the phone for external calls. In case of a medical emergency, notify the Nominated Supervisor.
41. The Responsible Person or Educators not currently caring for children are to lock all external doors and windows e.g. front door, laundry, including the windows in the enclosed outdoor space.
42. The Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person where possible check all communal areas and toilets during lockdown, and usher any person or child found during the check to a safe location within the Service. Where the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person is unable to perform this check an Educator not currently caring for children will perform the check.
43. Everyone is to remain in lockdown until the Nominated Supervisor announces the "All Clear".

After lockdown

44. The Nominated Supervisor notifies parents as soon as possible after the lockdown has ended.
45. The lockdown will be documented, and the Service's response reviewed.

Additional safe practices for babies and non-ambulant children

- The Service has two labelled evacuation cots to be used for children who are unable to evacuate independently. Educators are to place a maximum of 6 children in each evacuation cot.
- Non-ambulant children with additional needs that are present at the Service will be provided with an alternative evacuation method where required, such as a wheelchair etc.
- Nursery educators are primarily responsible for the evacuation of children in the nursery room, however additional educators will assist where required.
- The use of the evacuation cot and where required alternative evacuation methods, is practiced during regular monthly evacuation drills.

Responsibilities of parents

- To ensure all contact details for parents and those of the authorised nominees are complete, accurate and up to date.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the Evacuation and Lockdown policy and procedures are in place.• Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.• Ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, educators, staff, and volunteers, and available for inspection.• Ensure a risk assessment has been undertaken to identify potential emergencies that are relevant to the service.• Conduct a risk assessment of emergency evacuation routes and assembly points.• Ensure that a copy of the emergency and evacuation floor plans and instructions are displayed in a prominent position near each exit that forms part of an evacuation route.• Document rehearsal of the emergency and evacuation procedures• Notify the regulatory authority of any serious incidents, change of circumstances and complaints.• Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Affect the fee charged of the way they are collected or- Significantly impact the service's education and care of children or- Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.• Ensure that the emergency and evacuation procedures are rehearsed every month for evacuations and every three months for lockdowns by the educators, staff, volunteers, visitors, and children present at the service on the day of the rehearsal and the responsible person in relation to the service who is present at the time of the rehearsal

Evacuation and Lockdown

Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in rehearsals of the emergency and evacuation procedures every three months. • Keep a documented record of each rehearsal and reflections that occurred after • Collaborate with educators and staff to develop procedures to manage all risks associated with emergency and evacuation situations. • Ensure the development of an emergency evacuation floor plan. • Ensure educators and staff have ready access to emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers and fire blankets and are adequately trained in their use. • Ensure educators and staff have ready access to an operating telephone or similar means of communication. • Ensure that emergency equipment is tested within the timeframes recommended by recognised authorities. • Ensure that an up-to-date portable emergency contact list for the children is accessible and that evacuation procedures state who will carry this list during evacuation. • Ensure that emergency and evacuation risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly. • Ensure the emergency and evacuation procedures and floor plan are displayed in a prominent position near each exit on the evacuation route and that all staff and educators are aware of these. • Ensure that all educators and staff are trained in the emergency and evacuation procedures. • Ensure that all educators and staff are aware of emergency evacuation points. • Ensure that families are regularly reminded of the emergency procedures in place at the service. • Ensure children's medication is collected during an evacuation. • Audit and restock the evacuation bags every month. • Take responsibility for ensure that all children are accounted for during an evacuation
Educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehearsing emergency and evacuation procedures with everyone who is present at the service at least every three months and that the rehearsal is documented. • Communicating with families about emergency procedures.
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you have the service's up to date contact details. • Ensure you complete the attendance record on delivery and collection of your child. • Provide emergency contact details on your child's enrolment form and ensure this is kept up to date. • Be aware of the service's emergency and evacuation policy and procedures. • Reinforce the service's emergency and evacuation procedures with your child. • If present at the service at the time, follow the directions of educators and staff in the event of an emergency or when rehearsing emergency and evacuation procedures

Procedure and forms

- Emergency Evacuation and Lockdown Record
- Emergency Evacuation Bag Contents Checklist
- Fire Evacuation Instruction Record
- Risk Management Plan for High-Risk Activity or Special Event
- Missing Child Procedure
- Bomb Threat Procedure
- Emergency Evacuation and Lockdown Procedure

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Incident, Injury and Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Supervision Policy

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

Reg	97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
	98	Telephone or other communication equipment
	168	Policies and procedures in relation to emergency and evacuation
	170	Policies and procedures to be followed
	171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
	172	Notification of change to policies and procedures

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
	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
	2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
	6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
	6.2.2	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program
	7.2.1	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2023
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2024

Further reading and useful websites

- ACECQA: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/education-and-care-sector-fact-sheets/emergency-and-evacuation> accessed 23 June 2025
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services: <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/> accessed 23 June 2025
- Australian Government Emergency Services: <https://www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/public-safety-and-law/emergency-services> accessed 23 June 2025

Key Terms

Term	Meaning	Source
ACECQA – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources, and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.	Managing Emergency situations in Education and Care Services
Emergency	An incident, situation or event where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person at the service. For example, a flood, fire or a situation that requires the service premises to be locked down.	Guide to the NQF
Emergency Services	Includes ambulance, fire brigade, police and state emergency services.	https://www.australia.gov.au/

Evacuation and Lockdown

		information-and-services/public-safety-and-law/emergency-services
Evacuation Plan	An evacuation plan is used where it is deemed necessary to evacuate the immediate area or building to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and adults.	https://www.echr.edu.au/docs/default-source/resources/ipsp/managing-emergency-situations-in-education-and-care-services.pdf?sfvrsn=8
Evacuation Route	Path of travel to a place of safety outside the building.	Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008 Queensland
Fire Safety Adviser	May co-ordinate fire safety management plans, fire and evacuation plans, procedures, review and practice, and give or arrange instruction to staff on evacuation and the operation of firefighting equipment.	
Lockdown Plan	A lockdown plan is used in situations such as the threat of a violent person or a police operation in the vicinity that may require the service to go into lockdown. This means that the service locks all doors and windows and, where possible, removes children, educators, and other adults from view.	https://www.echr.edu.au/docs/default-source/resources/ipsp/managing-emergency-situations-in-education-and-care-services.pdf?sfvrsn=8
Lockout Plan	A lockout plan is used for events such as a severe storm, smoke haze or toxic gases, where a full lockdown may not be required. In a lockout, the building is well secured with external doors and windows closed, entry doors cleared, and access for families is ensured.	https://www.echr.edu.au/docs/default-source/resources/ipsp/managing-emergency-situations-in-education-and-care-services.pdf?sfvrsn=8
Risk Assessment	A systematic process of evaluating the potential likelihood and consequences of risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.	

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 recognised 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.	January 2019
2	6 February 2019	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further reading.	February 2020
3	29 January 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further reading.	January 2021
4	28 April 2020	Kaylene Harper	Updated information regarding phone procedures in emergency.	April 2021
5	25 September 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Accessed sources and further reading.	September 2021
6	21 October 2020	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy. Added key terms and roles and responsibilities in line with Queensland Government Policy and Procedure Guidelines	October 2021
7	15 February 2021	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy.	February 2022
8	18 February 2021	Kaylene Harper	Reviewed policy.	February 2022
9	29 September 2022	Linda Hollard	Reviewed policy Accessed sources and added information	September 2023
10	23 August 2023	Grace McKinstry	Reviewed policy Accessed sources and added information	August 2024
11	1 July 2024	Tiffany Boeske	Reviewed policy Accessed sources	July 2025
12	23 June 2025	Gen Mahaki	Reviewed policy Accessed sources and further reading Updated alignment with current NQF guidance	June 2026

