

Evacuation and Lockdown – June 2023



Background

Early childhood services must ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children at all times they are at the service. They must also ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and anyone else on the premises. To achieve these ends, services need a clear plan for the management of emergency situations so that educators are best equipped to respond calmly and effectively.

Policy statement

Gidgillys has a duty of care to maintain the safety and wellbeing of each child, educator, and all using or visiting the Service during an emergency or evacuation situation.

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 and evacuation situations in an education and care service can arise in a number of circumstances and for a variety of reasons. In the event of an emergency or evacuation situation, the safety and wellbeing of all staff, children, families and visitors to the service is paramount.

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;
- Unidentified external disturbance; or,
- Severe storm.

Strategies and practices

Risk assessment for potential emergencies:

In preparing the emergency and evacuation procedures, a risk assessment is conducted to identify potential emergencies relevant to our service.

The Emergency Management Folder is kept in the service office and contains:

- Detailed risk assessment and control measures of potential emergencies the service may be exposed to. Documentation is assessed and updated periodically and when needed as circumstances change.
- Detailed, specific procedures to follow in the event of any emergency or evacuation including:
 - Natural disaster
 - Fire or smoke
 - Bomb threat
 - Snake or other potentially dangerous animal

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- Act of terrorism
- Chemical or hazardous leaks and spills
- Loss of power or water
- Intruders
- Outbreak of infectious disease or illness
- Death of a child or adult

Discovering an Emergency

- Educators who discover an emergency are required to alert the whole service and immediately take necessary action. Three sharp whistle blows throughout the centre and identify to all staff the situation that has arisen.
- In the event of a LOCKDOWN (Gidgillys code word will be used, this is not documented for security purposes) and necessary actions taken to protect all staff and children.

Evacuation Drills and Emergency Evacuation

- Evacuation drills are carried out every three months without notice, at different times of the day (National Regulation 97(3)(a)).
- Each drill is documented to include the date, time, how many people in the building according to attendance registers, how many people evacuated, the time it takes to evacuate, what simulated emergency conditions (if any), any problems encountered, weather conditions, which staff and children were absent on the day of the drill and any additional notes. This documentation is kept for a minimum of three years (National Regulation 97(3)(b)).
- Simulated emergency conditions consider a variety of practice styles such as scenarios in the rooms, around the yards, and out of the grounds.
- There is at least one large emergency cot that is to be used for any children not walking during evacuations. This cot is to be checked regularly and maintained in a sturdy condition to ensure its safety at all times.
- Emergency whistles are provided in designated areas throughout the service whistles are only to be used for evacuation purposes.
- After reflection, notes on any areas that need improving or revising are to be documented in the Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Record. Educators will discuss and implement strategies to make continuous improvement to procedures which will be documented in the Service's Staff Meeting minutes and Quality Improvement Plan.

After the Emergency is over

- In the event that the building is unsafe to return to, the Responsible Person will notify parents or emergency contacts to collect each child.
- If able to return to the building, with reassurance and calmness, walk back to the service following the safety procedures, recheck that all children have returned and discuss as developmentally appropriate the emergency that has taken place.
- Consider counselling services for anyone affected by the emergency.
- Schedule the next emergency drill on a day that will ensure the children and staff who were absent will be able to participate in emergency practices.

Document everything that happened good and or bad.

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Lockdown

- The Service has a procedure – distinctly different 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).
- Educators are encouraged to speak quietly between each other and try and keep children's voices low and keep them comforted as much as possible.
- These procedure are practiced at staff meetings to ensure all educators are reminded and aware of the procedures to follow.

During lockdown

- All educators and children inside are to remain in their rooms and those outside are to go inside immediately and follow lockdown procedures.
- Educators are to lock all doors and windows (draw curtains/blinds) and ensure children are kept secure (e.g. under tables).
- Educators perform head counts on Xplor App and ensure that all signed-in 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.
- Do not use the phone for external calls. In case of a medical emergency, notify the Nominated Supervisor.
- Educators without children are to lock all external doors and windows (e.g. front door, laundry).
- Everyone is to remain in lockdown until the Nominated Supervisor announces the "All Clear."

After lockdown

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

Responsibilities of parents

- To ensure all contact details for parents and those of the emergency contacts are complete, accurate and up-to-date. A minimum of two (2) emergency contacts Are required.
- Familiarise yourselves with the emergency evacuation plans throughout the service
- Ensure to always sign child in and out of the service via the Xplor App every day

Procedure and forms

- Evacuation and Lockdown Evaluation Report
- Emergency Evacuation Bag Checklist

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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

Regulation	97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
Regulation	98	Telephone or other communication equipment
Regulation	168	Policies and procedures in relation to emergency and evacuation

NQS	QA2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
NQS	QA2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
NQS	QA2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
NQS	QA6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
NQS	QA6.2.2	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program
NQS	QA7.2.1	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018 (September 2020 Update): Section 4 – Operational Requirements <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf>

Further reading and useful websites *(Consistent with the approach of the National Quality Framework, the following references have prioritised efficacy and appropriateness to inform best practice, and legislative compliance over state or territory preferences.)*

- Fire NSW *Portable Fire Extinguisher Information for Business* - <https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=699>
- Education NSW – Early Childhood Emergency - <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/emergency>

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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	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018. Service to modify policies to its specific needs.	
2	6 September 2019	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
3	29 November 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
4	30 December 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
5	May 2022	ACA NSW	Updated references Added points for parents Added list of possible emergencies Other small grammatical issues	
6	June 2022	Erin Shortland (Director)	Re-created with Links to our centre after lost in computer crash	June 2023
7	1 st June 2023	Erin Shortland	No changes made	June 2024