

POLICY AIM

We aim to minimise the risk of harm, or the exposure to danger, ensuring the safety of children, educators, families, and visitors of the Service in the event of a threatening situation.

RATIONALE

In the event of a hazard, threat, dangerous situation, or natural disaster within the community, the service has a responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment for our staff, children, families and visitors to the centre. To achieve this, we will implement a clear plan to manage all emergency situations, including a plan for emergencies that may require our Service to go into lockdown and ensure our educators and staff are well equipped with the knowledge and expertise to respond effectively when required. Children and staff will regularly rehearse our emergency procedures, including lockdown to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

SCOPE - WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY?

- Children
- Families
- Staff
- Management
- Visitors

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

QUALITY AREA 2 - CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Standard 2.2 (Safety) - *Each child is protected.*
- Element 2.2.1 (Supervision) - *At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.*
- Element 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

- Element 7.1.2 (Management Systems) - *Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.*
- Element 7.1.3 (Roles and responsibilities) - *Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.*

RELATED POLICIES & LEGISLATION

RELATED SWEETPEAS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy
- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Arrival and Departure Policy
- Bushfire Policy
- Emergency and Evacuation Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Procedure
- Flood Management Policy and Procedure (Penrith)
- Incident Procedure
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy
- Lockdown Procedure

RELATED EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS:

- Law Section 167 - Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
- Regulation 97 - Emergency and evacuation procedures
- Regulation 98 - Telephone or other communication equipment
- Regulation 168 - Education and care services must have policies and procedures
- Regulation 170 - Policies and procedures must be followed

RELATED LEGISLATION:

- Australian Standard AS3745:2010 - Planning for emergencies in facilities

TERMINOLOGY

- **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 or other type of emergency response.
- **Emergency drill/rehearsal** - A process to rehearse anticipated emergency scenarios or events, designed to help clarify roles and responsibilities, provide training and verify the adequacy of the emergency response.
- **Emergency services** - Includes ambulance, fire brigade, police and state emergency services.
- **Lockdown** - A security measure taken during an emergency to prevent people from leaving or entering a building or premises until the threat or risk has been resolved.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

- **WHS** - Work Health and Safety

IMPLEMENTATION AND STRATEGIES

We have set procedures to follow in the event of any emergency requiring lockdown. These procedures comply with regulatory requirements and are consistent with recommendations by recognised authorities. They are designed to ensure an efficient, safe, and calm procedure for all children, staff, families, and visitors.

Whilst many emergency situations will require staff and children to evacuate from the Service, there are potential situations that will require the Service to go into 'lockdown'. For procedures relating to evacuations or other incidents, refer to the Sweetpeas *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*, *Emergency Evacuation Procedure* (for your individual service), *Incident Procedure* (for your individual service), *Bushfire Policy* and *Flood Policy* (Penrith service only).

Within early childhood services there are three types of lockdown that may be required:

- **Shelter-in-place (Level 1)** which generally will be required when there is a real or perceived **local threat to health or safety**. For example:
 - Severe storms
 - Chemical or hazardous substance spill
 - Flood
- **External threat (Level 2)** indicates that there is a potential threat outside that you wish to **prevent from entering the building**. For example:
 - Unidentified dangerous animal or insects
 - Extreme smoke from a local or distant fire/bushfire
 - Gas leak/atmospheric hazardous substance

NOTE: If toxic/chemical spills or fumes are coming from inside the building, then you must follow the Emergency Evacuation Procedure. For procedure on local bushfire, see Bushfire Policy.

- **Full lockdown (Level 3)** for situations that involve **serious threats** such as:
 - Potentially dangerous unwanted or uninvited intruder
 - Potentially dangerous person due to intoxication or substance abuse
 - Receiving an emergency services warning about a reported incident or civil disturbance

Lockdown means that all windows are closed, and external doors are locked, and where possible internal doors are locked, and blinds closed.

For a 'Shelter-in-place' or 'External threat' lockdown, children are generally able to participate in the usual experiences and activities, keeping away from windows wherever possible. However, for a 'Full lockdown' children and adults must be moved to a room/position that does not allow them to be viewed.

Where possible, access should be maintained to a bathroom and enough space should be available for children to be comfortably involved in quiet activities. It is therefore vital that appropriate spaces have been identified and displayed on the service's *Lockdown Procedure*. This information can be displayed on the back of the service's *Incident Procedure*, which can then be quickly taken from the wall when required. This act will ensure that in a situation involving unwanted visitors, or previous visitors that have now returned with malicious intent, that the plan is not visible or available.

RESPONSIBILITIES

MANAGEMENT OR NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- develop, and review, a risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that may require the service to go into lockdown.
- engage relevant stakeholders/authorities to improve risk mitigation strategies for lockdown situations as part of our Emergency Management Plan (police, fire, parents/families).
- ensure capacity to lock internal doors.
- consider procedures for non-ambulant children and staff implications in the event of a lockdown.
- ensure new staff, volunteers and students are provided with information and training about lockdown procedures upon induction.
- ensure emergency evacuation plans and procedures are displayed in prominent positions near each exit and in the indoor and outdoor learning environments (*Lockdown Procedure* information should be displayed on the back of service's *Incident Procedure*).
- determine communication channels- ensure all educators and staff have access to an operating telephone or means of communication- consider use of communication apps for silent group communication among staff members (*Messenger*).
- determine how the different type of lockdown alert signal will be given.
- develop effective strategies for checking the attendance roll and communicating with children, educators, families, and visitors of the Service.
- document roles and responsibilities of staff and educators, including WHS Officer and Deputy.
- monitor WHS job roles and ensure they are being completed.
- plan to maintain children's safety and wellbeing.
- ensure all children, staff, families, and visitors of the Service remain inside during a lockdown.
- contact emergency services as soon as practicable- provide essential information to police depending on the type of lockdown- (e.g.: description of the intruder, threat, weapons).
- communicate with families about lockdown procedures.
- 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.
- provide opportunities for debriefing and counselling to families and children and staff.

WHS OFFICER AND DEPUTY WILL:

- complete duties as per job role.
- assist to develop, and review, a risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that may require the service to go into lockdown.
- ensure emergency evacuation plans and emergency procedures are displayed in prominent positions near each exit and in the indoor and outdoor learning environments (*Lockdown Procedure* information should be displayed on the back of service's *Incident Procedure*).
- ensure '*Who to call in an emergency?*' signs are displayed near each service phone, where they can be easily accessed and read by staff (these are *not required* to be displayed at exits and **should not** be displayed at the main entrance/exit of the service as these contain personal phone numbers of Management. They should be included on the rings of policies and procedures at the exits, but not displayed at the front of the ring.).
- ensure lockdown drills are practiced every three months at different times to ensure all staff and children have the opportunity to participate.
- ensure lockdown drills are reviewed and reflected upon each time they occur and are adequately documented including any improvements.
- document lockdown rehearsals including who is present at the time of the rehearsal.
- communicate with families about lockdown drills.
- provide opportunities for discussing procedures with children and staff.
- ensure lockdown bag or lockdown location(s) is stocked as per Lockdown Contents List.
- **ensure the following is displayed in lockdown location(s):**
 - *Lockdown Procedure*,
 - *Lockdown Room Procedure*,
 - current attendance list of children,
 - *Who to call in an emergency?* sign,
 - location of lockdown resources and supplies (e.g. blanket, books etc).

IN THE EVENT OF A LOCKDOWN (ANY LEVEL), EDUCATORS WILL:

- direct children to shelter in place indoors, where doors can be locked or barricaded securely (as per plan).
- ensure all children are accounted for (check HubHello).
- immediately lock doors and close windows.
- close all blinds/curtains.
- ensure all children remain inside the indoor learning space (or are accompanied by an educator/staff member if going to the bathroom).
- ensure children remain in a confined area, (or out of sight for a 'full lockdown' - see below) during the lockdown period.
- ensure children remain calm: arrange activities to engage them (except for 'full lockdown').
- remain in lockdown until the all-clear signal is given.
- ensure all families are notified of the incident as soon as practicable after the lockdown has ended.

ADDITIONALLY, DURING AN EXTERNAL THREAT LOCKDOWN (LEVEL 2), EDUCATORS WILL:

- use any available linen to block gaps around doors or windows to minimise the entry of smoke/hazardous chemicals.

ADDITIONALLY, DURING A FULL LOCKDOWN (LEVEL 3), EDUCATORS WILL:

- implement lockdown procedure.
- alert staff using agreed signal for immediate lockdown.
- contact emergency services (000) for assistance.
- remove a copy of the service's *Incident Procedure* from a ring next to any exit of the Service to access *Lockdown Procedure*.
- move children to secure designated lockdown location(s).
- lock external doors, close windows and blinds and turn off lights.
- clear any room/hallway that cannot be secured.
- silence televisions and speakers.
- silence mobile devices such as phones and iPads.
- ensure all children remain low, away from doors and windows.
- encourage all children to remain quiet (have books and/or quiet toys ready for children to look at to assist with engaging them during the lockdown).
- ensure all children and persons in the room remain out of sight of external windows / glass doors / internal viewing windows.
- contact Nominated Supervisor (if not on site).
- remain in the lockdown location(s) until the all-clear announcement is made by the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person.
- ensure all families are notified of the incident as soon as practicable after the lockdown has ended via HubHello Message Centre.

RELATED SWEETPEAS DOCUMENTS

- Emergency Drills Quarterly Audit
- Evaluation of Emergency Drills
- Lockdown Bag Contents
- Lockdown Procedure (each service)
- Lockdown Room Procedure (each service)
- Staff Emergency Contacts
- Who to call in an emergency? (each service)

REFERENCES

- ACECQA. July 2023. Policy and Procedure Guidelines. Emergency and evacuation.
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

- Children’s Services Central. 2012. Managing Emergency Situations in Education and Care Services.
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012

REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

This policy will be updated regularly to ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements. Appropriate consultation of all stakeholders (including staff and families) will be conducted on a timely basis. In accordance with *Regulation 172* of the National Regulations, families of children enrolled will be notified at least 14 days and their input considered prior to any amendment of policies and procedures that have any impact on their children or family.

Version	Amendment(s)	Review Date	Updated By
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Sweetpeas staff across all four Sweetpeas locations indicated a need for a clearer Lockdown Policy with a separate procedure that could be displayed in lockdown locations for ease of understanding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Service Leaders & WHS Officers were asked to reflect on current policies and provide feedback for improvements. ○ A need for a universal “all clear” phrase between Sweetpeas services for the benefit and safety of staff working between services was identified. • Created a new Lockdown Policy for the company from the previous separate service policies. • Created new <i>Lockdown Procedure</i> for each individual service. • Created new <i>Lockdown Room Procedure</i> based on the previous St Clair service document ‘Lockdown procedure level 3’ • Lockdown levels are now referred to by name, with their level numbers as a secondary reference, to ensure clearer understandings of each level and its purpose. • Management responsibilities made clearer. • Responsibilities for WHS Officers and Deputies added. • Added clearer details on what information should be displayed where. • Added section Related Sweetpeas Documents • Chose a location for the display of the Lockdown Procedure at every service. 	August 2023	<p>Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager)</p> <p>Janine Evans (Managing Director)</p> <p>Sarah Williamson (Assistant Director & WHS Officer - St Clair)</p> <p>Zali Dolan (WHS Deputy - St Clair)</p> <p>Linda Lind (Assistant Director & WHS Officer - Cranebrook)</p> <p>Joanne Foster (WHS Deputy - Cranebrook)</p> <p>Brooke Howell (Assistant Director & WHS Officer - Penrith)</p> <p>Kim Wheatley (WHS Deputy - Penrith)</p> <p>Courtney Streeting (WHS Officer - St Marys)</p> <p>Helen Debosz (WHS Officer - St Marys)</p>
1.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wording updated to indicate the location of Lockdown Procedures in each service more clearly. 	September 2023	<p>Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager)</p> <p>Sarah Williamson (Assistant Director & WHS Officer - St Clair)</p>
1.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added <i>Flood Management Policy and Procedure (Penrith)</i> to Related Policies. • Checked hotlinks 	September 2024	<p>Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager)</p>

Version	Amendment(s)	Review Date	Updated By
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No other changes required.• <i>Lockdown Room Procedure(s)</i> x4 reviewed Sept24. No changes required.• <i>Lockdown Procedure(s)</i> x4 reviewed Sept24. No changes required.		Janine Evans (Managing Director)