

POLICY AIM

Sweetpeas aims to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all staff, children, families, and visitors to the centre. Sweetpeas is committed to identifying risks and hazards of emergency and evacuation situations, and planning for their reduction or minimisation, and ongoing review of planned actions around handling these situations.

RATIONALE

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for emergency and evacuation and take reasonable steps to ensure policies and procedures are followed. (ACECQA, 2021).

Emergency situations in early education and care services may arise for a variety of reasons, often suddenly and unexpectedly. It is vital that if an emergency situation arises, staff are confident to manage the situation effectively and efficiently, maintaining the safety and wellbeing of children, families and visitors.

Ensuring that educators and children know what to do in an emergency situation requires vigilant planning and practice. Regularly practicing the drills for emergency situations also provides an opportunity to help support and build on children's coping mechanisms and resilience.

SCOPE - WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY?

- Children
- Families
- Staff
- Management
- Students
- 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 Authorisation Policy
- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Arrival and Departure Policy
- Bush Fire Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Evacuation Procedure
- Incident Procedure
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Lockdown Policy
- Lockdown Procedure
- Supervision Policy

RELATED EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS:

- 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

- 136 First aid qualifications
- 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

RELATED LEGISLATION:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

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

- **ACECQA** - Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
- **NQF** - National Quality Framework
- **RTO** - Registered Training Organisation - an organisation approved to deliver training including First Aid qualifications
- **WHS** - Work Health and Safety

IMPLEMENTATION AND STRATEGIES

Circumstances under which an emergency evacuation may occur include:

- Fire within the building or playground
- Fire in the surrounding area where the Service may be in danger
- Flood
- Cyclone, severe storm, dust storm or other natural weather event
- Dangerous animal, insect or reptile
- Terrorist threat
- Other circumstances may include:
 - gas explosion, traffic accident, or any event which could render the building unsafe (eg: earthquake).

THE APPROVED PROVIDER AND NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- Work together with staff to identify potential emergency and evacuation situations that may arise at this specific centre to identify all risks associated with such situations.
- Conduct an annual risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that are relevant to each Service
- Ensure consideration is made to evacuate infant/s and non-ambulant children
- Make a notification of a serious incident to a regulatory authority (within 24 hours) through the *NQA IT System* when emergency services have attended an education and care service in response to an emergency, rather than as a precaution or for any other reason.

THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/RESPONSIBLE PERSONS WILL:

- Make the final call to whether to evacuate the premises due to an emergency situation.
- Work together with staff to develop procedures to manage all risks associated with emergency and evacuation situations. These procedures will be attached to this policy.
- Ensure an evacuation floor plan is available and up to date. This floor plan will be attached to this policy.

- Work with relevant authorities to ensure policy and plans are adequate.
- Ensure all educators, including casual/relief educators and staff members, are made familiar with our *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*, procedures and regulatory requirements as part of their induction into each service.
- Ensure all staff, visitors and students are aware of emergency evacuation points and assembly areas.
- Ensure educators and staff have ready access to an operating telephone or similar means of communication and that emergency family contact telephone numbers are kept in evacuation bags. Staff should be aware that children's emergency contact numbers are also accessible via HubHello.
- Ensure staff have ready access to emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers and fire blankets, and that staff are adequately trained in their use.
- Ensure that emergency equipment is tested as recommended by recognised authorities
- Ensure the emergency and evacuation procedures and floor plan are displayed in a prominent position near each exit and that all staff and educators are aware of these.
- Ensure that all staff are trained in the emergency and evacuation procedures.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of evacuation points.
- Ensure that families are regularly reminded of the emergency procedures in place at the service.
- Provide staff and educators with specific procedures around all potential emergency situations (see *Emergency Evacuation Procedure*, *Lockdown Policy* and *Lockdown Procedure*, *Bush Fire Policy*, *Incident Procedure*).
- Ensure that the evacuation procedures are in accordance with the evacuation floor plan.
- Ensure that rehearsals (drills) of evacuation procedures are regularly scheduled, every three months as a minimum, and that the schedule maximises the number of children and staff participating in the procedures.
- Ensure that staff are aware of when *scheduled* emergency and evacuations drills are to take place by recording them in the diary.
- Ensure that spontaneous rehearsals also take place to ensure staff participate in the simulation of unplanned, emergency and evacuation events as well as medical emergencies.
- Ensure it is communicated with families when evacuation rehearsals have occurred.
- Provide staff with evaluation/feedback form after each scheduled and spontaneous rehearsal to assist in refining their risk management procedures around the safe evacuation of staff and children (see *Evaluation of Emergency Drills* form).
- Ensure all scheduled, spontaneous and actual evacuations are documented and evaluated.
- Ensure all emergency contact lists are updated as required.
- Ensure Evacuation Bags contents are up to date with help of WHS Officers.
- Ensure emergency whistles are placed by each exit.
- Ensure at least one staff member who holds current ACEQCA approved first aid qualifications, approved anaphylaxis management and emergency asthma management training is in attendance at all times. Sweetpeas encourages **all** staff to obtain these qualifications and offers annual on-site First Aid training through an RTO.
- Ensure copies of each service's *Evacuation Procedure* are available at each exit along with evacuation floor plans.

WHS OFFICERS WILL:

- Ensure Evacuation Bags and First Aid kits are regularly audited and restocked as required.
- Ensure an up-to-date list of emergency telephone numbers for children is maintained. A copy of the current list should be available in the Evacuation Bag.
- Ensure First Aid Bag(s) are readily available in case of an emergency evacuation.
- Ensure emergency telephone numbers (*Who to call in an emergency?*) are displayed prominently throughout the Service in the kitchen, office, staff room and each area where children are educated and cared for.
- Ensure our emergency telephone list (located next to the telephone) includes the numbers for:
 - Local police station
 - Local fire station
 - Local ambulance station
 - State Emergency Services (SES)

- Ensure that rehearsals (drills) of evacuation procedures are regularly scheduled, every three months as a minimum, and that the schedule maximises the number of children and staff participating in the procedures.
- Ensure that spontaneous rehearsals also take place to ensure staff participate in the simulation of emergency and evacuation events and medical emergencies.
- Ensure it is communicated with families when evacuation drills have occurred.
- Complete evaluations of drills to assist in refining risk management procedures around the safe evacuation of staff and children (see *Evaluation of Emergency Drills* form).

EDUCATORS AND STAFF WILL:

- Ensure the safety of children in the service to the best of their ability at all times.
- Familiarise themselves with all emergency procedures.
- Follow appropriate procedures for emergency situations (i.e., *Bush Fire Policy, Lockdown Policy, Lockdown Procedure, Evacuation Procedure, Incident Procedure*).
- Provide the Nominated Supervisor with feedback following evacuation rehearsals (see *Evaluation of Emergency Drills*).
- Communicate with families when drills have occurred.
- Provide children with age-appropriate support and information before, during and after emergency and evacuation rehearsals (drills).
- Ensure there are no obstructions of emergency exits or evacuation routes.
- Unlock external gates each morning when the centre opens.

FAMILIES WILL:

- ensure contact details are kept up-to-date in HubHello.
- provide emergency contact details on their child's enrolment form and advise the service of any change of name or phone number via email or HubHello.
- ensure the attendance record for their child is completed each day on HubHello Electronic Sign In.
- ensure they are aware of the service's *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* and procedures.
- follow the directions of the Approved Provider/Incident Manager in the event of an emergency or evacuation.

DEALING WITH TRAUMA

Emergencies and natural disasters are extremely stressful, and it is normal for children and adults to feel overwhelmed and distressed. People cope with trauma in many different ways. Children look to adults for reassurance, care and opportunities to share their feelings. It is important for educators to understand the impact of disasters and seek help when needed.

The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will support educators to provide information to parents and families following any emergency or natural disaster including:

- will the service be open in the days and weeks ahead?
- how to find alternative care and education
- how to contact services for support with dealing with trauma

RESOURCES FOR TRAUMA SUPPORT

- Be You (Trauma informed practice in your learning community): <https://beyou.edu.au/resources/sessions-and-events/trauma-informed-practice-in-your-learning-community>
- Emerging Minds: <https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/toolkits/parents-carers-and-families-toolkit/bushfires-drought-and-community-trauma/>

RELATED SWEETPEAS DOCUMENTS

- Evaluation of Emergency Drills form
- Sweetpeas First Aid Kit Stock List
- Who to call in an emergency?

REFERENCES

- ACECQA: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/>
- ACECQA. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines- Emergency and evacuation guidelines.
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Fire Protection Association Australia: www.fpa.com.au/
- Fire System Services: <https://firesys.com.au/fire-safety-maintenance-services/>
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework (2017). (Amended 2020).
- NSW Government - Emergency Services: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/living-in-nsw/emergency-services>
- NSW Rural Fire Service: www.rfs.com.au
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

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
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated sign on sheets to IPAD • Added staff sign on sheets and visitors' book • Made an incident procedure and added to related policies • Added a location as we had no area further away from service • Added to inform families of emergency procedures • Changed elements to reflect current standards • Added place out of flood zone for major evacuation • Added medical emergencies 	July 2021	Janine Evans (Nominated Supervisor)
2.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separated Procedures from policy document so all Sweetpeas services have the same policy, but different procedures. 	June 2022	Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager)
2.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cosmetic changes for new formatting template and colours • Added clear responsibilities for families • Added separate responsibilities for WHS officers • Added Dealing With Trauma section 	September 2022	Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager)
2.3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated wording to make a clearer distinction between emergencies and evacuations. • Added Lockdown Procedure 	January 2024	Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager)