Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy

Document Title	NQS2.8 Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy	Version	3b
Date Approved	January 2024	Date for Review	August 2026
Warning - Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.			
DCC-Network/All Organisation Information/DCC Policies/Quality Area 2 Children's Health & Safety			

1. Policy Statement

River Region Early Education is committed to ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending our education and care service by identifying the risks and hazards of emergency and evacuation situations.

Children, educators, and staff will regularly rehearse our emergency and evacuation procedures to maximise their safety and wellbeing in the event of an emergency or event requiring evacuation.

2. Rationale

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for emergency, and evacuation to minimise risk of harm to children. This policy provides guidance to employees as to the management and procedures for emergency incidents and emergency drills to ensure children and employees are safe.

This policy specifically relates to management and procedures around emergencies that affect children, employees, and visitors at a particular location or premises, such as building fires, severe weather, or gas leak. Please refer to the following policies for other types of emergencies and incidents:

- NQS2.12 Medical Conditions Policy (medical emergencies),
- NQS2.21 Bush Fire Policy (bush fire preparation and emergencies)
- NQS2.11 Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Policy (first aid and incident reporting),
- NQS2.19 Workplace Health and Safety Policy (workplace hazards),
- NQS3.2 Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy (fire equipment and standards), and
- NQS7.63 Critical Incident Management Plan Policy (risk planning and reporting).

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, including part-time, full-time, and casual employees, trainees, students, and volunteers.

4. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Board as approved provider to ensure that:

- A risk assessment is conducted to identify potential emergencies relevant to the service and determine action plans,

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- Emergency and evacuation procedures are developed that include instructions for what must be done in an emergency and emergency floor plans,
- Emergency floor plans are displayed in a prominent position near each exit,
- All emergency and evacuation procedures are rehearsed every three months and rehearsals (emergency drills) are documented, and
- Educators have ready access to an operating telephone or other similar means of communication.

It is the responsibility of the General Manager to:

- Carry out or delegate the responsibilities of the Board as listed above,
- Ensure an annual risk assessment of potential emergencies and action plans is completed, and
- Complete any required notifications of serious incidents to the Regulatory Authority.

It is the responsibility of the Work Health and Safety Committee to:

- Ensure emergency plans and emergency floor plans are reviewed by a third-party specialist, such as local emergency service or fire safety service, on creation and every three years,
- Review incident response plans, emergency plans, and emergency floor plans annually,
- Determine the emergency drill scenario roster for each calendar year to ensure each child and employee can experience all emergency scenarios and procedures, and
- Ensure emergency drills rehearsing all procedures are held every three months.

It is the responsibility of the Business Services Manager to:

- Ensure fire safety equipment is maintained and checked every six months.

It is the responsibility of nominated supervisors to:

- Participate in the development and review of emergency and evacuation plans and procedures,
- Ensure required information from emergency and evacuation plans and procedures, including emergency plans, emergency floor plans and emergency service telephone numbers, are prominently displayed, including near all exit points,
- Ensure required information relating to emergency response procedures, including incident response plans and checklists, is displayed in staff areas,
- Ensure employees understand incident response, emergency, and evacuation procedures,
- Provide information or training to employees around emergency response where required, on orientation and at least annually,
- Ensure emergency drills are held every three months, are documented, rehearse different kinds of emergency scenarios and all procedures, including evacuation, lock down and shelter-in-place, and include all children and employees where possible,
- Ensure educators always have access to a telephone or other suitable means of communication, and
- Maintain communication with families around emergency management and evacuations.

It is the responsibility of the Responsible Person during emergencies and emergency drills to:

- Ensure all relevant emergency equipment, such as evacuation bag, emergency first aid kit, and 'buddy bags' of children in attendance, are collected and before exit in the event of an evacuation,

- Access an up-to-date list of children, employees, and visitors in attendance,
- Check that all persons have safely exited the premises, and
- Ensure no person other than emergency services enters the premises until the emergency or drill is over.

It is the responsibility of employees to:

- Seek out information about incident response, emergency and evacuation procedures and ensure they understand what is required, and
- Participate in emergency drills.

5. Definitions

Approved provider – A legal entity with ultimate legal responsibility for an education and care service in NSW. A service approval authorises the approved provider to operate an education and care service under the National Law and National Regulations. The Board is the approved provider for River Region Early Education.

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 plan – A document that contains essential information about emergency and/or evacuation procedures, including (as relevant) assembly points, lock down locations, alarm procedure, emergency contact phone numbers and action plan. The document is displayed alongside emergency floor plans in key places where they can be seen by employees and visitors, in particular at every exit.

Emergency floor plan – An (at least) A3-sized document that includes a schematic representation of the building where the plan is displayed and includes clearly marked emergency exits, assembly points, lock down locations, fire and emergency equipment locations, a 'You Are Here' indication and emergency contact numbers. The document is displayed alongside emergency plans in key places where they can be seen by employees and visitors, in particular at every exit.

Emergency drill – A rehearsal of an emergency or evacuation procedure that, as much as possible, replicates an actual scenario and serves to familiarise children, employees and visitors with emergency and evacuation procedures and allows an evaluation and continuous improvement of emergency readiness.

Responsible person - The person identified as being in day-to-day charge of a service as defined and required by Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) 2010.

6. Guidelines

a) Identifying risk

Potential emergencies are identified in an annual process to identify risk across the organisation.

- The Potential Emergencies Risk Assessment is completed annually using *Child Health and Safety Risk Assessment Template* and monitored by the Leadership Team. This risk assessment is used to create or modify Emergency Management Plans created using *NQS2.8K Emergency Management Plan Template*.

- River Region Early Education Risk Register is completed using *NQS7.63 A3 Risk Register Template* in accordance with *NQS7.63 Critical Incident Management Plan Policy* and approved by the Board.

Risk assessments are completed for medical emergencies, such as asthma and anaphylaxis, in accordance with *NQS2.12 Medical Conditions Policy*.

Risk assessments are completed for individual activities and events, such as excursions, incursions, transport, and workplace hazards in accordance with:

- *NQS2.9 Excursion Policy,*
- *NQS2.23 Transportation of Children Policy,*
- *NQS2.15 Sleep and Rest Time Policy,*
- *NQS2.4 Animals in the Environment Policy,* and
- *NQS2.19 Workplace Health and Safety Policy*.

b) Critical incident response (including emergencies)

The guiding steps for critical incident response are below.

Assess hazard → Identify incident level → Follow action plan → Notify
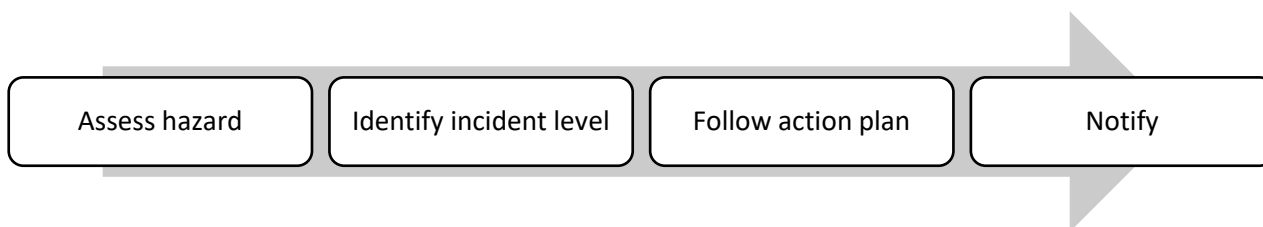
Assess hazard

- Confirm warnings, automatic alarms or other occurrences.
- Assess if the situation caused or has the potential to cause:
  - injury or loss of life
  - damage to property or assets
  - reduced water quality
  - environmental impact
  - breach of regulation
  - damage to reputation
- Can it be resolved ourselves.

Identify incident level

Assess the severity of the incident as minor or major:

- Minor:
  - Can be resolved on-site
  - Minimal or no off-site impact
  - Emergency services not required
- Major:
  - People's safety is an immediate concern
  - Cannot be resolved with on-site resources
  - Some or significant off-site impact
  - May require emergency services (Fire, Ambulance or Police)

Follow action plan

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The most common actions to a major incident are evacuation, shelter-in-place or lock down

- Evacuation - the threat or danger is within the building/nearby and it is safe to exit, such as:
    - Gas leak, bomb threat, building fire, noxious fumes.
- Shelter-in-place – the threat or danger is outside the building and it is unsafe to exit, such as:
    - Dangerous animal, bushfire, severe storm.
- Lock down - the threat or danger is inside/immediately outside the building and it is unsafe to exit, such as an aggressive person on site.

Action plans for different emergency types are:

- Displayed near all building exits using *NQS2.8G Emergency Evacuation Plan Template* and *NQS2.8G Emergency Lock-down and Shelter in Place Plan Template*
- Displayed in key areas of the organisation accessed by employees, for example staff rooms and administration areas using *NQS2.8K Incident Response Plan Template.*

Notify and report

Notification occurs during and immediately after a critical incident or emergency and includes:

- Emergency services (by the person managing the emergency)
- Management and administration (by the person managing the emergency)
- Neighbours nearby (by management or administration)
- Parents (by the person managing the emergency)
- Board (by the General Manager)
- The Regulatory Authority (by the General Manager)

Reporting occurs after a critical incident or emergency and follows procedures as outlined in *NQS7.63 Critical Incident Management Plan Policy* and *NQS2.11 Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Policy*.

c) Display of emergency information

Emergency information that is displayed includes:

- Emergency Evacuation Plans and Emergency Lock Down / Shelter in Place Plans
- Emergency Floor Plans
- Incident Response Plans
- Bomb Threat Checklist

Emergency plans are created using the *NQS2.8G Emergency Evacuation Plan Template* and *NQS2.8G Emergency Lock Down and Shelter in Place Plan Template* and are displayed prominently and near every exit of the organisation's premises. They include:

- The method of raising the alarm, for example three short, loud blows on a whistle,
- Emergency service contact numbers,
- Evacuation procedures, including how to assist children and people with disabilities,
- Details of how to account for children, employees, and visitors,
- Location of emergency assembly points and/or lock down points, and
- How to contact neighbouring businesses, including other services.

Emergency floor plans are displayed near every exit of the organisation's premises and:

- Are at least A3 size,
- Include the title, validation date and key/legend,

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- Depict the layout of the premises as accurately as possible,
- Include a 'you are here' location,
- Include designated exits in green, and fire equipment in red, and
- Identify 'lock down' locations and primary and alternate emergency assembly points.

Incident response plans are created using *NQS2.8K Incident Response Plan Template* and are displayed in key areas of the organisation accessed by employees, for example staff rooms and administration areas. They are:

- Are at least A3 size,
- Include contact numbers for emergency services, utilities, management, administration, nominated supervisors, Board and Mobile venues,
- Include initial response guidelines for assessing and responding to emergencies and critical incidents, and
- Include action plans for potential emergencies and critical incidents.

Bomb/Substance Threat Checklist is created using *NQS2.8B Bomb and Substance Threat Checklist* and is displayed in key areas of the organisation accessed by employees, for example staff rooms and administration areas.

d) Emergency drills

Emergency and evacuation procedures are based on information identified in risk assessment and all procedures are rehearsed every three months across all services to ensure employees are confident in responding quickly and effectively and children feel safe.

Drills are based on scenarios for emergency response identified in risk assessments and include:

- **Evacuation** from the premises where the danger is within or near the premises, for example fire, gas leak, noxious fumes, or bomb threat,
- **Lock-down** where it is safer to remain on premises than to leave, for example an aggressive person on or near the premises, and
- **Shelter in place** where it is safer to create a shelter on the premises than try to evacuate, for example a weather emergency, or an environmental hazard.

e) Emergency equipment

Each service has emergency equipment that can be used in emergencies and emergency drills. This equipment includes:

- Evacuation bags that contain emergency items, a record of children in attendance, and emergency contacts for each child.
- Emergency First Aid Kits,
- Fire extinguishers and safety blankets

Evacuation bags are managed by nominated supervisors and are taken by the Responsible Person (or as they delegate) during an emergency or drill. The contents of evacuation bags are checked every quarter using *NQS2.8A Emergency Procedure Evaluation* and the *NQS2.8J Evacuation Bag Checklist* for their service.

Emergency First Aid kits are managed by nominated supervisors and are taken by the Responsible Person (or as they delegate) during an emergency or drill. The contents of First Aid kits are checked every quarter using *NQS2.8A Emergency Procedure Evaluation* and the First Aid Kit Checklist for their service.

Fire equipment, including fire extinguishers and safety blankets, is managed by Administration and checked every six-months.

Red Panic Button smart phone application is installed onto the service phone of all responsible persons and employees or contractors working after hours, for example cleaners and allows services to quickly and simply notify administration and management that they need support.

This button should be pushed if there is any danger or incident which requires emergency services to be called or requires additional management support. When the button is pressed, an alert is sent to management who will confirm the emergency and/or call emergency services.

f) Employee understanding and training

Employees are supported to understand emergency and evacuation procedures:

- During orientation by familiarisation with the location of fire equipment, emergency evacuation plans, assembly points and incident response plans and checklists,
- Through the display of emergency plans, emergency floor plans, incident response plans and bomb threat checklists in prominent places,
- Through participation in quarterly emergency drills, and
- Through annual fire safety and first aid training.

7. Procedure

See Educator Handbook – NQS2.8EH Emergency Management Procedures

8. Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Standards

Education and Care Services National Law	
167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Education and Care Services National Regulation	
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures – e) emergency and evacuation
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
National Quality Standards	
2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
Child Safe Standards	
1	Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

7	Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe, through continual education and training
8	Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse or other kinds of harm to occur
10	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

9. Related Documents

Doc #	Attachments
NQS2.8A	Emergency Procedure Evaluation
NQS2.8B	Bomb and Substance Threat Checklist
NQS2.8C	Emergency Drill Roster
NQS2.8D	Emergency Drill Notification
NQS2.8E	XPLOR Emergency Headcount Instructions
NQS2.8F	Red Panic Button Instructions
NQS2.8G	Emergency Evacuation Plan Template
NQS2.8H	Emergency Lock-Down / Shelter in Place Plan Template
NQS2.8J	Evacuation Bag Checklist
NQS2.8K	Emergency Management Plan Template
NQS2.8EH	Emergency Management Procedures (Educator Handbook)

Doc #	Intersections with other key documents
NQS2.11	Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Policy (first aid)
NQS2.12	Medical Conditions Policy (medical emergencies)
NQS2.19	Workplace Health and Safety Policy (risk assessments and hazards)
NQS2.21	Bush Fire Policy (bush fire preparation and emergencies)
NQS3.2	Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy (fire standards and equipment)
NQS7.63	Critical Incident Management Plan Policy (risk planning and reporting)
NQS7.63 A3	Risk Register
NQS2.11 A4	Adult/Visitor Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Record

10. Document Control

Doc #	Doc Title	Version	Approved	Next Review
NQS2.8	Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy	1	November 2018	November 2020
NQS2.8	Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy	2	March 2020	March 2023
NQS2.8	Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy	3	August 2023	August 2026
NQS2.8	Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy (minor amendment due to regulatory change)	3a	Sept 2023	August 2026
NQS2.8	Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy (Minor change due to name change and removal of procedures to the Educator Handbook)	3b	Jan 2024	August 2026