

Emergency and Evacuation Policy

Quality Area 2

1. Purpose

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Early Years Education (MACSEYE) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment that fosters the growth, independence and development of children, while protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff, children, volunteers, and visitors.

This commitment extends to ensuring that effective arrangements are in place for responding to emergencies, including situations that may require the evacuation or lockdown of a service. MACSEYE recognises that well-planned and regularly tested procedures are critical to minimising risk and safeguarding the welfare of all individuals in our care.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All MACSEYE early years and care services.
- All staff members, contractors, volunteers, children, families, and visitors present at a service at the time of an emergency.

3. Background

Emergencies present a potential risk to the health, safety, and wellbeing of individuals. It is therefore essential to identify and assess potential emergency scenarios that are specific to the service's location, physical environment, and operational context.

4. Principles

MACSEYE and each Service are committed to:

- Providing a safe and secure environment for all children, staff, families, and other persons participating in programs at the service.
- Developing and maintaining an emergency management plan that reduces risk to those present at the service.
- Ensuring clear and effective procedures are in place to manage emergency incidents.
- Delivering an appropriate and coordinated response during and following emergencies to meet the needs of children, families, staff, and others at the service.
- Informing parents and guardians of how communication will occur in the event of an emergency.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The following outlines the distinct responsibilities of the **Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Educators and Staff**, and **Families** in implementing and maintaining effective emergency and evacuation procedures.

Governance and Planning

- Ensure that emergency and evacuation policies and procedures are always available for inspection.
- Conduct an annual risk assessment to identify potential emergencies relevant to the service and communicate outcomes with educators.
- Consult with relevant stakeholders and authorities to strengthen risk mitigation strategies as part of the emergency and evacuation plan.

- Consider evacuation requirements for non-ambulant children and external environments, particularly for services operating in multi-storey and multiple building facilities.
- Review and evaluate emergency evacuation procedures after each rehearsal, documenting outcomes and required improvements.

Environment and Signage

- Display evacuation plans at each exit, including a floor plan, clearly marked exit routes.
- Ensure exit signage that is clearly visible, in hallways, stairways, and emergency exits are free from obstructions.
- Display emergency telephone numbers prominently in key service areas (e.g., kitchen, staff room, learning areas).
- Maintain all fire and safety equipment in accordance with requirements, recording testing dates on attached tags and retaining verification certificates.
- Ensure smoke detectors are tested quarterly and batteries replaced annually.

Training, Drills, and Support

- Ensure staff are trained annually in the use of emergency equipment (e.g., fire extinguishers, blankets, hoses).
- Undertake emergency evacuation and lockdown rehearsals once per term for each session of care, involving staff, volunteers, and children present.
- Document the timing and outcomes of rehearsals Emergency Evacuation Rehearsal Record
- Provide children with age-appropriate information and reassurance before, during and after rehearsals.
- Ensure all staff understand their roles and responsibilities during an emergency. \

Communication with Families and Community

- Inform parents and guardians of how communication will occur during an emergency.
- Notify families when rehearsals have occurred.
- Communicate regularly with families about emergency and evacuation procedures.
- Liaise schools to align drills where appropriate.
- Provide information to parents and families after any emergency or natural disaster, including service operating hours, alternative care arrangements, and support services for trauma recovery.

Equipment and Resources

- Maintain an Emergency Evacuation Bag in each room, auditing and restocking monthly.
- Keep an up-to-date register of children's emergency contacts in each Evacuation Bag
- Ensure portable first aid kits are accessible for use during evacuations.
- Ensure at least one staff member with current ACEQCA approved first aid, anaphylaxis, and asthma training is always present.
- Ensure children's medical management plans are accessible during emergencies and drills.
- Nominate a responsible person to collect children's medications in the event of an evacuation.
- Ensure staff always have access to an operational telephone or other communication device.

Incident Response and Reporting

- Complete an Emergency Evacuation Incident Report and an Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Record after any emergency evacuation
- Notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours via the NQA IT system if emergency services attend the service in response to an emergency (other than as a precaution).

Families will:

- Ensure their contact details are accurate and always kept up to date.
- Provide emergency contact details on their child's enrolment form and promptly advise the service of any changes (e.g., name, phone number, or emergency contact person).
- Complete the attendance record for their child each day.
- Familiarise themselves with this policy and its procedures.
- Follow the directions of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, or /Incident Manager in the event of an emergency or evacuation.

There may be times when the normal operation of the service is disrupted, requiring a temporary closure to a planned or unplanned emergency. In such circumstances, the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will consult with

emergency services and/or local authorities to determine the need for closure. Families will be informed as soon as practicable to ensure immediate and safe collection of children.

In the case of **planned closure**, management will provide families with advance notice as reasonably practicable, including details of the closure and the anticipated period of disruption.

The service will notify the Department of Education of any closure, whether planned or unplanned, within 24 hours.

6. Induction and ongoing training

This policy will be accessible to:

- **Service staff** via the Information Hub.
- **Families** via the organisation's website.
- **All stakeholders** through a hard copy available at the Service.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff have access to this policy and supporting documents.
- Overseeing induction training on this policy prior to its implementation.

All service staff are responsible for:

- Understanding and complying with this policy.
- Participating in ongoing training, which will be provided through a range of learning platforms.

7. Monitoring, evaluation and review

- **Compliance Oversight:** Monitoring of compliance with this policy and the associated procedures will be overseen by the Policy Owner.
- **Review Process:** A formal review will be undertaken annually. The review will include a consultation period with families, educators, the Compliance Team, and other relevant stakeholders, and will be facilitated by the Policy Officer.
- **Communication and Training:**
 - All service staff will be informed of any changes arising from a policy or procedure review.
 - Training will be provided, where required, to ensure staff understand and can implement changes.
 - Families will be notified of any changes at least **14 days** prior to implementation.
- **Non-Compliance:** Breaches of this policy will be managed in accordance with the MACSEYE Code of Conduct.

8. Related documents

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisation Policy
- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Supervision Policy

9. Legislative requirements

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQS)	
Quality Area 2	Children's Health and Safety
Quality Area 7	Governance and Leadership

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW ACT

Section 174(2)(a)	Serious incident - Any emergency for which emergency services attended
Section 174(2)(c)	Any incident that requires the approved provider to close, or reduce the number of children attending the service for a period
Section 174(2)(c)	Any circumstance at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child attending the service

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW REGULATIONS

Regulation 4	Definitions “multi-storey building” and “storey”
Regulation 12(d)	Meaning of a serious incident- any emergency for which emergency services attended
Regulation 97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
Regulation 98	Telephone or other communication equipment
Regulation 99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
Regulation 136	First aid qualifications
Regulation 168	Education and Care Services must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures are to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

RELATED LEGISLATIONS

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

10. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Adequate supervision	Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an educator can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation• knowing where children are at all times and monitoring their activities actively and diligently.
Approved first aid qualifications	A qualification that includes training in the matters set out below, that relates to and is appropriate to children and has been approved by ACECQA and published on the list of ACECQA’s approved first aid qualifications and training. Matters are likely to include: emergency life support and cardiopulmonary resuscitation; convulsions; poisoning; respiratory difficulties; management of severe bleeding; injury and basic wound care; and administration of an auto-immune adrenalin device.
Approved provider	A person who holds a provider’s approval (National Law). A provider approval authorises a person to apply for one or more service approvals and is valid in all jurisdictions.
Education and care service premises	In relation to a centre-based service, it means each place at which an education and care service operates or is to operate.
Educational program	A program that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is based on an approved learning framework; and• is delivered in a manner that accords with the approved learning framework; and• is based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child; and

Term	Meaning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child (National Law).
Emergency drill/rehearsal	A structured exercise that simulates an anticipated emergency scenario to practice and reinforce response procedures. Drills are designed to clarify roles and responsibilities, train staff and children, test equipment, and verify the adequacy and effectiveness of the service's emergency management arrangements.
Emergency services	Includes an ambulance, fire brigade, police, and state 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.
Hazard	A source of potential harm or a situation with the capacity to cause injury, illness, damage, or other adverse effects, whether or not the risk is immediately apparent or foreseeable.
Lockdown	A security measure is taken during an emergency to prevent people from leaving or entering a building or premises until the threat or risk has been resolved.
MACSEYE	Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Early Years Education Ltd, a subsidiary of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd established to conduct early childhood education and care services.
National Law	Unless otherwise specified, this refers to the <i>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010</i> or, in Western Australia, the <i>Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012</i> . This applied law system establishes a nationally consistent standard for children's education and care across Australia. For details on the Application Act or legislation relevant to each jurisdiction, refer to the ACECQA website.
National Regulations	National Regulations support the National Law by providing detail on a range of operational requirements for an education and care service.
Nominated supervisor	<p>In relation to education and care service, this means a person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is nominated by the approved provider of the service under Part 3 to be a nominated supervisor of that service; and unless the individual is the approved provider, has provided written consent to that nomination (National Law).
Person in day-to-day charge	<p>A person is in day-to-day charge of an education and care service if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the person is placed in day-to-day charge by the approved provider or a nominated supervisor of the service; and the person consents to the placement in writing (National Regulations). There are minimum requirements for the person in day-to-day charge.
Person with management or control	<p>In relation to an education and care service, this means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if the provider or intended provider of the service is a body corporate, an officer of the body corporate within the meaning of the Corporations Act 2001 of the Commonwealth who is responsible for managing the delivery of the education and care service; or if the provider of the service is an eligible association, each member of the executive committee of the association who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service; or if the provider of the service is a partnership, each partner who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service; or in any other case, a person who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service (National Law).
Risk assessment	A structured process for identifying, analysing, and evaluating potential risks, including the likelihood of their occurrence and the consequences if there were to occur. The purpose of risk assessment is to inform decision-making, support effective controls, and reduce the potential impact of identified risks on organisational objectives.

11. Policy information

Policy information			
Policy title:	QA2 Emergency and Evacuation Policy	Version:	2.0
Authorised Executive:	Managing Director	Responsible Manager:	General Manager, Governance and Risk
Approving authority:	Board	Approval date:	9 August 2024
Effective date:	9 August 2024	Review date:	9 August 2025
Review Approval Date:	29 October 2025	Next review date:	29 October 2026

Version control		
Version	Date	Changes
1.0	09/08/2024	Policy developed
1.1	09/09/2025	Annual review of policy undertaken
1.2	07/10/2025	Feedback from MACSEYE Committee considered and incorporated
2.0	29/10/2025	Policy approved by MACSEYE Board