



Emergency lockdown policy

Our Service is committed to the ongoing safety and wellbeing of children, staff, families and visitors. 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

PURPOSE

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

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

We have set procedures to follow in the event of any emergency requiring evacuation or 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 Setting, there are potential situations that will require the Setting to go into 'lockdown'.

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

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

- 'Full lockdown' for situations that involve serious threats such as:

- o Potentially dangerous unwanted or uninvited intruder
- o Potentially dangerous person due to intoxication or substance abuse
- o Receiving an emergency services warning about a reported incident or civil disturbance

Lockdown means that all windows 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 able to participate in the usual experiences and activities: 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 an Emergency Lockdown Procedure. This information can be displayed on the back of the Evacuation Plan, 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

Awareness of risk

To respond effectively to an emergency, awareness of potential risks that may arise both within, and outside of your setting is incredibly important. When putting together or updating a lockdown procedure, consider the following points to help inform your risk aware strategy:

- Identify potential risks within the community
- Where in the setting could risks arise? For example, the entrance, or outer extremities of the setting such as the edge of outdoor areas.
- Check the websites of local authorities or emergency services that may provide warning of a potential risk.

Risk preparedness

Effective emergency response all depends on effective preparation. The more practice and procedures you have in place, the more likely you are to respond effectively to an emergency if one should arise. The points below provide useful guidelines to consider in your emergency planning.

- Is the CCTV of your setting working and easy to access should the emergency services request it?
- Have you identified designated safe areas on your site?
- Do all staff know and understand the roles they need to play in an emergency?
- Is there a clear chain of communication and command? It may be worth investing in items such as walkie talkies, high visibility vests and registers to form a part of an 'emergency to go' bag.
- How often do you rehearse your emergency lockdown procedure? It's always a good idea to rehearse and record as often as, for example, a fire drill.
- How often is your procedure reviewed? It may require updates from time to time to reflect the changing nature of the setting.
- Are the actions that you are taking age appropriate? You know your children, acknowledge the age and use appropriate language.

Text message to parents:

Due to an ongoing emergency, we have entered our setting into an emergency lockdown. We are following our internal procedures to keep all children safe. Please do not attempt to come and pick your children up until we have advised it is safe to do so. To reassure you all, the safety of all children is in-hand, and we will continue to update you as frequently as we can. We will be in contact with further information as soon as we have been given the “all clear” message from emergency services.

Who is responsible to coordinate actions in an emergency?

Having a clear chain of responsibility in an emergency is important to ensure a response runs smoothly, and your procedures are implemented in the most effective way possible. The points below outline key considerations when forming a chain of responsibility.

- In an emergency, the setting manager must assess the risk and lead the response.
- Make sure different staff members have clearly defined areas of responsibility. This can include accounting for all children, and another staff member being responsible for the securing of windows and doors.
- For example, one staff member could be responsible for calling the emergency services at the direction of the manager, whilst other staff members could be responsible for locking down different areas of the building.
- A clear chain of command and communication structure is vital to an effective emergency response.

Age-appropriate:

What do we mean by age-appropriate language?

You are best placed to understand the age of the children who may be at risk. Therefore, your actions to ensure they remain safe, are critical. During an emergency, a child may be faced with feelings of fear and worry, so taking age-appropriate actions is vital to make sure they stay in their designated areas. This may include managing the situation like a game, for example.

Examples of steps to take in the event of an emergency:

- Identify the source of the problem, and where the problem is taking place
- **Stay calm**, keep reassuring the children
- Secure all windows and doors, close curtains and blinds where possible
- Alert parents via lockdown text (example above)
- Ensure staff and children are in designated safe areas
- Stay away from windows and doors and stay low
- Await further instructions from emergency services
- **Be alert:** do not act or move until you have been officially advised, or given the all clear

Following the lockdown:

The steps you take following the emergency lockdown are almost as important as what you do during the emergency itself.

- Co-operate with the emergency services to help in an orderly evacuation
- Make sure you have the register and children's details to hand
- Update the Police with any significant incident witnessed to help with their investigation

Every setting is responsible for all of the decisions they take, and you should seek further guidance on any matter you are not sure about.

This emergency lockdown procedure agreed for use in (name of provision)	
On:	
By:	Position:
Date of planned review:	

v.September 2024

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