CatholicCare
DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

Children's Services

Emergency Evacuation

Policy

Version: 3.0
Updated: 24 July 2025
Review due: July 2028
Document ID: 12011-063

Contents

Purpose 3
Scope 3
Procedures 3
1. Display of Emergency Procedures, Protocols and Telephone Numbers 3
2. Emergency Preparedness/Risk Assessments 3
2.1 Organisation 4
2.2 Notification 4
2.3 Evacuation Procedure 4
2.4 Procedure for when Children/Staff are to remain in the Centre 5
3. Fire Safety Training/Evacuation Drills 5
4. Bushfire preparedness 5
4.1 Bushfire planning 5
4.2 Fire danger ratings 6
4.3 Building maintenance 6
4.4 Emergency Response 7
4.4.1 Increased risk 7
4.4.2 Imminent risk 7
4.5 Recovery 7
Related policies 7
Related forms and resources 8
Links and references 8
Glossary 8
Sign off and review 9
Revision history 9

Purpose

This policy and procedure is to ensure that all children, staff and visitors are evacuated safely from the Centres in the event of an emergency. It is essential that all staff are trained in, and regularly practice, the location's guidelines for evacuation and use of fire safety equipment.

Scope

This Policy applies to all Staff, Educators, Contractors, Students and Volunteers in Children's Services programs.

Procedures

1. Display of Emergency Procedures, Protocols and Telephone Numbers

Emergency evacuation floor plans and procedures are to be displayed in a prominent position near each exit in each learning environment and, the office, kitchen, foyer, bathrooms and staff rooms.

Call Emergency Services **000** (if an ambulance, police or fire brigade is required).

The *Emergency Contacts Template* must be completed.

Also included in displayed In Case of Emergency should be:

- Local police department
- Local fire station
- Poisons Information
- Local Hospital Number and address
- Electricity Supplier Number
- Gas Supplier Number
- State Emergency Services
- Sydney Water

2. Emergency Preparedness/Risk Assessments

This procedure is to be read in line with the Emergency Preparedness and Response Procedure in the *WHS Work Health Safety Practice Guidelines* and *Emergency Drill Record*.

In the event of a BOMB THREAT, if possible, complete the checklist as per *Bomb Threat Procedure*.

A risk assessment must be conducted for each site considering internal and external risks relevant to the service. This may include but isn't limited to flood, bushfire, severe storm, human hazard and environmental hazard.

Risk assessments to identify potential emergencies relevant to the service will be reviewed every 12 months / or after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect safety.

Co-located services (with schools or other services) should ensure their procedures are in alignment in all situations including when the other service in not operating (e.g. school holidays). Roles and responsibilities should be clear.

2.1 Organisation

All staff, casual staff, students, volunteers, visitors and contractors are required to sign in/out upon arrival and departure.

- All present children must be signed in/out every day by an adult
- Centre staff will maintain children's attendance records.
- Parent contact numbers will be kept up to date.

Each service must have an evacuation bag with necessary items which may include but is not limited to; bottled water, first aid kit, emergency contacts, copies of the evacuation plan to be given to emergency personnel if required, and a copy of the local map indicating bush fire zones. In case of emergency, a mobile phone will be added and any emergency medication that may be required (e.g. Ventolin, EpiPen, etc).

2.2 Notification

- Notify the Chief Warden or Coordinator immediately or as soon as possible.
- Raise the alarm - alert all centre staff immediately and follow procedures for either evacuation or securing the Centre.

2.3 Evacuation Procedure

Staff, Visitors and Children evacuate and meet at assembly point.

Fire Warden to CHECK all sleep rooms, children's toilets and small spaces in rooms/outdoor areas and evacuate children to designated spaces.

See individual Centre's procedures for assembly points.

Staff will collect children's and staff and visitor's attendance records, first aid kit and special medications.

- Staff will close (but not lock) doors behind them as they move through building to help contain the fire.
- Staff will call the rolls at the first stop point. Children will then be moved to meeting points to await instruction about returning to the Centre.
- If emergency services personnel advise it is not safe to re-enter building, the nominated supervisor will contact families to advise collection of children and CatholicCare Management will be notified.
- In the event that children are able to return to Centre, parents will be notified of the evacuation action by notice on the same day.

- Staff must ensure the safe and timely evacuation of non-ambulatory children during emergencies (e.g., fire, earthquake, lockdown). All staff must be trained in assisting children with mobility limitations.
- Identify and practice accessible evacuation routes regularly. Ensure these routes are always clear and include access to ramps or lifts as needed.
- Scenarios involving non-ambulatory children need to be included in evacuation drills. All staff to complete daily checks to ensure that the designated evacuation routes are kept clear and risks present is mitigated.

2.4 Procedure for when Children/Staff are to remain in the Centre

- Staff are encouraged to keep children calm at all times. Staff are to inform all other adults in the room, including family members, visitors, etc. that they must remain with the group and follow instructions.
- Staff must close and lock all doors, windows and blinds and turn off all lights. The children must be moved to an area away from view from outside.
- Staff will remain calm and quiet.
- If possible, staff should contact either the Police/Ambulance/Fire Brigade.
- Where possible staff will take the phone from the room into the area they are in with the children.
- Staff are to make no calls but to keep lines free to maintain communication.
- All mobile phones must be put on silent and set to not vibrate.

3. Fire Safety Training/Evacuation Drills

Fire Safety Training will be conducted annually.

Emergency drills will be conducted every three (3) months. These drills will be evaluated after each event to ensure procedures are being carried out correctly and a record of those who participated should be kept. All emergency procedure types should be practised over the course of the year.

4. Bushfire preparedness

4.1 Bushfire planning

All services must complete a bushfire risk assessment to determine their bushfire risk rating and the impact nearby bush fires may have on service delivery. Considerations to be included in the risk assessment include:

- Is the service in a bush fire prone zone or in close proximity to a fire zone? These zones are released by local councils, are recertified at least every five (5) years and can change without notice. Services should consult their local council Bush Fire zone maps to understand their rating and ‘neighbourhood safer places’ to evacuate to in the event of a bush fire.
- Any existing information already supplied to the other onsite services.
- Service accessibility in case of bush fire emergency including accessible main roads, number of exits to alternate roads, and the proximity of main roads to bush fire zones.
- Age of the children and easy access to transport for evacuation.
- Nearest ‘neighbourhood safer places’.

- Children with any additional needs which may impact on a safe evacuation e.g. (chronic lung conditions, limited mobility).
- Location of 'shelter in place' refuge in case of imminent bushfire.
- Fire danger ratings.
- Completion of *A guide to developing a Bush Fire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan*.

An overall service risk rating will be determined using a risk matrix. CatholicCare WHS and children's services management will maintain a register of each service's fire risk rating.

Services at medium to high risk must have a Bush Fire Emergency Procedure which outlines procedures for evacuation and shelter in place. Services should also have a printed copy of their local council's bushfire map to assist them in determining the safest route dependent on the situation. Where the service is on the site of a school, emergency procedures should be aligned and roles and responsibilities defined.

Services which operate during school holidays must ensure their plan is adequate in the absence of school personnel.

The Bush Fire Emergency Procedure, bushfire zones and risk assessment should be reviewed annually and practiced as per the Emergency Procedure requirements listed above. Where possible, advice from the local Rural Fire Service (RFS) should be sought.

4.2 Fire danger ratings

During bushfire season the NSW Rural Fire Service bush fire danger ratings are issued for the following day. These ratings give an indication of the consequences of a fire if one were to start.

Services should be aware of the daily danger rating and consider the risks to their service depending on the day.

Where a **Catastrophic** rating is declared, services at High risk (as determined by their risk assessment) may be closed as a precautionary measure. This will be determined by either relevant authority, the Catholic Schools Office and in some cases CatholicCare senior management. Services will be notified by the Practice Manager and will be required to contact affected families.

Where a service has not yet been closed but is at increased risk, services should, in conjunction with their Practice Manager, maintain contact with families notifying them of the situation.

4.3 Building maintenance

Services determined to be at High Risk should ensure ongoing regular maintenance is carried out as per recommendations by the RFS. This may include ensuring gutters are cleared, gardens are kept well maintained and over hanging trees managed as necessary.

All emergency detection, prevention, and management equipment must be present, functional, and compliant with relevant Australian Standards. This includes systems such as fire alarms, extinguishers, sprinklers, emergency lighting, exit signage, first aid kits, and spill response equipment. Regular inspections, testing, and maintenance must be conducted in accordance with applicable standards, Maintenance records should be accurately documented and kept up to date. Any equipment found to be non-compliant, damaged, or expired must be repaired or replaced promptly to ensure ongoing safety and regulatory compliance.

4.4 Emergency Response

4.4.1 Increased risk

Increased risk situations could include under control fires in the neighbouring suburb or services not in close proximity to bushfire prone zones but with bushfires in the local area. This will also apply on days rated as **Severe or Extreme**, where services have been rated as High Risk on the service register.

Services exposed to an Increased Risk should monitor the Fires Near Me App, make contact with their local fire department to request early advice of the need to evacuate, monitor the outdoor environment for ember attack or an escalation in the risk level. If air quality is poor due to smoke, children should be kept inside with windows and doors closed.

4.4.2 Imminent risk

Imminent risk includes bushfires in the local area which due to the fire rating, weather conditions, fire status (e.g. out of control) or location of fire means the service should enact their emergency procedures. This also includes services which have been directed to evacuate from relevant authorities.

Where possible a 'leave early' approach should be taken.

Depending on the nature of the imminent risk, services will enact their evacuation procedure or 'shelter in place' procedure.

When communicating with families, families should be notified of what is expected from them. This may include to meet at the 'Neighbourhood Safer Place', evacuation site or if *safe access to the service is not possible*, families should be advised to await further instruction. An example of this communication is "*Your child is being moved to a bushfire refuge or other safe place where they are accounted for and supervised. Due to the heightened risk of accessing the area, for now please await further instruction from us. Do not attempt to collect your child yet".*

Consideration should be given if the air quality poses an additional risk to the child/ren.

4.5 Recovery

Children and staff should not return to an evacuated building unless it has been cleared by Emergency Personnel.

Children should be supported and supervised until an authorised contact can collect them.

A notification must be made to the Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate via the NQAITS portal.

Related policies

- *Agency – Work Health Safety Policy*
- *Agency – Work Health Safety Practice Guidelines*

Related forms and resources

- *Emergency Contacts Template*
- *Emergency Drill Record*
- *Bomb Threat Procedure*

Links and references

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations (NSW) - Reg 168*

Glossary

Emergency

An emergency is defined as any kind of incident that may cause harm or injury to children, staff and/or visitors. Two types of emergencies may occur:

- An emergency requiring the evacuation of premises, (fire, gas leak);
- An emergency requiring the Centre to be secured and locked down to ensure children, staff and visitors do not leave the premises (a siege, an environmental hazard).

Sign off and review

This document remains valid until it is either superseded by a new version or officially revoked.

CatholicCare values your input and welcomes feedback on this Policy. Your suggestions help us improve and better support your work. Please send any feedback to policy.updates@catholiccaredbb.org.au

Version	Authorised by	Approved date	Review cycle	Review due
1.0	Executive Director	11 February 2019	1 year	February 2020
2.0	General Manager Children's Services	13 January 2021	2 years	January 2023
2.1	General Manager Children's Services	9 March 2023	Review date adjusted to align with new review schedule	July 2025
3.0	General Manager Children's Services	24 July 2025	3 years	July 2028

Revision history

Version	Description	Author	Amendment date
1.0	Policy	Policy Specialist	22 January 2019
2.0	Policy	Coordinator Teacher Early Learning Centre: Quality Practice Manager, Children's Services	13 January 2021
2.1	Policy	Policy Specialist Policy Specialist – no changes	24 March 2021 9 March 2023
2.2	Policy	Policy and Document Support Officer	12 December 2023
2.3	OSHC changes	Quality Practice Manager Children's Services	2 June 2025
3.0	Policy	Quality Practice Manager Children's Services	24 July 2025