

Critical Incident Policy (Including Critical Incidents)

Published	August 2020
Review Date	December 2022
Sources	Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2017 Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2017 of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, February 2008 Bush Fire Survival Plan, rfs.nsw.gov.au Managing Emergency Situations in Education and Care Services PSC National Alliance 2012 Local Emergency Management Planning, NSW Justice of Emergency Management, retrieved Jan 2019
Consultation	Peter Dyce – Community Safety Officer NSW RFS (RFS (Yass) 2013, 2015 Mike Cliff – Gundaroo R.F.S Captain 2019
Relevant Document	Refer also to the CCEL EMP, Grief and Loss, Emergency Evacuation and Media Policies

Aim:

To consider emergency situations within local contexts and develop suitable emergency plans based on risk assessment outcomes using local and state-based resource agencies provide a framework for the response to, and management of critical incidents that may occur within the early education and care setting.

Definitions:

Critical incidents can include:

- **Serious injury or death**
- **Sexual assault or abuse**
- **Violence, threats or abuse**
- **Natural disasters**
- **Terrorist attacks, including bomb threats**

Explanation

Characteristics of a critical incident may be that they are sudden, unexpected, dangerous or distressing. Critical Incident situations may challenge coordinators and educator's beliefs, and the policies and procedures of the service. Normality is threatened. The situation may induce strong emotional reactions that could have the ability to hamper clear thinking.

Critical Incidents:**1. Identification and Response**

- Identification is when an incident is disclosed to, or observed by, a service provider at any service delivery setting. This can include disclosure by a client, family member or other professionals, to the service provider.
- Response covers the immediate activities undertaken to ensure the safety and well-being of clients, staff and visitors, preserve evidence and notify emergency services and family or other support people.

2. Reporting

- Reporting requires specific information regarding the incident identified.
- As part of this stage, follow-up is undertaken to ensure that the information provided in an incident notification is accurate, and service providers and the department are assured that appropriate actions are being planned and undertaken to manage the incident.
- Critical Incidents are to be reported to CCEL at the earliest opportunity, CCEL will report Critical Incidents to the Early Childhood Directorate via the NQAITS portal within 24 hours of the incident.

3. Incident Investigation

- An investigation is a formal process of collecting information to ascertain the facts, which may inform any subsequent criminal, civil, disciplinary or administrative sanctions.
- The purpose of an incident investigation is to determine whether there has been abuse or neglect of a client by a staff member or another client, in relation to an allegation in a client incident report.

4. Incident Review

- A review is the analysis of an incident to identify what happened, determine whether an incident was managed appropriately, and to identify the causes of the incident and any subsequent learnings to apply to reduce the risk of future harm. This review will be carried out by CCEL, the department) and any relevant external bodies external bodies.
- Note that incident reviews are distinguished from incident investigations (above), which have a focus on determining whether there has been abuse or neglect of a client by an Educator or another client. In general, if an investigation has been carried out, there is no requirement for the service provider to undertake an incident review, so long as the investigation sufficiently covered any relevant issues of quality assurance and continuous improvement that would otherwise be considered by a review.

5. Analysis and Learning

- Analysis and learning will include monitoring and acting on trends identified through the analysis of client incident information to enhance the quality of service and supports to all involved.
- Incident data analysis, which includes the monitoring, interrogating and acting on trends identified through the analysis of incident information. The purpose of analysing incident data is to fulfil three core objectives in relation to client incidents:
- Understand what is happening in relation to incidents

- Understand why this is happening (that is, what is driving these events – why are certain types of incidents / services / clients / locations seeing increases / decreases in incidents?)
- Use the information from analysis to change service policies, inform and educator service, staff, Educators and families.

6. Post Emergency Procedures

After a Critical Incident the following steps should be followed:

- Seek support from External agencies
- Review and evaluate the critical incident/emergency situation
- Manage media enquiries – to be responded to only by the Approved Provider, all Educators and staff must act in a manner which protects the privacy and rights of children, families and staff.
- Seek services and strategies for ongoing support for all involved.

Continual Monitoring and Improvement:

Continual improvement and monitoring will occur in the following ways:

- Incidental and planned consultation with families
- Co-ordination Unit Staff accessing current relevant information
- Co-ordination Unit Staff and Educators accessing current and relevant training
- Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of systems

Responsibilities:

In relation to Co-ordination Unit Staff:

- Be aware of their obligations under the current Education and Care Services National Regulations and the current National Quality Standard in relation to managing critical incidents
- Ensure all staff and educators are aware of the processes involved for managing a critical incident
- Ensure all staff and educators have access to and are familiar with the services Emergency Management Policies.
- Provide training and have discussions with staff and educators to assist them to understand and manage a critical incident if it occurs
- Seek advice from relevant authorities to assist with providing information and resources that are accurate and up to date

In relation to Educators and Staff:

- Be aware of their obligations under the current Education and Care Services National Regulations and the current National Quality Standard in relation to managing critical incidents
- Ensure they are aware of the processes involved for managing a critical incident
- Have access to, and be familiar with the Services Potential Emergency Risk Assessments detailed in the Operational Diary
- Attend training to assist them to understand and manage a critical incident if it occurs
- Seek advice from relevant authorities to assist with providing information and resources that are accurate and up to date
- Educate children, where relevant about what might happen in emergency situations, and how to manage these
- Follow the procedures as outlined in the services Emergency Management Policies

Policy Review

Date Revised	Comments
July 2012	In relation to Educators: added information about the Fire Safety Risk Assessment Form
January 2013	Added information for In Home Care
July 2013	Added information and guidelines for Bush Fire Prone Areas Consulted Pete4r Dyce (Standard Evac Procedures Page 4 and Bush Fires procedures
January 2014	Added information about what Educators should consider when writing their Emergency and Evacuation Plan
March 2014	Scheduled Policy Review – No changes made
September 2015	Scheduled Policy Review – CCEL Ensure Educators have training in use of fire equipment, added risk assessments for Reg 97.2
March 2017	Reviewed Guideline against RFS.NSW.gov.au "Get Ready for a Bush Fire"
November 2018	Removed In Home care
January 2019	Fire Risk Assessment Form under review
February 2020	Critical Incident Policy separated from Emergency Evacuation Policy
December 2020	Removed EMP, added Reg 97.2 Risk Assessments in Operational Diary, removed post reporting to separate policy