Emergency & Critical Incident Post Reporting

Policy Statement

This policy acts to ensure that:

→ Mandatory reporting of any emergency incidents are made to the relevant authorities

→ Reviews of the emergency procedures are conducted

→ Appropriate support or counselling is accessed and provided

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.

Goals

→ Have clear procedures in place to support the wellbeing of all at the service

→ Have clear procedures in place to ensure reporting to the relevant authorities occurs

Strategies
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

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

Incident Investigation

→ Investigation of the incident may occur led by CCEL, the Early Childhood Directorate or other relevant authority

→ 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

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

→ A review will be carried out by CCEL, the department and any relevant 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

Analysis and Learning

→ A debrief will be arranged for the Educator/s or staff member with a member of the CCEL Management Team to assist in the analysis of 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 includes the monitoring, interpreting 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 polices, inform and educator service, staff, Educators and families

Post Emergency Procedures

After a Critical Incident the following steps should be followed:

→ Seek support from external agencies with guidance from CCEL

→ Review and evaluate the critical incident or 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

→ Approved Provider and Coordinators accessing current relevant information

→ Approved Provider, Coordinators and Educators accessing current and relevant training

→ Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of systems

SOURCES

→ Education and Care Services National Regulations - December 2021
→ Education and care Services National Law - January 2022
→ Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations - October 2017
→ Guide to the National Quality Standard - January 2020
→ Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A Guide for Early Education and Outside School Hours Care Services, NSW Department of Education, 2021
→ A Guide to the Child Safe Standards, NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, 2020
→ ACECQA – FDC Approved Provider compliance responsibilities – October 2017
→ Be You
→ My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia
→ The Early Years Learning Framework
→ ECA Code of Ethics
→ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
→ Community Early Learning Australia – Consultancy, Review and Development of Emergency Procedures for FDC
→ Bush Fire Survival Plan
→ Managing Emergency Situations in Education and Care Services PSC National Alliance
→ Local Emergency Management Planning, NSW Justice of Emergency Management
→ NSW Rural Fire Service

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES:
→ Bush Fire
→ Child-Safe Environment
→ Communication
→ Emergency Evacuation & Lockdown
→ Governance & Management
→ Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness
→ Parent Code of Conduct
→ Privacy & Confidentiality
→ Staff Code of Conduct