Early Childhood Management Services

Emergency and Evacuation Management Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all ECMS services are prepared for, respond effectively to, and recover safely from emergencies. This policy outlines responsibilities and procedures for emergency management in compliance with the National Quality Standard, Victorian Child Safe Standards and emergency services guidelines. This policy will provide a framework to:

- Minimise the impact of emergencies and critical events on children and educators, staff, volunteers and visitors.
- Facilitate the return of the workplace to normal operations as soon as possible.
- Provide staff with the tools that, if faced with an emergency situation, will enable them to respond.

ECMS services that are located in a [Bushfire-at-Risk Area](#) have additional responsibilities as outlined in this document and are required to submit their plan annually to their DET regional office.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- The Approved Provider, persons with management or control, Centre Director, Nominated Supervisor, and persons in day-to-day charge.
- Early Childhood teachers, educators, staff, contractors, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others enrolled and participating in ECMS programs and services, including during offsite excursions and activities.
- All ECMS-operated Early Learning Centres and Kindergarten programs.

Policy Statement

ECMS is committed to an anti-bias approach in early childhood. ECMS operates within a framework of social justice and equity - this means we celebrate family and cultural diversity and aim to be supportive, responsive, and inclusive of all children. ECMS is committed to providing a safe environment for all children, staff, and visitors. Each service must maintain an up-to-date Emergency Management Plan (EMP), conduct quarterly evacuation drills, and ensure all individuals are aware of their roles in an emergency.

Policy Principles

ECMS is committed to:

- providing a safe environment for all children, staff and persons participating in programs at ECMS services
- having a plan to manage emergency situations in a way that reduces risk to those present on the premises
- ensuring effective procedures are in place to manage emergency incidents at the service
- ensuring an appropriate response during and following emergency incidents to meet the needs of the children, their families, staff and others at the service.

Background

The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 define an emergency in relation to an education and care service as any situation or event that poses an imminent or severe risk to the persons at the service premises e.g. flood, fire or a situation that requires the service premises to be locked down.

Comprehensive emergency management includes prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Services are required to have procedures in place detailing what needs to be done in an emergency, including an emergency and evacuation floor plan. These procedures must be based on a risk assessment that identifies potential emergencies relevant to the service (Regulation 97).

Early childhood services have a duty of care to the children, staff, volunteers, students, visitors and all attending the facility. It is also a requirement under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 that employers provide a healthy and safe environment for all persons who access the service's facilities and/or programs.

Emergency Management Plan

- Each service must have a current EMP that includes evacuation routes, assembly areas, emergency contacts, and IMT structure.
- EMPs must be reviewed annually or after a significant incident.
- Hard copies must be available and communicated to all staff.

Critical Incident Response

Document Name: Emergency and Evacuation Management Policy	Next Review Date: August 2026	Document Version: 6.0
Document Owner: Director of Risk & Compliance	File Location: Inside Play Resources Policy and Procedure	Release date: Jul 2014 **Page 2 of 5**

In the event of a significant event or incident, ECMS services must follow the ECMS Critical Incident Response Policy. This outlines roles, escalations protocols, internal and external communication and post-incident support requirements. This policy works in conjunction with each service's EMP to ensure a coordinated and compliant organisational response.

Evacuation Drills and Preparedness

- Drills must occur quarterly and involve all staff and children.
- Documentation must include date, time, duration, participants, and learnings.
- All equipment (alarms, lighting, duress systems) must be tested during drills.

Code Red/BARR Locations

- Services on the Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) must not operate on Code Red days.
- Families must be informed of closures by 3pm prior.

Roles & Responsibilities

CEO	• Holds ultimate accountability for policy implementation and compliance.
Director of Risk & Compliance	• Oversee policy governance, implementation and compliance.
Head of Operations	• Ensure organisational compliance with emergency requirements • Support review and oversight of service EMPs
Area Managers	• Monitor implementation of EMPs • Provide guidance and oversight to Centre Directors
Centre Directors/Nominated Supervisors	• Undertake roles and responsibilities as outlined in the service's EMP • Review EMP at the start of each year • Identify potential on-site hazards and take action to manage and minimise risk • Lead quarterly evacuation drills and record outcomes • Appoint and brief the Incident Management Team (IMT) • Communicate closures (e.g. Code Red days) to families by 3pm prior • Ensure floor plans and emergency contacts are clearly displayed • Regularly test alarms and communication systems • Ensure maintenance of emergency exits, lighting, and equipment • Notify ECMS of notifiable incidents

Document Name: Emergency and Evacuation Management Policy	Next Review Date: August 2026	Document Version: 6.0
Document Owner: Director of Risk & Compliance	File Location: Inside Play Resources Policy and Procedure	Release date: Jul 2014 **Page 3 of 5**

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Educators, Volunteers, Students on Placement, and Contractors	- Participate in EMP development and implementation - Identify and report hazards - Participate in all drills and debriefs
Educators, Volunteers, Students on Placement, and Contractors	- Participate in EMP development and implementation - Identify and report hazards - Contribute to the development of the service EMP - Participate in all drills and debriefs
Parents/Guardians	- Familiarise themselves with the service's EMP - Ensure accurate completion of the attendance record on delivery and collection of their children - Provide current emergency contacts - Reinforce procedures with children - Follow staff directions in drills and emergencies

Related Legislation, Regulations and Resources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations (Regs 97, 168)
- National Quality Standard, QA2 and QA7
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Safe Standards (Victoria) - Standard 2
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2013 (Vic)
- Australian Standards: AS 3745–2010 Emergency Control for Facilities
- The Department's Emergency Management Requirements for early childhood services: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/
- Metropolitan Fire Brigade: www.mfb.vic.gov.au
- Country Fire Authority: www.cfa.vic.gov.au
- Victorian State Emergency Service: www.ses.vic.gov.au
- WorkSafe Victoria: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Related Policies and Procedures

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Critical Incident Response Framework
- Governance and Management of ECMS Policy
- Excursion/Regular Outing Policy
- Medication Management and Medical Conditions Policy
- Parent Involvement and Participation Policy
- Participation of Students and Volunteers Policy
- Privacy and Confidential Information Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy

Supporting Procedures

Document Name: Emergency and Evacuation Management Policy	Next Review Date: August 2026	Document Version: 6.0
Document Owner: Director of Risk & Compliance	File Location: Inside Play Resources Policy and Procedure	Release date: Jul 2014 **Page 4 of 5**

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- Excursion/Regular Outing Procedure
- Supervision Risk Management Procedure

Supporting Documents
- Emergency Management Plan (EMP)
- Hazard Assessment Template
- Risk Management Plan & Assessment Template

Document Version History			
Version	**Reason for Amendment**	**Approved by**	**Approval date**
6.0	Policy reviewed and updated	ECMS Executive	Augus 2025

Document Name: Emergency and Evacuation Management Policy	Next Review Date: August 2026	Document Version: 6.0
Document Owner: Director of Risk & Compliance	File Location: Inside Play Resources Policy and Procedure	Release date: Jul 2014 **Page 5 of 5**

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