**Introduction**

Bega Valley Shire Council education and care services are committed to ensuring the health, safety, welfare and well-being of all children and staff by taking preventative actions and ensuring that everyone knows what to do in situations involving fire, flood, emergencies or other natural disasters.

**Strategies**

Our strategies for emergencies require all staff and educators to be familiar with 2 types of evacuation responses in particular:

- Evacuation: from an area, a room or the service premises
- Lock-down: in an area, a room or the service premises

**Identify emergency exits, safe evacuation/marshalling areas**

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and Work Health and Safety Officer will ensure:

- A diagram is displayed in each children’s area and identify the emergency exits
- Exit signs are displayed above evacuation doors
- All staff, educators, children and others are able to identify where the safe exits, evacuation and marshalling areas are at each education and care service

**Identify emergency warden and responsible persons**

The Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leaders will ensure:

- All staff, educators, children and others know who the emergency warden is and/or the Responsible Person in their room or group each day.
- Emergency wardens and/or Responsible Persons know and understand their role and responsibilities in emergency situations

**Training in emergency responses**

The Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leaders will ensure:

- All staff, educators, children and others become familiar with an emergency evacuation or lockdown procedure for the education and care service
- A written evaluation of each practice is completed and any strategies for improvement are identified and discussed by all educators and staff in a meeting.
Emergency evacuation procedures

The person identifying the emergency will:
- sound the whistle and alert the responsible person or emergency warden in each room to the location of the emergency and the safe exit/ marshalling points

The Responsible Persons and/ or Emergency Warden in each area will
- Delegate responsibility and direct staff, children and others in the emergency
- Where possible notify another staff member about location of the emergency and make sure they alert others in the building to evacuate.
- Make sure that each person gives verbal confirmation that they have understood the location of the emergency and the instructions about evacuating the building
- If there is no other person available, the person finding the emergency will alert all people in the building to the location of the emergency and safe exit/ marshalling points.
- Phone 000 for emergency assistance when everyone in the building has been alerted to the emergency and evacuated. In the event of a power failure AND ONLY AFTER EVACUATION, attempt to make contact with 000 using a neighbouring telephone.
- Notify the Approved Provider when safe to do so
- Complete a written evaluation of emergency evacuation.

At the sound of the alarm (or/ whistle, staff, Educators and others in each room or area will:
- Listen for and acknowledge instructions from the Responsible Person or Emergency Warden
- Remain calm and ask children to stop what they are doing and hold onto the emergency evacuation rope (where appropriate) or meet at the exit door.
- Place any babies, toddlers or children with mobility difficulties into a cot or pram
- Collect the roll and do a head count
- Check room and toilets for any children, staff or others with particular attend to corners, beds or people who may not have heard instructions
- Exit the building through the safest exit, closing doors when the room is clear and move to the safe evacuation point.
- Check the sign in books and make sure no children, staff or others are missing
- Alert the Responsible Person to any children not accounted for

Staff with delegated responsibility for attendance records and building check will:
- Collect the day book and the staff sign in book
- Ensure no-one remains in the office, kitchen or staff room
- Lock the front door so that no person can enter the building undetected after it has been evacuated
- Where necessary assist with evacuation of the under 3’s room if safe to do so
- Exit the building and meet at the safe evacuation point.
- Ensure no-one re-enters the building until safe to do so
Fire prevention and risk management
Bega Valley Shire Council education and care services will undertake the following preventative and responsive actions in relation to fire-safety.

Prevention
The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leaders will ensure

- If there is threat to the town or to their homes on extreme fire risk days, families will be encouraged to make alternative arrangements for the care of their children
- Regular fire safety checks are undertaken by an authorised Fire Safety expert (6 monthly) and that the grounds surrounding the centre are kept clear of combustible debris.
- Smoke and heat detectors are installed in areas designated by the Fire Safety expert.

Readiness
The Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leaders/ Responsible Persons will ensure:

- All staff and educators understand and can apply emergency evacuation procedures
- Daily records detail who is present in the building including children, staff, visitors and others
- The attendance role is checked at morning tea time to ensure that all children are signed in
- All children and visitors respond immediately when the fire alarm is sounded and evacuate according to the fire evacuation procedures
- Regular emergency evacuation and lockdown responses are scheduled and practiced every 3 months. One emergency response in each sequence should include a medical or first aid emergency.
- One evacuation procedure is undertaken at rest time each year. This will occur towards the end of the rest period to minimise the disruption to older sleeping children. If there are any children aged Under 2 years still sleeping at this time, they will be able to remain asleep, but a staff member must go through all actions of getting sleeping children to safety. Older children must be moved to a safe area, even if this means having to wake them prematurely.
- Emergency responses are documented and evaluated in day book and address any issues that arise in evacuating the building using workplace health and safety procedures.

Snake, vermin or other dangerous animals
The Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leaders/ Responsible Persons will ensure:

- The program includes information and education about the risks and hazards of snakes, vermin or other dangerous animals.
- Staff will alert children to the hazard by blowing a whistle. Children will move to the staff member who will direct them to a safe location until the snake or other dangerous animal is removed.
- Parks and Wildlife officers are contacted for assistance to remove the dangerous animal.
- Information is posted to advise children and families of any ongoing risks posed by the dangerous animal.
- Children practise regular identification and emergency evacuation responses to dangerous animals.
Lockdown

The Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leaders/ Responsible Persons will ensure

- Each education and care service has a verbal code that triggers ‘lock down response’. This code should be agreed and communicated to all staff.
- In the event of a lockdown emergency, the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person will give the verbal code to the responsible person in each room. The lockdown code will identify a safe area in which children, staff, educators and others should remain until issued with additional instructions by emergency services personnel.
- That the building is secured against unauthorised entry (where safe to do so).
- Phone 000 and provide details of the emergency and ask for instructions.

The Educational Leader/ Responsible Person in each area will ensure:

- All children and adults remain calm and together.
- All children and adults are present and accounted for.
- Children and adults stay away from windows, doors and other unprotected openings

Bush fires (Lock down)

The Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leaders/ Responsible Persons will ensure

- All staff should follow the directions of the Fire Brigade and/ or State Emergency Services in the case of a bush fire. If the education and care service has not been contacted and is in danger then all children, visitors and staff should follow lock down procedures. They should remain in the building, close all doors and windows, place wet towels under the door frames and attempt to make contact with the Fire Brigade or other Emergency Services personnel (dial 000).

Flood safety or other natural disaster procedures

The Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leaders/ Responsible Persons will ensure

- If flood or other natural disaster prevents staff from reaching the workplace relief staff will be contacted to ensure that there are sufficient staff in the building.
- Notify the Approved Provider of the threat to service operations and follow directions. This may include:
  - If unable to find sufficient replacement staff, they identify non-working families and request that their child remains at home until staff are able to return to work.
  - Closure of service

If Bega Valley Shire Council direct staffs to stay at home or leave their workplace in the event of a flood or other natural disaster, special leave conditions apply.

The Approved Provider will:

- notify the Department of Education and Care in the event that a service is closed due to an emergency, and business operations need to be suspended.
First aid or Medical Emergency

All educators and staff will

- Understand and apply the practices and procedures for medical emergencies outlined in the Bega Valley Shire Council Children’s Services First Aid and Medical Emergency Policy.

Other emergencies

Additional details on emergency responses are provided in the Bega Valley Shire Council Occupational Health and Safety booklet. See section 8 for information about:

- Vehicle accidents
- First Aid or Medical Emergency
- Hazardous substances
- Dealing with abuse or violence, including bomb threat, robbery
- Reporting

Evaluation

Effective emergency procedures are in place and practiced regularly by children, staff and others who access the education and care service.

Statutory legislation and considerations

- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011
- NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000

References

- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- New South Wales Fire Brigades: Online: http://www.nswfb.nsw.gov.au