



FLOOD EVACUATION POLICY

AIM:

Clarence Family Day Care is committed to:

- Providing safe environments and evacuation procedures for all children in care with the service in the event of a flood emergency.
- Fulfilling our duty of care to children using the service.
- Responding in a responsible manner in the event of flooding in the local area.
- The primary responsibility of the educator is to ensure the safe evacuation of children in care when instructed to do so by the relevant authorities.

RATIONALE:

In many areas of the Clarence Valley we face the very real possibility of flooding impacting upon our service and/or our families. While there are elements of flooding that you cannot control, like rising river levels and rainfall, there are a range of planning and preparation activities that you can undertake which will lessen the impact a flood may cause to you and your environment.

POLICY:

To effectively plan for and respond to flood emergencies, educators should:

- Identify and plan for potential emergencies, the likely impact on the service and the children in care, take all precautions and be prepared for the worst case scenarios.
- Discuss your floodsafe plan with the parents of children in your care. Inform them that during flood events when evacuation warnings and/or evacuation orders are made they may, depending on circumstances at the service, be required to collect their children from care at short notice.
- Have an Emergency Floodsafe Kit prepared in advance if flooding is likely. *For information and guidance on preparing your Emergency Floodsafe Kit, visit the NSW State Emergency Services website at www.floodsafe.com.au*
- Display current emergency telephone numbers near all telephones. – doctor; hospital; ambulance; pharmacy; Public Health Unit; police; fire brigade; SES; Rural Fire Service; Poisons Information Centre; Clarence Family Day Care; NSW Dept. of Education & Communities; parents/guardians and children's emergency contacts. *(parents/guardians and emergency contacts telephone numbers must remain confidential)*
- Develop, keep up to date and prominently display (at each exit from the premises), emergency evacuation plans. Educators located in flood prone areas must have a documented floodsafe plan that includes the location of a safe evacuation place.

- Using a range of scenarios, practice emergency evacuation procedures regularly with all children at least every 3 months, make it a game to reduce panic if an emergency occurs.
- Keep a record of each practice that includes an evaluation of the procedure and any areas/ procedures that can be improved upon, and keep these records for at least 2 years after the date of the practice.
- Stay informed of Flood and Storm Warnings and Alerts – issued by the Bureau of Meteorology – Flood and storm warnings.
- Stay informed about what is happening in your local area. Listen to local radio and monitor information from the NSW State Emergency Service.

NSW State Emergency Service

Ph: 132 500

Website: www.ses.nsw.gov.au

Twitter: @NSWSES

Facebook: facebook.com/NSW.SES

- Never drive, ride, walk or play in floodwater. Floodwater can be deeper and faster flowing than it appears. It can contain hidden snags, debris, and contaminants such as sewage, chemicals, and dead animals. Floodwater can erode road surfaces. Entering floodwater is the major cause of death during floods.
- Always follow the advice of the SES and other emergency services during flood events.

FLOOD EVACUATION WARNINGS

A Flood Evacuation Warning is an announcement to the community that there is a real possibility that flooding will significantly impact an area.

When there is a Flood Evacuation Warning, educators need to prepare for possible evacuation. Impacts could include inundation of property and flooding of roads and highways. A Flood Evacuation Warning allows people the time to prepare before these impacts occur. The Flood Evacuation Warning is distributed to all local media, placed on the SES website and Facebook page. Other avenues the SES may use to deliver a Flood Evacuation Warning to the community include possible door-knocking of affected areas, the release of an Emergency Alert which goes to all landline and mobile phone numbers registered in the affected area and by placing the Flood Evacuation Warning notice in public locations.

It is important for educators living in areas which receive a Flood Evacuation Warning to source information related to the warning and follow all instructions given by emergency services.

TO PREPARE FOR POSSIBLE EVACUATION

Contact the parents of children in care and inform them that an evacuation warning has been announced and that they need to be prepared to collect their children at short notice if an evacuation order is made.

At all times educators need to ensure that effective supervision of the children in care remains the highest priority. At this point it is prudent for educators to implement planned procedures to ensure the effective supervision of the children whilst preparing for flooding and to make a decision as to whether parents will be required to collect their children from care prior to an Evacuation Order being issued.

- Stack possessions, documents and equipment on benches and tables, placing electrical items on top.
- Secure objects that are likely to float and cause damage.
- Relocate waste containers, chemicals and poisons well above floor level.
- Activate your Floodsafe Plan.
- Locate important papers, valuables and mementos. Place them in your emergency kit.
- Keep listening to your local radio station for information, updates and advice.
- Keep in contact with your neighbours.
- Follow all instructions given to you by emergency services.
- Act early as roads may become congested or may close.

FLOOD EVACUATION ORDERS

When flooding is about to impact a community significantly, the SES will issue a Flood Evacuation Order. This means that educators in the affected area must evacuate children according to the time frames outlined in the order. This could be over a period of time or immediately.

Even where a community or an area may have mitigation works that reduce the impact of flooding (a levee for example), there may still be a significant threat posed to life by flooding. In this situation, the SES may still issue an Evacuation Order based on the potential of flood impacts including levee breaches, overtopping and where the structural integrity of any mitigation works is not certified or endorsed as being safe.

Remaining in flooded areas is dangerous and may place your life and the lives of children in your care at risk as well as the lives of people who may be required to come and rescue you.

Seeking shelter with family and friends well away from flood affected areas is the best place to evacuate to. An evacuation centre may be established where people can register, receive emergency accommodation and other welfare services.

The Flood Evacuation Order will be issued to all local media, placed on the SES website and Facebook page. Other ways a Flood Evacuation Order will be announced includes through door-knocking affected areas by emergency services, the release of an Emergency Alert which goes to all landline and mobile phone numbers registered in the affected area or by placing the Flood Evacuation Order in public locations.

It is important for people living in areas which receive a Flood Evacuation Order to source information related to the order and follow all instructions given by emergency services.

When an Evacuation Order is given:

- Immediately contact the parents of the children in your care and inform them that they are required to collect their children without delay.
- Turn off the electricity and gas at the mains before you leave and turn off and secure any gas bottles.
- Take your pets with you.
- Never drive, ride, walk or play in floodwater.
- Keep listening to your local radio station for information, updates and advice.
- Follow your Floodsafe Plan.
- Follow all instructions given by emergency services.

Absences/Local Emergency Declaration:

Where a period of local emergency has been declared by the relevant Minister, Child Care Benefit (CCB) can be claimed for the period the service was closed due to the declared emergency. If the service remained open during the declared local emergency (*ie. the service is not located in an area covered by an evacuation order*) CCB can be claimed for absences for children that were unable to attend the service.

Key Contact Phone Numbers

Emergency call: 000

Storm & Flood information: (SES) Ph:132500

SES Floodsafe: www.floodsafe.com.au

Bureau of Meteorology: www.bom.gov.au

Road closures: 132 701

State Disaster Recovery Centre: 02 8855 5111 or 1800 018 444

Relevant Legislation:

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:

- Part 4.2, Division 5 - Emergencies and communication
- Part 4.7, Division 2 - Policies and procedures

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010;

- Part 6, Operating an education and care service

Key Resources: NSW SES Website; www.ses.nsw.gov.au