

### **PURPOSE**

Clarence Family Day Care aims to maintain children's safety and wellbeing by developing a flood emergency plan and proactive responses to minimise the potential risks faced by children, educators and staff of the Service during a flood.

**Note:** There can be various instances of flooding – whilst the context of this policy is mainly referring to a major weather event that results in a flood, there may be smaller weather events that result in flood, this could be due to blocked drains or the other hinderance. Also, a residence/venue may become flooded due to a burst water main. In major flood events, educators do not operate. However, there may be an instance that educator's do face a flood and they will have children in care such as in a flood situation that occurs suddenly or in a area not known to flood.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to the approved provider, staff, educators, educator assistants, families and visitors of Clarence Family Day Care.

### **POLICY**

Educators are to take effective action to ensure that their service is as flood safe as possible.

### **FLOODS IN AUSTRALIA**

Floods are categorised according to the speed at which floodwaters rise:

- **Slow-onset flood:** Occur by slow rise and fall of water level and usually lasts for a relatively longer period. Slow-onset floods may last one or more weeks, or even months. Due to the flood lasting for a longer period, it can lead to loss of livestock, agricultural products, roads, rail roads etc.
- **Rapid onset floods:** Occur by a rapid rise in water level which lasts for a shorter period. The damage rapid onset floods can cause are often more destructive and pose a greater risk to life and property as people usually have less time to take preventive action prior to the flood.
- **Flash-Floods:** Occur by a rapid rise in water level, within minutes or a few hours after heavy rainfall, topical storm, failure of dams or levees. Flash-Flooding poses the greatest threat to life and may result in significant damage to property.

### **FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM**

A flood warning system provides people with the ability to act in keeping safe and reducing the costs of flooding. A flood warning system includes the following elements:

- **Prediction:** Recognition of changes in the environment that lead to flooding and the forecast of future water levels during the flood
- **Interpretation:** Recognising in advance the effect of the predicted flood levels and the communities at risk
- **Message Construction:** Planning the content of the message which clearly warns people of approaching flood
- **Communication:** Distributing warning information in a timely way to people and organisations likely to be affected by the flood.
- **Response:** Getting the appropriate protection behaviour from the community and agencies involved
- **Review:** Reflecting on the various aspects of the system with a view to improving its performance

Flood warnings are issued by Emergency Services. The predicted extent of the flood and the amount of time available before it arrives will determine the course of action to be taken.

When there is a flood evacuation warning, educators need to prepare for possible emergency evacuation and implement the procedures effectively to ensure the safety of all children, educators, staff, families and visitors in the Service.

## **PROCEDURE**

As our service covers a large area that is diverse, educators in areas that are prone to flooding are to:

- be aware of local risks associated with the impact of flooding
- be aware of the SES (State Emergency Services) NSW phone number 132 500
- minimize hazards that maybe harmful to children during a flood
- emergency evacuation plans are displayed in prominent positions near each exit and in the indoor and outdoor learning environments
- clear procedures are in place for when a flood warning occurs to ensure the safety of educators, children and families
- emergency evacuation rehearsals (drills) will be practiced every three months, including identifying a designated assembly point and place of refuge in case of flooding
- a range of possible flood scenarios are included in evacuation drills and each drill is documented
- emergency telephone numbers will be clearly displayed in prominent positions within the Service
- emergency contact details of all children are updated regularly
- follow Emergency Service alerts

## **BEFORE A FLOOD**

Educators will:

- Continue to visit Bureau of Meteorology to check current flood and weather warnings  
<http://www.bom.gov.au>
- Refer to the SES State Flood Plans which outline arrangements for responding to floods in NSW. <https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Documents/plans/sub-plans/SubPlan-Flood.pdf>
- Contact families to come and collect their child/ren once emergency services have confirmed it is safe to do so
- Download the local flood plans – contact your local Council for these
- Visit <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/your-local-risk/> to see if there are any emergency situations in your area
- Be familiar with the warning levels and what action needs to be taken during a flood
- Ensure the removal of leaves, debris and other items that can enhance flooding (eg: check gutters and drains)
- Become familiar with the emergency evacuation plan identifying routes and safe locations if evacuation is required (note: this may be different for a flood situation)
- Prepare the Emergency Evacuation Kit
- Ensure an up-to-date emergency contact list for all children is included in the Emergency Evacuation Kit
- Organise sandbags
- Place chemicals on a high shelving to reduce contamination of flood water
- Talk to the children about the flood, using simple words that children can understand
- Contact families to come and collect their child/ren once emergency services have confirmed it is safe to do so

## **DURING A FLOOD**

Educators will:

- Act quickly
- Monitor current flood warnings in the local area
- Liaise with Emergency Services instructions and react to changing conditions
- Turn off electricity, water and gas
- Place sandbags in the toilet bowls and over shower and bath outlets to prevent backflow of sewerage into the Service
- Lock all doors and take recommended evacuation routes for the local area
- Contact emergency services to ensure the relocation area is safe before proceeding
- Evacuate the Service immediately and relocate to clearly defined area as discussed with emergency services and clearly identified in the Service's Emergency Evacuation Plan
- Keep families updated regularly of the relocation site
- Keep the Coordination unit up to date with the situation

## **IF IT'S TOO LATE TO LEAVE DURING A FLOOD**

Important: calm and logical thinking will be required. The following points are options depending on the circumstances within your own context. Seeking safe options to move children and staff above rising waters levels will be the primary objective.

Educators will:

- Continue to seek advice from emergency services
- Remain calm
- Move to higher ground and avoid standing in flowing or rising water
- If time permits, stack possessions, equipment and resources onto benches and tables
- Ensure that if flowing water is above the ankles, STOP! Turn around and go another way
- Avoid entering flood waters, if you must do so ensure you and the children are wearing solid shoes and check depth with a stick.

## **AFTER THE FLOOD**

Educators will:

- Stay tuned to local radio stations for official warnings and advice
- Wait until emergency services have declared the area safe before entering the flood zone
- Do not enter the Service until the water has dropped below floor level
- Do not let children play in or near floodwater
- Stay away from drains
- Wear rubber boots or rubber soled footwear and rubber/leather gloves when entering the Service
- Check with electricity, gas and water establishments to determine if the supplies to the Service and local area has been affected and if it safe for them to be turned on
- Be aware of damaged power lines, bridges, buildings, trees surrounding the Service
- Contact families or emergency contacts to confirm the location and safety of the children
- If possible, take photographs for insurance claims
- When safe and convenient, clean or discard contaminated toys & equipment

## **NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK**

<b>EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS</b>	<b>NATIONAL QUALITY AREA</b>	<b>NATIONAL QUALITY ELEMENT/STANDARD</b>
97, 98, 168	2	2.2.1, 2.2.2
	7	7.1.2, 7.1.3

## **REFERENCE & RELATED INFORMATION**

- Education and Care NSW Regulations
- Privacy Act
- Floods: Warning, Preparedness and Safety  
[http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/flood/EMA\\_Floods\\_warning\\_preparedness\\_safety.pdf](http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/flood/EMA_Floods_warning_preparedness_safety.pdf)
- SES – NSW State Emergency Services <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au>