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# CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

## QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

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### National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.2.2	<b>Incident and emergency management</b>	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented

### Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law	
12	Meaning of serious incident
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

## Introduction

This policy provides guidelines and assists educators when they are faced with a critical incident of anyone in immediate contact with Woden Early Childhood Centre (WECC). The Management Committee will offer support and counseling for any educator who requires this service in this situation.

The Management Committee is also aware and respect that people will grieve in their own individual way and is respectful of this.

## Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

## Definition

A critical incident A 'critical incident' may be defined as any event which threatens severely to disrupt, in whole or in part, the functioning of the Centre or which carries the risk of significant adverse publicity (or both). This definition is inevitably vague, and it is probably impossible to identify in advance all types of event which would constitute critical incidents. But a critical incident would normally have the following features:  
 there are substantial threats to the safety of individuals or the fabric or reputation of the Centre; and  
 the incident is likely to lead to the suspension of normal operations and it follows that a critical incident is likely to require the calling out of the emergency services; and special communications mechanisms.

## Goals – What are we aiming to do?

The following procedures should be followed in the event of a death of a person involved with WECC:

- if a critical incident has occurred at WECC, or on a WECC-supervised activity or excursion, all educators must provide a truthful and detailed written account of events surrounding the incident. This should be completed individually and as soon as practicably possible
- where possible, educators will be expected to go about their 'normal' duties to the best of their ability following the incident, unless they are notified otherwise by the Nominated Supervisor or Director
- the Nominated Supervisor or Director will contact Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and advise them if the incident relates to a child or an accident at WECC
- the Nominated Supervisor or Director will contact WECC's insurance company, Guild Insurance
- the Nominated Supervisor or Director will call a meeting of all Room Leaders where practically possible. Room Leaders, in turn, will pass on all information onto the educators in their rooms, either by phone (in which case telephone numbers can be found in the office) or in person at a time where there would be no disruptions
- the Management Committee, Nominated Supervisor or Director and all WECC educators will participate as required in any internal and/or external investigation of the incident

## Strategies – How will it be done?

- a decision regarding the operation of WECC may need to be made, and this should be done in consultation with the educators and the Management Committee
- it may be helpful for the children and educators to accept their grief if a memorial ceremony is held. This may be done in a number of ways. Some examples may be placing a plaque somewhere in WECC or planting a tree in memoriam
- the Management Committee will provide opportunities for educators to get together with their colleagues and their partners to discuss the incident and de-brief
- the Management Committee and Nominated Supervisor or Director will support educators who wish to attend the funeral. Relief staff will be provided, and educators will have the opportunity to discuss the incident and de-brief prior to returning to WECC
- the Nominated Supervisor or Director will monitor educators and their reactions and coping ability. Counsellors suggest that the first six (6) weeks following an event of this nature is an incredibly difficult time. The Management Committee and Nominated Supervisor or Director will provide another round of counselling to support educators and provide them with the opportunity to discuss how they are coping with an independent party, should this be requested of the need identified
- the Management Committee and Nominated Supervisor or Director will keep educators and parents informed of any appropriate information they need to know with regards to the incident

Management and educators will ensure that immediate and appropriate action is taken in the event of the death whilst at WECC by following and implementing the following procedure:

1. assess the situation as per service procedures for any immediate danger to other children or staff
2. attempt CPR in accordance with current First Aid requirements
3. call an Ambulance (000) immediately
4. management will call the parents/guardian of the child and arrange to meet at the hospital
5. medical staff will advise families
6. notify the Regulatory Authority
7. complete minor incident, injury and trauma form
8. contact WECC's insurance company, Guild Insurance
9. log incident onto NQA TI System, attaching incident form and evidence

Management will also ensure that families, children and educators will receive the following post incident support:

- demonstrate sensitivity, open mindedness and a balanced approach
- recognition of cultural needs
- preservation of evidence
- accurate and detailed record keeping
- management to contact legal representative for support and direction
- protocols established for staff to discuss the traumatic event including social media
- professional communication with families of WECC
- engage the services of health care professionals (counselling and support for staff)
- ongoing cooperation with inter-agencies involved in investigation

#### *Keeping children's records*

In the event of the death of a child whilst being educated and cared for at WECC, records need to be kept for seven (7) years from the child's death.

## Evaluation

WECC will help to restore a sense of safety for children, educators and families as soon as possible following a traumatic event. WECC will ensure to follow all legal requirement to adhere to in the tragic event of a death at WECC.

## Related policies /documents

- *Emergency and evacuation*
- *Incident, injury, trauma and illness*

## Statutory legislation and considerations

- The Education and Care Services National Law
- The Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Work Health and Safety Act

## Sources and references

- The Business of Childcare, Karen Kearns
- Australian Child and Adolescent Trauma, Loss & Greif Network – [http://earlytraumagrieff.anu.edu.au/files/ACATLGN\\_grief\\_and\\_loss.pdf](http://earlytraumagrieff.anu.edu.au/files/ACATLGN_grief_and_loss.pdf)
- What Do We Tell Children When Someone Dies? – [http://adac.org.au/siteF/resources/l\\_children\\_gt.pdf](http://adac.org.au/siteF/resources/l_children_gt.pdf)
- Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement – <http://www.grief.org.au>

## Authorisation

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 President  
 2019 WECC Management Committee