



## 2.12 Management of Critical Incidents

**Applies to:** All Koorana staff working in Preschools and families attending Koorana Preschools and visitors.

**Purpose**

To prevent where possible, and appropriately manage all critical incidents which may occur at the Preschool, affect its staff, visitors and children and in doing so provide support and reduce the effect that the incident may have.

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**Approved by: CEO**

**Policy context:** This policy relates to

Standards or other external requirements	National Quality Standards – Quality Area 2 – Standard 2.3, Element 2.3.2 & 2.3.3
Legislation or other requirements	Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Regulations [Regulation 97; (2)(e) under Regulation 168] Work Health and Safety Act 2011 Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
Contractual obligations	N/A
Resources	Red Cross – Disaster Preparedness

**Documents related to this policy**

Related policies	N/A
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	<a href="#">TELEPHONE THREATS RESPONSE CHECKLIST</a>

**Definitions**

*“Koorana” means Koorana Child and Family Services Incorporated.*  
*“Parents” includes a legal guardian.*  
*“Visitors” includes students, volunteers, visiting professionals, performers and contractors.*

*“Staff” is a Koorana staff member working in the Preschool, e.g. Educator, Administrator or Key Worker. This may also include other Koorana staff such as Case Managers, Early Linker, Therapists, Head Office Administrators, Home and Community Based Key Workers and Koorana Management when visiting or working in the Preschool.*

*“Critical incident” means any actual or alleged event or situation that creates a significant risk of substantial or serious harm.*

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

In meeting its obligations under relevant legislation, guidelines and industry codes of practice Koorana Preschools will:

1. Develop, implement and regularly review procedures and plans of action for the management of critical incidents and emergencies to ensure they reflect the highest possible standards.
2. Have Emergency Evacuation and floor plans visible in relevant areas of the preschools and at each exit.
3. Have conducted relevant risk assessments.
4. Regularly rehearse emergency evacuations and lockdowns.
5. Will have either fixed and/or portable phones in all locations within the Preschools.
6. Allocate individual responsibilities to specific staff.
7. Ensure all staff are aware of and familiar with these procedures.
8. Identify and reduce risks and hazards through regular assessments.
9. Organise and monitor regular practice drills.
10. Establish close liaison with all local emergency services.
11. Organise staff development activities where necessary.

## **PRACTICES**

### **Critical Incidents**

#### *Immediate Actions*

The Preschool Leader or “Responsible Person” is to:

1. Gather factual information.
2. Contact emergency services.
3. Ensure the safety and welfare of children and staff → evacuate or initiate lockdown if required.
4. Administer first aid or allocate other staff to administer first aid until ambulance arrives.
5. Inform the Services Operations Manager Inner West or other Koorana management staff if Services Operations Manager Inner West cannot be contacted. Give facts of the situation. Receive advice.
6. Refer media enquiries to CEO or other Koorana management staff if CEO cannot be contacted.
7. Advise parent(s).
8. Notify Department of Education as required.



### *Later Actions*

The Preschool Leader will:

- convene brief meeting with Service Operations Manager Inner West, General manager Client Services and CEO to:
  - discuss the incident
  - obtain Executive support
- contact local support personnel in consultation with Service Operations Manager Inner West
- convene a full team meeting to:
  - present information
  - discuss the action plan
  - allow staff response
  - decide how children will be informed or given additional information
- inform children of:
  - facts of the incident
  - actions
  - allow children's discussion or response
- identify "at risk" staff and children
- contact parents or families of "at risk" staff or children
- arrange a debriefing for "at risk" staff or children
- inform all parents by letter with:
  - the facts of the incident
  - the Preschool's response plan
  - possible reaction of children
  - sources of help for families
  - encourage two way communications between parents and the Preschool
- restore the Preschool to regular routine ASAP
- provide further information if available and/or required
- continue to monitor the well-being of staff and children



### *Timeframe for Actions*

The successful management of critical incidents is dependent on Koorana taking appropriate action and providing support during and after the incident. Timeframes following a critical incident will vary depending on the circumstances.

The following is a guide to probable critical incident management at Koorana Preschools. The CEO will allocate responsibilities.

Immediately - ensure the safety and welfare of children and staff, arranging first aid if necessary; set up a recovery room or centre if necessary.

### Within 24 hours - gather the facts

- where possible notify the time and place of debriefing to all relevant persons;
- manage the media;
- keep staff, children and parents informed as appropriate;
- arrange counselling and debriefing as necessary;
- develop plans to restore normal functioning of the Preschool.

### Within 48 - 72 hours

- provide opportunities for staff and children to talk about the incident;
- provide support for staff and children;
- continue to debrief all relevant persons;
- restore normal functioning and service delivery as soon as possible;
- keep parents informed;
- identify behavioural changes and the possibility of post-traumatic stress disorder, refer to Counsellors for children and staff;
- manage the media.

### Within First Month

- arrange a memorial service where required and if appropriate;
- encourage parents to participate in meetings to discuss children's welfare;
- monitor progress of hospitalised staff or children;
- monitor psychological and physical health of all involved;
- manage the media.

### In the Short Term

- continue to monitor staff and children for signs of post-traumatic stress disorder - refer for specialised treatment;
- continue to provide support;
- manage the media;



#### In the Longer Term

- plan for and be sensitive to the disturbing influence of anniversaries, inquests and legal proceedings;
- access specialist support whenever necessary.

#### *Possible Critical Incidents could be*

##### Evacuations

Staff will follow the Preschools' respective evacuation procedure.

##### Fires

Staff will follow the Preschools' respective evacuation procedure.

- A staff member should wait at the front of the Preschool to direct Emergency Services to the location of the fire.
- Fire extinguishers and hose reels should only be used if staff are confident in doing so and there is no additional risk to them or children.

##### Bomb Threats

If you receive a threat via phone, REMAIN CALM. Try to complete as much of the TELEPHONE THREATS RESPONSE CHECKLIST as possible, trying to keep the caller on the telephone for as long as possible. Note any background noises.

All of this information is vital for the Police and their investigations.

The following steps are to be followed by the Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person":

1. On receipt of a bomb threat IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY POLICE AND IF DIRECTED IMPLEMENT EVACUATION PROCEDURES.
2. On evacuation staff and children should only take their personal belongings that are in their immediate area and then proceed to the evacuation area.
3. After the evacuation, notify the Services Operations Manager Inner West, or other Koorana management staff if Services Operations Manager Inner West cannot be contacted, of the threat.
4. The person who received the threat should complete as much of the Bomb Threat Report form as possible AFTER EVACUATING. Give this form to the Preschool Leader or Responsible Person and then the Police.
5. The Senior Officer of the Emergency Services is the only Authorised person to give the "all clear" for the return of staff and children to the Preschool.

##### Suspicious Device

Suspicious devices may take the form of a suspect article, either found in the building or grounds, or an article being delivered by messenger or mail.

**SUSPICIOUS DEVICES SHOULD NEVER BE TOUCHED, TILTED OR TAMPERED WITH!!**

The following steps are to be followed by the Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person":

1. Contact the Police as soon as possible, providing the following information:
  - exact location of the device
  - description of the device, if known.
2. Assess the threat and make the decision to evacuate. Staff and children should evacuate the area or building to the evacuation area. The designated area should be one that affords safety in respect to the detonation of the device. This may be a different location to the normal evacuation area, dependant on the location of the threat.
3. If possible ensure that confidential documents or valuables are secured.
4. Ensure that all staff and children reach and remain at the evacuation area.
5. Place responsible staff, where possible, at all entry points to the Preschool to prevent visitors or others approaching the suspected danger area, until the arrival of the Police.
6. Where required accompany the Police to show the exact location of the device and to also assess that safety measures implemented have remained in place.
7. Be prepared to assist the Police, if required, to make a full search of buildings or classrooms for other suspected devices.

#### Lockdown

Where there has been an identified threat outside of the service the service will implement its Lockdown Procedure. This is to occur where the service is not required to evacuate the building, but is required to protect the staff and children inside the building from an external threat.

#### Chemicals, Gas and Explosions

Within the Preschool:

Whenever there is a major escape of chemicals or threat of explosion within the Preschool, immediate evacuation must be implemented.

The following steps are to be followed by the Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person":

1. Once alerted by staff, remain calm and keep the children as calm as possible.
2. Attempt to leave the building as long as you are completely certain the route is safe.
3. If you are unsure of the safety of the exit, then stay where you are until assistance arrives.

#### Adjoining Facilities or Buildings:

Where adjoining buildings, homes or facilities are affected, the Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person" should act in accordance with the instructions of Emergency Services present, or order immediate evacuation where deemed necessary.

In some cases it may be necessary to keep staff and children within the building rather than evacuate them.

#### Transport/Traffic Accidents

In the event of a transport or traffic accident, always ensure that children and staff are safe. Assess the situation and take action accordingly.

The following steps are to be followed by the Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person":

1. If danger to children exists in playrooms, evacuate immediately. If, however, children are safer within the playrooms, keep them there.
2. If roads are closed, keep children at the Preschool until parents are able to pick them up or inform the staff of their wishes.

### Storms

Warning of an impending storm may be received in time to allow children to go home before the emergency. However, if warning time is insufficient to allow this or if high winds develop during opening hours without warning the following steps are to be followed by the Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person":

1. Direct children and staff to assemble inside buildings:
  - stand against interior walls away from windows
  - avoid rooms that will bear the full force of the wind
  - close all windows and blinds on the windward side;
2. If safe to do so, secure all loose objects in the open that may become missiles, e.g. garbage bins.
3. If safe to do so, close down any Preschool utilities that may cause additional hazards, e.g. power.
4. Ensure all staff and children have taken shelter, conducting a roll call at the first appropriate time.
5. Notify the Services Operations Manager Inner West, or other Koorana management staff if Services Operations Manager Inner West cannot be contacted.
6. Notify utility companies of any break or suspected break in lines.
7. Keep children and staff at the Preschool until it is safe to return to normal activities or to go home.

### Earthquakes

The effects of any earthquake vary depending on geographic location, ground type, intensity of the event and the construction of the buildings.

The following steps are to be followed by the Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person":

1. Indoors
  - Stay there. You could be hit by falling debris outside.
  - Take cover under a door frame, table, bench or desk.
  - Keep away from windows.
2. Outdoors
  - Move away from buildings, high walls, electric power lines and dangling electric wires.
  - Sit down.
  - If you are near a large building, seek refuge under archways or doorways which could offer protection from falling debris.
3. When the Earthquake Stops
  - Immediately evacuate buildings, if safe to do so.
  - Assemble staff and children well clear of buildings, but not under trees.
  - Take the roll for children and staff as well as visitors book and account for all.
  - Liaise with Emergency Services if possible.
  - If time permits and it is safe to do so, turn off heaters and other appliances prior to the

evacuation.

- If damage has occurred, turn off gas and electricity, if it is safe to do so.
- Do not use telephones other than for emergencies. Telephone exchanges will be needed for rescue and medical services may become overloaded.

#### Serious Injury or Death

Staff or children who witness a serious injury or death must receive immediate assistance and support (trauma counselling or crisis debriefing). By preference, this should occur on the same day as the incident or immediately the next day and must be provided by an experienced professional.

The following steps are to be followed by the Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person":

1. The Preschool Leader must be informed immediately if not present.
2. Put into place adequate support mechanisms for all those who require it (by contacting the Services Operations Manager Inner West, or other Koorana management staff if Services Operations Manager Inner West cannot be contacted).
3. The Preschool Leader is required to refer to Koorana's Incident, Injury, Trauma, Illness, Fever, Minor Ailments and First Aid Policy for further reporting requirements.

#### Aggressive, threatening, bullying behaviour toward staff

Assess the situation and decide on appropriate action to be taken.

1. Attempt to diffuse the situation with quiet & understanding discussion.
2. Call '000' if you feel the situation could escalate and it is possible to do so and explain the situation or use the security button.
3. Initiate Lockdown procedure if possible.
4. To ensure the safety of staff and children, follow all instructions from the aggressor.
5. The safety of staff and children is paramount and nothing should be done to threaten that safety.
6. The Preschool Leader or "Responsible Person" must be notified of the behaviour and whether or not the person is known to staff as soon as it is safe to do so. Never endanger a staff member or children in doing this.
7. Try to observe and remember as much detail as possible for later police investigation. Document it as soon as possible.
8. NO attempt should be made to apprehend the aggressor or to follow them away from the premises.
9. Notify Koorana management ASAP.

#### Physical assault of staff

1. Try to remain calm and cooperative and where possible calmly but quickly remove yourself and find a safe place for self and others.
2. Call '000' if it is possible to do so and explain the situation or use the security button.
3. Initiate Lockdown procedure if possible.
4. To ensure the safety of staff and children, follow all instructions by aggressor.
5. The safety of staff and children is paramount and nothing should be done to threaten that safety.



6. The Preschool Leader or “Responsible Person” must be notified of the assault and whether or not the person is known to staff, as soon as it is safe to do so. Never endanger a staff member or children in doing this.
7. Try to observe and remember as much detail as possible for later police investigation.
8. Take no physical retaliatory action unless you believe your life is threatened.
9. NO attempt should be made to apprehend persons or to follow them away from the premises.
10. Notify Koorana management ASAP.

#### Armed Hold Up/Hostage Situation

The following steps are to be followed by the Preschool Leader or “Responsible Person”:

1. Call ‘000’ if it is possible to do so and explain the situation or use the security button.
2. To ensure the safety of staff and children, follow all instructions.
3. The safety of staff and children is paramount and nothing should be done to threaten that safety.
4. Staff and children not involved should be evacuated to a safe area, if possible.
5. The Preschool Leader or “Responsible Person” must be notified of the behaviour and whether or not the person is known to staff as soon as it is safe to do so. Never endanger a staff member or children in doing this.
6. Follow all Police instructions.
7. Notify Koorana management ASAP.
8. Seek trauma counselling where required.

#### Criminal Activity (e.g. vandalism or break-in)

The first staff member to arrive or notice is to:

1. Immediately inform the Preschool Leader or “Responsible Person”.
2. The Preschool Leader or “Responsible Person” must inform the Police.
3. Do not touch anything nor let children into the area, until Police have inspected the area and advised that it is safe to enter the area and to handle things. This may mean that the Preschool opens late or closes early to families.
4. The Preschool Leader or “Responsible Person” must inform the Service Operations Manager Inner West or other Koorana management staff if Services Operations Manager Inner West cannot be contacted.

#### Extreme Heat

Transient periods of high temperatures will often occur during the summer months. The Preschools should continue to operate without disruption to normal routines and children should not be sent home. The Preschools are fully air-conditioned to decrease the chances of staff or children becoming affected by the heat.

Heat stress caused by extreme heat is a serious condition that can lead to death if not treated.

Symptoms include:

- tiredness
- weakness



- visual disturbances
- headaches
- nausea
- muscle cramps
- breathlessness
- dizziness
- palpitations

The following precautions should be taken to prevent heat stress in staff and children:

1. Encourage staff and children to drink at least 2 litres of water per day (at least a glass of water every hour if inactive, or a glass of water every 1/2 hour if active) to avoid dehydration.
2. Encourage the wearing of hats, the use of a 30+ sunscreen and protective clothing.
3. Children and staff will remain indoors when the heat is extreme.
4. Ensure that blinds, fans and cooling devices are working efficiently.

#### Extreme Cold

Periods of extremely cold weather will also occur during the year. If the body temperature falls below a certain point, shivering will occur. Action should be taken to immediately warm the body. This can include exercise, wearing more clothing or moving the person to a warmer place. Preschools have heating and children will remain indoors should extreme cold weather conditions occur.

#### People Affected by Critical Incidents

The effects of a critical incident on people can vary. They may be directly involved in the incident, they may be managing it or those who witness it. All will encounter different experiences. The following should be used as a guide in identifying those who may require assistance or support.

- People directly exposed to the Incident: Those who suffer intense trauma and experience either physical or psychological injuries.
- Relatives and Friends: Those who are grieving for the injured and affected, e.g. families, children and staff.
- People with Previous Trauma or Grief: Those who are not directly affected by the incident but who may be affected because of a previous incident or experience.
- Helpers or Recovery Personnel: Recovery personnel who are required to maintain functional efficiency during the incident and to cope with the psychological effects, e.g. staff, administrators and emergency service personnel.
- The Community and People Indirectly Involved: Those in the community affected but not directly involved, e.g. other parents, staff and those that could have been direct victims but were not due to chance or those for whom stress is triggered as a result of the incident.



**TELEPHONE THREATS RESPONSE CHECKLIST**

1. Record the exact wording and nature of the threat.
2. Below are some examples of questions that you may have the opportunity to ask. These will help the police to investigate the incident.

**GENERAL THREAT**

What are you threatening to do?.....  
Why are making this threat?.....  
When do you intend to carry it out?.....  
Do you intend to phone again?.....  
What is your name?.....  
Where are you?.....  
What is your address?.....

**BOMB THREAT**

When is the bomb going to explode?.....  
Where did you place the bomb?.....  
When did you put it there?.....  
What does the bomb look like?.....  
What kind of bomb is it?.....  
What will make the bomb explode?.....  
Why did you place the bomb?.....  
What is your name?.....  
Where are you?.....  
What is your address?.....

**IDENTIFYING/LOCATING THE CALLER (Please circle)**

*Caller's voice*

Male	Loud	Lisping
Female	Well spoken	Abusive
Old	Broken English	Recorded
Young	Accented	Incoherent
Fast	Slurred	Disguised
Soft	Stuttering	Familiar

*Background noises*

Street noises  
Voices  
Music  
Car



Animals  
Machinery

Any other details:

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