

Service Closure Policy

Policy Statement

Uniting Early Learning is committed to:

- ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children attending the service.
- providing a clear and consistent approach to be followed in times of local emergencies that require either pre-emptive and voluntary closure of the service to maintain the safety and protection of children, staff and families.
- supporting the right of all children to feel safe, and be safe, at all times.
- fulfilling duty of care (refer to Definitions) obligations under the law by protecting children from any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm.

Executive Summary

Business continuity is essential and Uniting Early Learning will endeavor to operate services without disruption. In the case of an emergency and/or a pre-emptive closure is unavoidable, all stakeholders will be informed as soon as practicable to ensure a clear understanding of the relevant procedures to be undertaken. The priority to safeguard the children in our care in the event of a critical incident will be paramount. A risk assessment will be undertaken before any closure decisions are made.

Current Environmental Context

All emergency and voluntary closures must be approved by the Approved Provider/Licensee.

The emergency closure of a service/program will be enforced for any of the following circumstances:

- Any code red day, for those services located in a high fire risk area.
- Any situation that requires a service premise to be locked down.
- Any situation or event that poses and imminent or severe risk to the persons at the service premise.
- Where a principal of a local school, in a rural area, informs of a planned closure due to an extreme weather forecast.
- In the case of a utility breakdown/disruption.
- When an unexpected absence of staff does not allow the correct educator: child ratios to be maintained and there is no other option.
- Severe outbreak of a notifiable infection/disease.

The voluntary closure of a service/program will be considered in the following circumstances:

- Public Holidays.
- Set up and preparation program days (where negotiated).
- Professional learning and planning days.
- Annual leave of a Family Day Care educator.
- Closure of service during end of year/ Xmas period.
- Any other day determined and approved by the Approved Provider.

In Victoria, families must be informed of any closures that affects the access of their child to a funded kindergarten program. Children must have access to 600 hours of funded kindergarten over the course of the calendar year and any reduction in fees must be approved by the Approved Provider.

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Document Author	EL Practice Manager	Document Version	V 0.1	Policy No. 021
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Reference/Sources

- Children’s Services Act 1996
- Children’s Services Regulation 2009, R31, 73, 111, 155, 157, 160
- Early Years Management Policy Framework Part 1 and 2 Department of Education and Training 2016
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: S3 (3), 168
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 75,
- Kindergarten funding guide Department of Education and Training (Vic) 2018
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6
- Tasmanian Licensing Standards for Centre Based Child Care Class 5 (October 2014)
- Uniting Early Learning Emergency and Evacuation policy
- Uniting Early Learning Fee policy

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by Uniting Early Learning on: 14 December 2018

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by 30 November 2019

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