

Viera Children's Academy

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Policy and Procedure for Emergency Planning

Director Signature

Date

Purpose: To ensure that in the event of an emergency, procedures and plans of action are in place for staff and children.

Statement: Viera Children's Academy insists that the safety and well being of the children at the Academy is first priority. Given the proper guidelines, teachers and volunteers will be able to use this policy to maintain the safety for the staff as well as the children at VCA.

Safety Procedure:

Hurricanes

Hurricane or Tropical Storm **Watches** are issued by the National Weather Service 36 hours prior to the arrival of the storm's effects. Hurricane or Tropical storm **Warnings** are issued when one of these storms could affect our local area in 24 hours or less. When a **watch** is issued, VCA will monitor the storm and make any decisions to close before the issuance of a **warning**. The timing of the closure of the Academy will generally coincide with the end of a normal working day and should not inconvenience the parents. If the school closes and the highway department advises no unnecessary travel, parents will be immediately notified and asked to pick up their children.

In the event of a hurricane while the children are in the program, the children's safety and well being will be the prime concern of the staff.

Proper staff ratios will be maintained while the children are in the program. Staff living farthest away from the program will be sent home first.

If the weather is such that parents cannot get to the school, children will be kept at the school overnight. Parents will be informed and assured of their child's safety. In that event, children will be supervised

throughout the night. The building will be kept warm for the children and they will sleep on cots and use their blankets. Meals will be served to the children and the staff – dinner in the evening and breakfast in the morning. The next day, arrangements will be made to get the children home.

If bad weather occurs when the program is closed, an announcement will be made over designated radio stations to notify parents and parent phone tree will be activated.

In the event of a storm, once the children and staff are safe, the parent phone tree will be activated.

Tornado and Thunderstorm

Tornado drills

The procedure for tornado drills is one that would be followed for a tornado or severe weather warning.

Each month between April and September, tornado drills will be held. The staff will be instructed during their orientation of the location of the emergency shelter. These drills will be logged in the emergency drill notebook with the date and time period.

1. One staff member will sound the alarm and all children will be escorted by their core teacher to the prearranged safe emergency shelter (Manatee Elementary School)
2. The assistant or aide will check the bathrooms and school building to make sure all children have joined the group in the shelter.
3. The last staff person shall take the attendance sheet and join the group where the attendance shall be taken.
4. In case of a real emergency, one staff member should monitor the weather radio and follow instructions, as stated.
5. Flashlights should accompany children to the shelter area.
6. The teachers should remain calm, leading the children in songs and stories.
7. The children should be informed as to why they have left their classroom and what steps are being taken to ensure their safety.

Tornado information

Check your weather radio on a regular basis. Make sure it is plugged in and in the “alert” mode. On the first Wednesday of each month, the weather department will hold a mock alert. Please notify the owner immediately if your radio does not trigger automatically.

To protect yourself inside the building, do the following:

1. Crack the windows.
2. Move to the center of the building (Dolphin and Frog Classrooms). Make every effort to locate yourself behind a wall, or partition, away from the windows. The concern is flying glass. Areas providing good

structural supports are: closets, bathrooms, and hallways. If possible, stay under a desk or table. Place your arms around your head and face to protect them from flying debris.

3. If you have access to a basement, this is the best place for protection from a tornado. Go to any wall, face onto the floor with your arms around your head and face. Additional protection could be gained from staying under a desk or table.

Please discuss the dangers and safety procedures of tornadoes with your children.

TORNADOES AND SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS

A “**tornado watch**” means that the national weather service is alert to possible development in a specified area over a specified period of time. There is no siren, but public warning will be broadcast over TV and radio stations. Bring the children inside immediately. One staff person will listen to the radio. Open a few windows a small amount to listen for sirens. Keep the children calm and preoccupied with constructive activities.

A “**tornado warning**” means that the national weather service has confirmed a tornado sighting and location, the time of detection and direction of movement. There is a steady siren and public warning on TV and radio. In the instance of a tornado warning follow the instructions previously listed under ‘**tornado information.**’ Take shelter ***immediately***. Gather the children and go to an identified shelter (if possible the inner rooms of Dolphin and Frog classrooms. If it is safe to travel, then go to Manatee Elementary School.) Take along a radio, flashlights, books, blankets, and a TV, record player, or cassette player in case the electricity stays on. Also take crackers or a snack.

Stay calm and comfort any child showing signs of distress. After assisting the children to the designated shelter, one staff member will check the building to be sure all the children are in the shelter. Open a few windows slightly for cross ventilation. The local siren, radio and TV will sound an *all clear* when it is safe to resume normal activity.

The siren is only sounded in cases of actual tornado warnings.

With severe thunderstorms, windstorms, floods, and hurricanes move the children indoors. Keep them away from the windows or doors if the storm appears to be strong. Stay tuned to a radio for further developments.

Earthquake

During an earthquake, stay calm and seek shelter under tables. Stay away from shelving, filing cabinets, other high equipment, glass mirrors, windows, and doors. If you are unable to protect yourself under a table, get down onto the floor and cover yourself. Staff should cover children with their own bodies.

When the shaking has ended account for all of the children and check for injuries. Start first aid if needed. Do not touch damaged electrical wires, use elevators, or strike a match. If you smell gas, turn off main valve. If the building is deemed structurally unsound, evacuate following fire procedures.

Fire

FIRE PREVENTION

Fire safety is a regular part of the curriculum for children, and the emphasis is on safety procedures. Evacuation routes and actual staff responsibilities during the evacuation are posted in each room. All emergency telephone numbers are posted by the telephone.

Instructions on how to use the fire extinguishers are posted on or by the extinguisher. Each staff member should have the opportunity to practice using the fire extinguisher. Fires are reported to the division of public health within 24 hours.

FIRE DRILLS

Each month a fire drill will be held. The drills will be a combination of scheduled and surprise drills, both for the children and the staff. The drills will be logged in a fire drill book with the date and time noted.

ACTUAL FIRE

If a staff person discovers a fire, he or she will activate the fire alarm. A designated person will call 911. Staff will exit the children, following fire drill procedures. Everyone will calmly proceed to the designated area outside the building. Take along the sign - in sheets, the emergency cards, and a first aid kit. Once outside, a staff member will check attendance. A designated person will check all of the classrooms and bathrooms for the children and will shut the classroom doors. A designated person will use the fire extinguisher from the wall if she feels it is safe to do so. Never re-enter the building without proper approval.

In the event of an actual fire, once the children and staff are safe, the parent phone tree will be activated.

POWER FAILURE

In the event of a power failure at the program the Director, or designates, will immediately determine if the failure is program based or covers a larger area.

The children will be kept inside if the power failure is due to downed power lines nearby.

As soon as probable cause for the power failure is located, the local power utility will be called for the emergency service. When notifying the power facility, explain that we are a child care facility with children in the building, and they will respond immediately.

The children must be kept calm and any distress comforted immediately by the staff.

If the weather conditions outside are such that proper heating or cooling will not be maintained at the program, the parents of the children should be notified.

In the event of a power failure, the phone will not ring; outgoing calls can be made.

EVACUATION

In the event that Viera Children's Academy needs to be evacuated, the following steps will be followed:

- An emergency announcement will be made over the intercom to the entire school
- Teachers will react as though it is a fire drill

- Teachers will safely gather the children and remove them from the building
 - Teachers will take their class lists
 - Teachers will take their emergency contact information binder from the classroom
- Teachers will use their primary or secondary exits from their classrooms
- Once the teachers and children have safely evacuated the building, they will go to Manatee Elementary school, located next door to VCA.
- **Once all the children are safe and accounted for, the parent phone tree will be activated.**