

## 22. Critical Incident policy

At **The Community Playgroups** we understand we need to plan for all eventualities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all the children we care for. With this in mind, we have a critical incident policy in place to ensure our playgroup is able to operate effectively in the case of a critical incident. These include:

- Flood
- Fire
- Burglary
- Abduction or threatened abduction of a child
- Bomb threat/terrorism attack
- Any other incident that may affect the care of the children in the playgroup.

If any of these incidents impact on the ability of the playgroup to operate, we will contact parents via phone, email, or text message at the earliest opportunity, e.g. before the start of the playgroup day.

### **Flood**

There is always a danger of flooding from adverse weather conditions or through the water/central heating systems. We cannot anticipate adverse weather; however, we can ensure that we take care of all our water and heating systems through regular maintenance and checks to reduce the option of flooding in this way. Our central heating systems are checked and serviced annually by a registered gas engineer and they conform to all appropriate guidelines and legislation.

If flooding occurs during the playgroup day, the playgroup manager will make a decision based on the severity and location of this flooding, and it may be deemed necessary to follow the fire evacuation procedure. In this instance children will be kept safe and parents will be notified in the same way as the fire procedure.

### **Fire**

Please refer to the fire safety policy.

### **Burglary**

The management of the playgroup follow a lock up procedure which ensures all doors and windows are closed and locked before vacating the premises. Alarm systems are used and in operation during all hours the playgroup is closed.

The manager will always check the premises as they arrive in the morning. Should they discover that the playgroup has been broken into they will follow the procedure below:

- Dial 999 with as many details as possible, i.e. name and location, details of what you have found and emphasise this is a playgroup and children will be arriving soon
- Contain the area to ensure no-one enters until the police arrive. The staff will direct parents and children to a separate area as they arrive. If all areas have been disturbed staff will follow police advice, including following the relocation

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procedure under flood wherever necessary to ensure the safety of the children

- The manager on duty will help the police with enquiries, e.g. by identifying items missing, areas of entry etc.
- A manager will be available at all times during this time to speak to parents, reassure children and direct enquiries
- Management will assess the situation following a theft and ensure parents are kept up to date with developments relating to the operation of the playgroup.

### **Abduction or threatened abduction of a child**

We have secure safety procedures in place to ensure children are safe while in our care, including safety from abduction. Staff must be vigilant at all times and report any persons lingering on playgroup property immediately. All doors and gates to the playgroup are locked and cannot be accessed unless staff members allow individuals in. Parents are reminded on a regular basis not to allow anyone into the building whether they are known to them or not. Visitors and general security are covered in more detail in the supervision of visitor's policy.

Children will only be released into the care of a designated adult; see the arrivals and departures policy for more details. Parents are requested to inform the playgroup of any potential custody battles or family concerns as soon as they arise so the playgroup is able to support the child. The playgroup will not take sides in relation to any custody battle and will remain neutral for the child. If an absent parent arrives to collect their child, the playgroup will not restrict access **unless** a court order is in place. Parents are requested to issue the playgroup with a copy of these documents should they be in place. We will consult our solicitors with regards to any concerns over custody and relay any information back to the parties involved.

If a member of staff witnesses an actual or potential abduction from playgroup we have the following procedures which are followed immediately:

- The police must be called immediately
- The staff member will notify management immediately and the manager will take control
- The parent(s) will be contacted
- All other children will be kept safe and secure and calmed down where necessary
- The police will be given as many details as possible including details of the child, description of the abductor, car registration number if used, time and direction of travel if seen and any family situations that may impact on this abduction.

### **Bomb threat/terrorism attack**

If a bomb threat is received at the playgroup, the person taking the call will record all details given over the phone as soon as possible and raise the alarm as soon as the phone call has ended. The management will follow the fire evacuation procedure to ensure the safety of all on the premises and will provide as much detail to the emergency services as possible.

### **Other incidents**

All incidents will be managed by the manager on duty and all staff will co-operate with any emergency services on the scene. Any other incident that requires evacuation will follow the fire plan. Other incidents e.g. no water supply will be dealt with on an individual basis taking into account the effect on the safety, health and welfare of the children and staff in the playgroup.

The playgroup manager will notify Ofsted in the event of a critical incident.

### **Lock down procedure**

We will use the lock down procedure when the safety of the children and staff is at risk and we will be better placed inside the current building, with doors and windows locked and blinds/curtains drawn.

We will activate this emergency procedure in response to a number of situations, but some of the more typical might be:

- A report incident or disturbance in the local community (with potential to pose a risk to staff and children in the playgroup)
- An intruder on the nursery site (with potential to pose a risk to staff and children in playgroup)
- A warning being received regarding a risk locally, of air pollution (smoke plumes, gas cloud etc.)
- A major fire or explosion in the vicinity of the playgroup – as long as it is safer staying in the premises than leaving.

In this case the staff will be notified by the following action:

### **A whistle will be blown.**

All individuals (including children) will remain in the area they are in, if safe to do so. If the children are outside, staff are to promptly and calmly direct children into the building, if this will not endanger them. Staff will make efforts to close and lock doors wherever safe to do so.

All individuals will keep away from the windows and doors and children will be occupied in the corner of the room, away from the windows, so they are not placed at risk or are able to see any situation developing outside.

The manager will ensure all children, staff and visitors are accounted for and safe, before keeping up to date with the current situation.

The manager will manage the situation dependant on the situation and the information available. If the playgroup is in immediate danger of an intruder, the police will be called as a matter of urgency. In other cases where the situation has been called through by the police or local area authority, the playgroup will await further instructions.

Once the all clear has been given externally, the manager will issue the all clear internally. After this time the staff will try to return practice to normal to enable the children not to be disrupted or upset by the events.

Any children showing worries or concerns will have one to one time with their key person to talk about these.

Parents will be informed about the situation at the earliest safest opportunity and will be kept updated when the information changes.

After the event a post-incident evaluation will be conducted to ensure that each child and staff member was supported fully, and the procedure went as planned.

<b>This policy was adopted in</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of the nursery</b>	<b>Date for review</b>
<i>July 2018</i>	<i>Lynn Gardner</i>	<i>July 2019</i>