CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

This policy sets out the procedure to be followed to ensure the safety of the whole nursery in the event of a critical incident.

Definition

A critical incident can be a physical incident or psychological trauma that has a severe immediate impact and likely log term effect on children, staff, or parents. This may include

* Incidents that involve staff, children, or parents
* People made disasters/emergencies
* Natural disasters/emergencies

At Wood Wharf Kindergarten we understand the need to plan for all eventualities to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all the children we care for. With this in mind, our critical incident policy is to ensure our nursery can operate effectively in the case of :-

* Flood
* Fire
* Burglary
* Abduction or threatened abduction of a child
* Bomb threat/terrorism attack
* National outbreaks of infection/health pandemics
* Dangerous dog roaming loose
* Warning of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc)
* Intruder
* Any other incident that may affect the care of the children in the nursery.

If any of these incident’s impact on the ability of the nursery to operate, we will contact parents via famly/ email at the earliest opportunity, follow by a phone call e.g. before the start of the nursery 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 nursery day, the nursery manager will decide based on the severity and location of this flooding, and it may be deemed necessary to follow the same procedure as 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 (see Fire Safety Policy).

Should the nursery be assessed as unsafe through flooding, fire or any other incident we will follow our operational plan and provide care in another location with alternative arrangements for childcare facilities in the local area.

Fire

Please refer to the our fire safety policy.

Burglary

The management of the nursery 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 nursery is closed.

The manager or most senior member of staff on site will always check the premises as they arrive in the morning. Should they discover that the nursery has been broken into they will follow the procedure below:

* In an emergency use the emergency response button in the office to alert the security team in Canary wharf.
* Contain the area to ensure no-one enters until the estate team arrive.
* Where it is safe to do so, 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. This may include temporary short-term closure and/or following the relocation procedure under the flood section wherever necessary to ensure the safety of the children
* The manager on duty will help with enquiries, e.g., by identifying items missing, areas of entry etc.
* A manager will be always available during this time to speak to parents, reassure children and direct enquires
* Management will assess the situation following a theft and ensure parents are kept up to date with developments relating to the operation of the nursery
* Arrangements will be made to ensure the nursery is made safe and secure again.

Abduction or threatened abduction of a child

We have secure safety procedures in place to ensure children are safe while in our care, including taking reasonable steps to ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises and at risk of abduction. Staff are always vigilant and report any persons lingering on nursery property immediately. All doors and gates to the nursery 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. We also have visual reminders about closing the door behind them to prevent tailgating (another person accessing entry behind them). 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 nursery of any potential custody proceedings or family concerns as soon as they arise, so the nursery can support the child. The nursery will not take sides in relation to any custody arrangements and will remain neutral for the child. If an absent parent arrives to collect their child, the nursery will not restrict access **unless** a court order is in place. Parents are requested to issue the nursery 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 nursery, 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, reassured and calmed 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 have impacted on this abduction.
* Any incidents must be recorded in writing as soon as practicably possible including the outcome, who was abducted, time identified, notification to police and findings
* In the unlikely event that the child is not found, the nursery will follow the local authority and police procedure
* Ofsted will be contacted and informed of any incidents
* With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary
* In any cases with media attention staff will not speak to any media representatives
* Post-incident risk assessments will be conducted following any incident of this nature to enable the chance of this reoccurring being reduced.

Bomb threat/terrorism attack

If a bomb threat is received at the nursery, the person taking the call will record all details given over the phone as soon as possible and raise the alarm/contact emergency services I canary wharf through the estate alert button in the office, The management will follow the fire evacuation procedure and guidance from the emergency services to ensure the safety of all on the premises. The person who took the call will provide as much detail to the emergency services as possible. Ofsted will be notified. With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children, and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary.

**National outbreaks of infection/Health Pandemics**

In the event of a national outbreak of a health pandemic, we will follow Government health advice and guidance, legal advice, and advice from our insurance provider.

 The setting will remain open if we have sufficient staff to care for the children. Depending on the nature of the pandemic we will follow all advice and implement measures to ensure that risks to vulnerable children and staff are minimised. This may include excluding infected children/staff/parents or family members from the setting for a set period, to prevent the spread of infection. This decision will be done in consultation with parents, staff, legal advice, and our insurance provider. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis.

**Dangerous dog roaming loose**

If the nursey is notified of a dangerous dog roaming loose the staff member will notify the manager and call for all children to be kept inside until we have been notified of the dog being captured or removed from the area

**Warning of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud, etc)**

If the nursery is notified of a warning of air pollution, we will keep the children inside and closer all windows and doors. We will follow instructions given to us. We will wait for instructions that is is safe before opening any windows or doors

**Intruder**

If an intruder has been seen on the nursery premises all action will be taken to keep the children safe. All safe will be notified and staff will collect children in the room they feel would be the safest. E.g., the intruder comes into the nursery garden the staff member will say aloud a confidential password code which instructs all staff members to take children into the nearest safest room.

The deputy manager will call the register to ensure all children and staff are accounted for

Any other significant incidents

All incidents will be managed by the manager on duty and all staff will co-operate with any emergency services on the scene, where applicable. The fire evacuation procedure will be followed for any other incident that requires an emergency evacuation. 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 nursery.

**Lockdown 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 building with doors and windows located and blinds drawn.

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

* A reported incident or disturbance in the local community with potential to pose risk to staff and children in the nursery
* An intruder on the nursery site (with potential to pose a risk to staff and children in the nursery
* 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 nursery – if it is safer staying on the premises than leaving.

In this case the staff will be notified by the following action: A confidential password code will be spoken to all staff members. Adults will immediately lock any doors and shut windows (where safe to do so) unless children are in the garden and need to get back into the building for their safety. The Manager on duty will decide on the safest area to congregate (1st floor). If children are outside, staff are to promptly and calmly direst children into the building, if this will not endanger them. Staff will make efforts to close and lock doors behind them. All individuals will keep away from the windows and doors and children will be occupied in the centre of the room so they are not placed at risk or see any situations developing outside.

The manager will ensure all children, staff and visitors are accounted for and safe returning to the office area to keep up to date with current situation via updates. The manager on duty will manage the situation dependent on the situation and information available. If the nursery is in immediate danger of an intruder, the estate team will assist in evacuating the children to the designated safe space of Our Lady and St joseph’s primary school in Limehouse.

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

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

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| **This policy was adopted on** | **Signed on behalf of the nursery** | **Date for review** |
| *07/09/2022* | *Heleanna Phair*  | *September 2023* |
| *Reviewed 15.11.23* | *Heleanna Phair* | *15.11.24* |