



Policy Document:

# Critical Incident & Emergency Closure.

(incl. Lock down procedure)

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## **Critical Incident & Emergency Closure.**

**At the Meadows Day Care Centre, we understand that we need to plan for all eventualities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all the children we care for as well as the staff that work here. With this in mind we have a critical incident policy in place to ensure that our setting is able to continue to operate effectively should such an incident occur.**

### **What is a critical incident?**

Although the concept of a critical incident is difficult to precisely define, we suggest that an incident could be described in critical terms when it 'Overwhelms or overcomes the normal coping strategies and strengths of those involved'. It is also important to note that this approach, which views critical incidents as situations or crises that are beyond the everyday experiences of preschool life, contains an implied understanding that these incidents would be markedly distressing to a significant number of adults and children.

Whilst no amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, it is hoped that some can be prevented and the effects of others minimised by taking sensible precautionary measures.

It is expected that

- All staff, volunteers and children should be familiar with the Centre's routines for fire and the evacuation of the building on hearing the fire alarm.
- All staff should be familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with emergencies (as detailed in this Policy).
- All staff should be familiar with the Centre's security procedures, in particular that all professional visitors are asked for identification and that parent or other visitors are not left unsupervised within nursery rooms. All visitors to the Centre must enter via the Main Entrance and not through Outdoor Play Areas or Nursery Rooms. All visitors to the setting MUST sign the 'Visitors Book'.
- All staff organising Nursery trips and visits follow the guidelines and write a risk assessment to be signed off by the Manager at least 48 hours before trip or visit.
- All staff should sign in and out of the premises.
- All staff are aware of children with medical needs or health problems including allergies.
- All staff are aware that they should assess associated risks to children before carrying out a curriculum or other activity.
- All staff are aware that they are responsible for assessing risks to themselves before undertaking an activity.

### **What is a major incident?**

A major incident may be defined as:

- An accident leading to a serious injury or fatality;
- Severe injury or severe stress;
- Circumstances in which a person or persons might be at serious risk of illness;
- Circumstances in which any part, or whole of the preschool is unable to function as normal due to external influences, and
- Any situation in which the national press or media might be involved.

As such, major incidents include:

- Death of a child, parent, staff or volunteer; death or serious injury on a Nursery outing.
- The sudden death, in tragic circumstances of a member of staff; volunteer; parent or child.

- A transport or road traffic accident involving staff; children; parents; volunteers of the Centre's community.
- A health epidemic in Centre and/or wider community
- A child missing from home; abductions or disappearances from home or preschool.
- Major fires or floods at the Centre or adjoining school.
- Destruction or major/significant vandalism at the Centre.

**A critical incident** can be a physical incident or psychological trauma which has severe immediate impact and likely long-term effects on the individuals involved. These may include:

- ✓ incidents which may involve staff/children/student/parent or other persons
- ✓ incidents may not necessarily occur in the Centre
- ✓ people-made disasters/emergencies
- ✓ natural disasters/emergencies/pandemics

In the event of a Critical Incident/Emergency affecting The Meadows Day Care Centre the following will apply:

### **Emergency Closure**

Any decision to close The Meadows Day Care will be made on Health and Safety or Statutory Regulation grounds, by the senior member of staff on duty (Deputy Nursery Manager) and/or Centre Manager and/or Ofsted nominated person.

*Section 3.54: Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the case of a fire or any other emergency, and must have an emergency evacuation procedure. Providers must have appropriate fire detection and control equipment (for example, fire alarms, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers) which is in working order. Fire exits must be clearly identifiable, and the fire doors must be free of obstruction and easily opened from the inside.*

### **The Meadows Day Care Centre will:**

- Hold a list of all children's next of kin in a readily accessible folder, keep it updated and will ensure that this information, relating to the children present, is taken on any outing.
- Establish and record essential details of any incident — what has happened, to whom, when, where, details of any injuries, witnesses who are at the scene, immediate support available and are the rest of the group safe. The facts will be clarified as quickly as possible, to ensure that accurate information is given to parents.
- Follow all procedures required by the registering authority and notify the relevant authorities — Police, Ofsted and any other Early Years Authorities. Regular checks are made to ensure all necessary phone numbers are at hand, correct and up to date.
- Not Release or confirm any information regarding the identity of those involved in an incident to the media until the Authorities have confirmed identity and parents have been informed. Media contact will be dealt with by both the Health and Safety Officer/Supervisor/Manager.
- Contact children's parents to inform them of the situation as outlined below.
- Aim to offer support to all who use The Meadows Day Care Centre and will enlist guidance from the Local Authority regarding to counselling/support systems that are available.

### **Evacuation**

If it is necessary to evacuate the building, we will do so following the Fire Action Plan, displayed on all designated emergency exits.

The Glebelands Primary School playground will be used as an Assembly Point.  
The Centre staff will walk the children to the playground.

**Parent/Carer notification**

We will notify parents by phone (Critical/Major Incident) or individual written note, as sensitively as possible, as soon as we are aware of an event that will result in the Centre being closed, giving as much notice as possible. In the event of a Critical/Major Incident we will keep a record of any calls received from parents, to help reduce the distress of receiving additional calls. We will give an indication of when the Centre is likely to reopen, if we are able to do so.

**Contacting Staff**

The Centre maintains an up to date record of staff's personal contact details, including emergency contacts. In the event of an emergency staff will be contacted out of hours informing them about the incident.

**Collection of Children**

If the Centre is closed because of a Critical Incident/Emergency, parents/carers will be contacted by a member of staff requesting them to collect their child/children immediately. In the event that the building has been evacuated, we will contact parents as soon as it is safe for us to do so.

## LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE

**A lock down procedure should be a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of the children and adults in the setting.**

**Our procedures aim to minimise disruption to the learning and play environment whilst ensuring safety for all.**

**Lockdown procedures may be activated in response to any number of situations but some of the more likely might be:**

1. A reported incident or disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to children and adults in the setting).
2. An intruder on site.
3. A warning being received regarding an environmental risk locally, of air pollution, smoke plume, gas cloud etc.
4. A major fire in the vicinity of the setting.
5. The close proximity of a dangerous animal.

THE SETTING'S LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE SHOULD BE FAMILIAR TO ALL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS. A LOCKDOWN DRILL WILL BE UNDERTAKEN AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR IN A CALM AND ORGANISED MANNER.

### **Partial lockdown**

A partial lockdown is a PRECAUTION aimed at keeping the children and staff safe while remaining indoors. In a partial lockdown, staff and children should remain within the building and all doors leading to the outside should be locked. NO ONE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO ENTER OR LEAVE THE BUILDING. However, the setting can continue as normal.

#### **1) Partial Lockdown Procedure**

**The partial lockdown procedure will be triggered by a recognised signal (not the same as a fire alarm).**

- STAY CALM
- All outside activity should cease immediately and all children and staff return to the building.
- All staff and children should remain in the building and external doors and windows should be locked.
- Free movement may be permitted within the building dependent upon the circumstances.
- In the event of an air pollution or chemical, biological or radiological contaminants issue, air vents, fans, heating should be closed or turned off.
- Seal up all the cracks around doors and any vents into the room to minimise possible access points of pollutants.

#### **2) Full lockdown Procedure**

**The full lockdown procedure will be triggered by a recognised signal (not the same as a fire alarm).**

- The Manager/Deputy will immediately call 999 and collect the register, a mobile phone and medications box to take to our 'safe place', i.e. the Nursery room.
- The Supervisor and remaining members of staff will and gather all the children together into our 'Safe Place'.
- No one should be allowed out of the 'safe place' during a lockdown procedure.
- Ensure all doors and windows are locked.

- All blinds will be drawn.
- Staff and children to stay out of sight and minimise movement
- Stay as quiet as possible so as not to draw attention
- One member of staff will count the children in the group whilst the Deputy/Supervisor quickly checks the premises for any other children.
- Once we are sure that all of the children and staff members are accounted for we will await Police assistance.
- After the danger has passed and it is safe for us to leave our safe place we will:
- Gather the children to the carpet area whilst the Manager/Deputy calls parents/carers to inform them what has happened.
- Endure. Be aware that you may be in 'lockdown' for some time.
- Ofsted and Cambridgeshire Early Years will be informed of the incident within 24hrs of it happening.

**ADOPTION AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

This policy was adopted on: .....- 1 July 2015

Signed:..... SK

This policy was reviewed/amended in – June 2017

Signed:..... SK

This policy was reviewed/amended in – October 2019

Signed:..... SK

This policy was reviewed/amended in – October 2020

Signed:.....JRS

This policy was reviewed/amended in – March 2022

Signed:.....JRS

This policy was reviewed/amended in – May 2023

Signed:.....JRS

This policy was reviewed/amended in -

Signed:.....

This policy was reviewed/amended in -

Signed:.....

