

## **12. Critical Incident Policy**

At La Petite Academy 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, we have a critical incident policy in place to ensure our nursery is able to operate effectively in the case of a critical incident. These include:

- Flood
- Fire (Refer to Fire Safety policy)
- Burglary/Vandalism to building
- Abduction or threatened abduction of a child
- Bomb threat or terrorism attack
- National outbreaks of infection or health pandemic
- Adverse weather conditions
- Reports of incidents or disturbances in the locality
- An intruder on the nursery site who poses a risk to staff and/or children
- Any other significant incident that may affect the care of the children in the nursery.

If any of these incidents impact on the ability of the nursery to operate and we cannot open or need to close immediately, we will contact parents via phone and/or email at the earliest opportunity, e.g. before the start of the nursery day or before afternoon session children arrive. The nursery has an arrangement with Ridgeway Infant School where children can be escorted there as a safe place to await collection if required.

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

### **Flood**

There is always a danger of flooding from adverse weather conditions or through the water and 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 make a decision based on the severity and location of this flooding. 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 nursery operational plan and provide temporary care in another location if possible (Ridgeway Infant School) and provide options for childcare facilities in the local area.

### **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/vandalised they will follow the procedure below:

- In an emergency dial 999 or non-emergency dial 101 with as many details as possible, i.e. name and location, details of what you have found and emphasise this is a nursery, and children will be arriving soon;
- Contain the area to ensure no-one enters until the police 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 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 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 vigilant at all times 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 Visitors policy.

Children will only be released into the care of a designated adult (refer to Attendance, 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 is able to 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 and a copy of this has been provided to the nursery. 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 staff member will notify management immediately and the manager will take control, dialling 999 and requesting the police, instructions from the emergency response team will be followed;
- 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 the incident;

- 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 or terrorist attack threat is received at the nursery, the person taking the call will record all details given over the phone as soon as possible, raising the alarm and contacting emergency services as soon as the phone call has ended. 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.

### **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.

If there is an incident outside of the nursery building and it is safer to stay inside the building, we will follow the Lockdown procedures below. Emergency services advice will be followed.

### **National outbreaks of infection and/or 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 as long as 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 of time, to prevent the spread of infection. This decision will be made in consultation with parents, staff, legal advice and our insurance provider. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis.

### **Extreme Weather Conditions**

If high snowfall, or another severe weather condition such as dense fog, is threatened during a nursery day then the manager will decide whether to close the nursery either at the start of, or at any point during, the day. This decision will take into account the safety of the children, their parents and the staff team. In the event of a planned closure during the nursery day, we will contact all parents to arrange for collection of their child.

In the event of staff shortages due to snow or other severe weather, we will contact all available off duty staff and/or bank staff and group the children differently until they are able to arrive. If we are unable to maintain statutory ratio requirements after all options have been explored, we will contact Ofsted to inform them of this issue, recording all details in our incident file. If we feel the safety, health or welfare of the children is compromised then we will take the decision to close the nursery.

### **Heat wave**

We are committed to ensuring that all children are fully protected from the dangers of too much sun and UV rays as severe sunburn in childhood can lead to the development of malignant melanoma (the most dangerous type of skin cancer) in later life.

Staff will make day-to-day decisions about the length of time spent outside depending on the strength of the sun and find the right balance to protect children from sunburn by following the NHS guidance. The benefits are discussed with parents and their wishes followed with regard to clothing, hats and sun cream. Please refer to the Sun Care policy for full information.

### **Incidents/Disturbances in the Locality**

We take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises, communicating policies clearly to staff on induction and through training. Parents are informed about the procedures through the

prospectus, website and reminders through newsletters. Visitors must read the information leaflet on entry.

We will use the following lock down procedure when the safety of the children, staff and others on the premises are at risk and we are better placed inside the current building, with doors and windows locked and blinds and/or curtains closed, due to incidents/disturbances in the vicinity, such as:

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

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

The sounding of the emergency alarm system from the panic buttons located in the porch of each building. At the 'all clear', there is a whistle to blow located in the main office.

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 centre of the room, or internal wall, so they are not placed at risk or are able to see any situation developing outside.

Internal communications will be kept to a minimum. Communication between rooms will be through internal telephones or mobile phones.

The manager will ensure all children, staff and visitors are accounted for and safe before returning to the office area to keep up to date with the current situation. The manager on duty will manage the situation dependent upon the information available. If the nursery 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 alerted by the police or local area authority then the nursery 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 to normal practice to enable the children not to be disrupted or upset by the events. Any children showing worries or concerns will have some 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. Ofsted will be informed.

Regular drills will be held to practice exercising the lock down procedures, using non-alarming scenarios.

<b>This policy was adopted on</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of the nursery</b>	<b>Date for review</b>
13/05/25	<i>Seren Brown</i>	30/04/29