

## **Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection**

The provider must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

### **1.8 Critical incident**

#### **Policy statement**

A critical incident is a traumatic incident that could result in death, or near death of a child, or staff member. At Little Fingers Pre-school, to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children in our care, we plan for all eventualities. The critical incident policy and procedure is in place to ensure that we operate effectively in the case of a critical incident.

#### *Procedure for a critical incident in the setting*

In the event of a critical Incident, the following procedures will be put into place by the person in charge i.e. the Pre-school Manager/SENCO (Leanne Shuttleworth), the Deputy Manager (Lana Sheppard).

These include:

- Adverse weather conditions such as a flood or snow.
- Heating system failure
- Burst water pipes
- Fire, bomb threat, explosion, terrorist attack
- Burglary
- Abduction or threatened abduction of a child
- Death of a member of staff or a child
- Assault on a member of staff or a child
- Serious accident or illness
- Any other incident that may affect the care of the children at the pre-school.

We will make every effort to keep the pre-school open, but in exceptional circumstances, we may need to close at short notice. We will contact parents via telephone/email.

In the event of an emergency, our primary concern will be to ensure that both the children and the staff are kept safe. If it is necessary to evacuate the pre-school, the following steps will be taken:

- If appropriate the manager will contact the emergency services.
- All children will be escorted from the building and taken to the assembly point in the playground.
- No attempts will be made to collect personal belongings, or to re-enter the building after evacuation.
- The manger, or if appropriate, another nominated individual will check the premises providing that this does not put anyone at risk.
- Before leaving the building the manager will close all accessible windows and doors.
- The register will be taken and all children and adults will be accounted for.

- If any person is missing from the register, the emergency services will be informed immediately.
- The manager or nominated person will contact parents to collect their children.
- All children will be supervised until safely collected. If after every attempt, the parent or carer cannot be contacted, the setting will follow its Uncollected Child procedure.
- If the registration is affected, we will inform Ofsted of its closure, and the local SfYC office for advice.

### **Flood**

There is always a danger of flooding from adverse weather conditions, which we cannot anticipate. If flooding occurs during the pre-school day, the manager will make a decision depending on the severity and location of the flooding, and it may be necessary to follow the evacuation procedure.

### **Snow**

If heavy snow fall is threatened during pre-school hours, the manager will take into account the safety of the children, their parents and the staff when deciding whether or not to close the pre-school. Parents will be contacted for collection of their child.

In the event of staff shortages due to snow, if we are unable to maintain statutory ratio requirements, Ofsted will be informed and advice sought. If the safety, health or welfare of the children is compromised, the manager will take the decision to close the pre-school.

### **Burst Water Pipes**

Regular checks and maintenance is carried out by the landlord of The Gospel Hall. However, if flooding occurs during pre-school hours, the manger will make a decision based on the severity and location of the flooding, and it may be necessary to follow the evacuation procedures.

### **Fire**

In the event of a fire, our normal fire procedures will apply and the building will be evacuated as above.

### **Burglary**

All doors and windows are closed and locked before the premises are vacated.

The manager checks the premises as they arrive in the morning. Should they discover that the pre-school has been broken into, they will:

- Dial 999 Police with as many details as possible – i.e. name and location, details of what they have found, and emphasise that this is a pre-school and children will be arriving soon.
- Contact David Sullivan who is in charge of the the Gospel Hall.
- Contain the area so that no-one enters until the police arrive. If all areas have been affected, the manager will follow police advice and may then follow the emergency closure procedure.
- The manager will help the police identify items missing, area of entry etc.
- The manager will be available to speak to and reassure parents.

- The manager will assess the situation following a theft and ensure parents are kept up-to-date with developments relating to the operation of the pre-school.

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

We take the safety and welfare of the children in our care extremely seriously and have secure safety procedures in place to ensure children are safe whilst within our care. This includes safety from abduction.

- Staff are vigilant at all times and report any persons lingering around the property to the manager.
- All doors and gates to the pre-school are locked and unable to be accessed unless staff members allow individuals in.
- Children will only be released into the care of a designated adult.
- Parents are requested to inform the pre-school of any potential custody battles or family concerns as soon as they arise so that the staff are able to support the child/ren.
- If an absent parent arrives to collect their child, the pre-school will not restrict access unless a court order is in place.
- Parents are requested to issue the pre-school with a copy of these documents should they be in place. We will seek legal advice with regards to any concerns over custody and relay any information back to all parties involved.

If a member of staff witnesses an actual or potential abduction from pre-school, the following procedures will be followed:

- The police must be called immediately
- The staff member will notify the manager immediately
- The parents 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 might impact on this abduction.

### **Bomb Threat / Terror Attack**

If a bomb threat is received at pre-school, the person taking the call will record all the details given over the phone as soon as possible and raise the alarm as soon as the telephone call is terminated. The manager will follow the fire evacuation procedure to ensure the safety of all on the premises, and will provide as much details to the emergency services as available. Advice would then be sought from the police as to further steps required.

### **National outbreaks of infection / Health Pandemics**

In the event of a national outbreak of a health pandemic we will follow the 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 done in consultation with parents, staff, legal advice and our insurance provider. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis.

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

### **Death or serious injury of a member of staff or child**

In this incidence, the manager would need to take charge of the situation. Priority would be to get emergency assistance by ringing 999 giving full details of the person, location, incident, and medical situation.

- A parent or next of kin should be contacted immediately.
- The local SfYC office should be contacted for support in contacting all the necessary agencies that need to be informed of the incident, including Ofsted, and Social Care. They will also provide support for the pre-school itself.
- Staff must be updated and debriefed.
- Children must be managed and reassured.
- Insurance company must be informed.
- Management must agree what will be told to the other parents to ensure they are all given the same information.
- With legal advice, management must decide what will be said to media if necessary to ensure consistency. Advice can also be obtained from the SfYC.
- A factual report must be written, using clear, specific language giving the facts about what happened.
- There must be a review of the procedures in the pre-school, to see if lessons can be learned from the incident, and an assessment made on the ongoing risk of this happening again.
- Consider counselling as necessary, contacting insurance company, local doctor who may be able to provide help in this area

### **Procedure for a critical incident outside of setting**

In the sad event that the pre-school is notified of a child's death outside of the setting, there may well be ongoing actions and issues that need to be addressed. These can include distress for staff, children, and parents, as well as Social Care and Police investigations, and possible media interest. There is no duty for us to ring Ofsted or Social care. However, if we felt that this incident was a safeguarding children issue, we would follow the normal Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

### **Procedure following a critical incident outside of setting**

- Inform SfYC for support
- Offer counselling for staff if needed or requested
- If a statement is required liaise with SfYC for advice and guidance. Agree what is to be said with staff so consistency is upheld

- Contact all parents to ensure that they hear about the incident directly from us, so that they hear the correct information. Ask SfYC for help and guidance.

### **Other Incidents**

All incidents will be managed by the manager, and all staff will co-operate with any emergency services on the scene. Any other incident that requires evacuation will follow the fire procedures. Other incidents will be dealt with on an individual basis taking into account the effect on the safety, health and welfare of the children and staff at the pre-school.

SfYC Headquarters Winchester: 01962 847070

SfYC Test Valley office: 01264 387443

Ofsted:08456-40-40-40

Local Social Care Dept. 0845 603 5620

A Critical Incident response time line is available in the Critical Incident Booklet

This policy was adopted by

Little Fingers Pre-school

On

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Date to be reviewed

March 2022

Signed on behalf of the provider

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Name of signatory

Carolyn Coleman

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

Chair

## 1.8 Critical incident COVID-19 Addendum

The pre-school will follow the critical incident policy for national outbreaks of infection/health pandemics.

In addition, it will continue to follow all Government guidelines regarding COVID-19 and keep staff and parents up to date with any changes. This includes following any procedures if the virus spreads across the setting and/or the infection rates were to increase again as well as any local restrictions. Further information can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures)

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