



# Critical Incident Policy

**A critical incident is defined as an incident that occurs which affects or threatens to affect the running of the pre-school as a complete unit.**

The pre-school will endeavour to be open as stated in our admissions policy without disruption. Where disruption is unavoidable, all involved in the pre-school will be kept informed and the pre-school will reopen at the earliest possible opportunity. These incidents can take many forms so it is impossible to list them all. For the purpose of this policy we will list the possible actions and they should be employed by the responsible person as and when they see fit.

## Aim

In the unlikely event that the pre-school has to close at times other than scheduled in the normal opening hours and dates, the policy will be applied to ensure that all involved in the pre-school have a clear understanding of the procedures which will take place.

## Methods

An emergency closure will be implemented in the following circumstances:

- When the building is unusable through accidental or malicious damage
- When the building is unusable due to required maintenance work. Where possible we will endeavour to negotiate scheduled work to be carried out during times of closure.
- When an outbreak of illness within the setting requires closure in line with Health Protection Agency (HPA) and Ofsted guidelines.
- When illness levels within the staff body mean it is impossible to maintain the correct ratios of suitable adults to children.
- When bad weather makes it unsafe for the building to be accessed e.g. snow and ice.

In the event of any of the above incidents occurring which requires the pre-school to not open on a given session, the manager will make contact with the families of the pre-school affected for that session in advance of the day where practical (If facilities are available a text message may be sent to a designated parent/carer via our text messaging service). Where this is not practical, a member of the management will be asked to remain at the building until such time as it can be determined that all the affected families have been made aware of the situation. The manager will be responsible for informing the relevant authorities of the unexpected closure. Initially this will be the Early Years Childcare and Extended Services team. Other parties who may need to be informed are Ofsted, Health Protection Agency, local health authority, Health and Safety Executive and RIDDOR, depending on the circumstances of the closure. Parents will be informed about how they can find out when the pre-school will reopen and other pertinent information according to the circumstances of the closure. This may include asking them to nominate a preferred contact number/email address, or holding a special meeting to keep parents informed. The pre-school website will be updated regularly.

Emergency closure after a session has started. In the event of an emergency closure after the session has started, parents and carers will be informed by telephone that they are required to collect their child as soon as possible. If the closure is due to sickness, the children and all staff who are unaffected will remain on the premises until all children can be collected. If the closure is due to an emergency which requires the building to be evacuated, the children will be safely evacuated according to the current Fire Drill procedures. Contact information for all the children will be taken out of the building alongside the daily register. Once the building is evacuated, the manager will ensure the relevant authorities/emergency services are called. The children will then be taken to a place of safety until such time as they can be collected by parents and carers.

**The place of safety is St Mary's Church Hall, Church Lane, MK41 0AP Telephone 01234 359094 or Overdale Tots Preschool, Highview, MK41 0AP Telephone 01234 327247**

The manager will contact the parents and carers of the children present. All staff will remain with the children during this time. Where the pre-school has to close in an emergency, the management will arrange for any funding from the local authority to be repaid if required, and for refunds to be made to any families who pay fees. This will usually be made by way of a reduction from the next term's fees, but may be in the form of a direct payment if circumstances require.

### **1. EVACUATION**

This will be used when it is deemed that it is unsafe for staff and children to **remain** in the pre-school and it is necessary to leave the room immediately for example; ***a fire or a gas leak, the building becoming unsafe, a bomb threat or other such incident.***

When this is necessary the Fire Alarm will be sounded and the fire procedure will be followed.

### **2. LOCK DOWN**

This will be used when it is deemed that it is unsafe for staff and children to **leave** the pre-school for example; ***severe weather conditions, an incident outside etc.***

If this becomes necessary a responsible person will inform the play leader. The procedure then will be to keep the children in the pre-school until the critical incident has passed. Staff should try to keep the children calm and quiet at all times but must be ready to react if the incident escalates.

### **3. LEAVING THE PRE-SCHOOL**

This will be used if it is deemed necessary for the children to vacate the pre-school for example; ***death or serious injury of a staff member or child in our care, suicidal parent or intruder with threatening behaviour, or other such incident that the children should not be exposed to.***

Although this should still be an immediate action unlike Evacuation no alarm will be sounded. If this becomes necessary the play leader will instruct the staff to lead the children out of the room via the safe exit.

With all these incidents there will be other persons and agencies to advise us of appropriate actions. We must ensure our children's safety at all times. Our system of contacting parents and carers will be instigated as soon as practicable and further advice will be sort from our support staff from Children's Services, Bedford Borough and Ofsted.

**Remember our best weapon in any critical incident is common sense. If we act positively and calmly and always think of the children first we will always do our best.**