



Critical Incident Policy and Procedures

Introduction

At Putnoe Woods Preschool we understand we 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 Preschool is able to operate effectively in the case of a critical incident.

A 'Critical incident' describes any occurrence, which constitutes a major disruption arising with little or no warning and requires the assistance of the emergency services including those that are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive, complying with RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). This policy will provide staff and parents information and guidance in the case of an incident occurring and could potentially minimise its impact on the setting.

In responding to an incident, the aim will always be to ensure:

- Rapid and appropriate response is taken
- Accurate information is relayed to parents and emergency services regarding the incident
- Normal Preschool routine is maintained as far as possible, offering continuity to the children
- Immediate support and clear guidance is offered by person(s) in charge

These include:

- Flood
- Fire
- Burglary
- Abduction or threatened abduction of a child
- Bomb threat/terrorism attack
- Any other incident that may affect the care of the children in the nursery
- Discovery of dangerous structural damage/building collapse
- Death or serious injury as a result of violence, accident or sudden illness
- A pandemic - worldwide spread of a new disease
- An epidemic - An **outbreak** of disease that attacks many people at about the same time and may spread through one or several communities

If any of these incidents impact on the ability of the Preschool to operate, we will contact parents via phone, email or text message at the earliest opportunity, e.g. before the start of the Preschool 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.

If flooding occurs during the preschool day, the Preschool Manager will make a decision based on the severity and location of this flooding, and it may be deemed necessary to follow 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.

Should the preschool be assessed as unsafe through flooding, fire or any other incident we will follow our operational plan and provide care in another location which is our place of safety:

Mark Rutherford Upper School or Putnoe Primary school

Fire

Please refer to the fire safety policy.

Burglary

The management of the preschool 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 preschool is closed.

The preschool manager will always check the premises as they arrive in the morning. Should they discover that the Preschool has been broken into they will follow the procedure below:

- Dial 999 with as many details as possible, i.e. name and location, details of what you have found and emphasise this is a Preschool and children will be arriving soon
- Contain the area to ensure no-one enters until the police arrive. 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, including following the relocation procedure under flood 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.

Abduction or threatened abduction of a child

We have secure safety procedures in place to ensure children are safe while in our care, including safety from abduction. Staff must be vigilant at all times and report any persons lingering on Preschool property immediately. All doors and gates to the Preschool 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. 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 arrival and collection policy for more details. Parents are requested to inform the Preschool of any potential custody battles or family concerns as soon as they arise, so the Preschool is able to support the child. The Preschool will not take sides in relation to any custody battle and will remain neutral for the child. If an absent parent arrives to collect their child, the Preschool will not restrict access **unless** a court order is in place. Parents are requested to issue the Preschool 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 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 may impact on this abduction.

Bomb Threat / Terrorism Attack

Please refer to Bomb Threat / Terrorism Attack Policy, Lockdown Policy



Pandemic / Epidemic

In the event of a risk of a pandemic or epidemic effecting the operations of Putnoe Woods Preschool it will be in extreme circumstance and on guidance from the local authority and government authorities that the preschool may have to consider closure.

- If the Government authorities decide that as situation has reached the stage that early years settings are required to close, that decision will be devolved to local authorities and if the virus spreads a decision may be made to shut settings in the area affected.
- This will not be a decision taken lightly by Putnoe Woods Preschool and we will be very much guided by the professional advice we receive
- If we have to close the preschool a message will be posted on the website or parents will be notified by telephone. If we have to close during school hours, we will contact all parents of children in school that day by telephone to arrange collection
- We will remain closed until such time as we receive instruction that it is safe to open again

Other incidents

All incidents will be managed by the manager on duty and all staff will co-operate with any emergency services on the scene. Any other incident that requires evacuation will follow the fire plan. Other incidents e.g. no water supply will be dealt with on an individual basis, considering the effect on the safety, health and welfare of the children and staff in the nursery.

Suspension of the Services

Putnoe Woods Preschool Services may be suspended (meaning the Child is temporarily not able to attend the preschool) in the circumstances that are set out in this policy or in the circumstances set out in clause 19 of the parent contract. If the Services are suspended for a period of more than one month, either of us may terminate the contract by giving the other one month's written notice.

Preschool Closure

The Preschool may be closed in the following circumstance:

- Matters beyond our reasonable control or compulsory closure by a public body. For example, but without limitation: fire, flood, terrorism, pandemic / epidemic of certain notifiable diseases. We will keep you informed, in such an event.



- It is, in our reasonable opinion, necessary for the welfare and safety of any child and our staff to do. By way of example; extreme weather conditions such as snow.

Charging during closures

Should the preschool be closed in the circumstances above, fees will be chargeable unless the loss of income is covered under our business interruption insurance. A copy of our loss of income insurance is available upon request.

The Preschool Manager will notify Ofsted in the event of a critical incident

This policy is in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018

Putnoe Woods is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, employees, students, volunteers, trustees and parents and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Date of Policy: September 2015	Created By: Jo Skelton	
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Review Date	Reviewer	Amendments
May 2018	Jo Skelton	GDPR statement added Reference to Lockdown Policy

Putnoe Woods Preschool



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Review Date	Reviewer	Amendments	Policy signed off on behalf of the Board of Trustees
January 2019			
November 2019	Nikki Adams	New email address	
March 2020	Jo Skelton	Added section: Pandemic / Epidemic Events beyond control Suspension of services	
January 2022	Jo Skelton		
November 2022	Nikki Adams	GDPR replaced by Data Protection	