

Critical Incident Policy

At Bright Beginnings Childcare Centre we acknowledge 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 Centre is able to operate effectively in the case of a critical incident.

A 'critical incident' may be defined as any event which threatens severely to disrupt, in whole or in part, the functioning of the Centre or which carries the risk of significant adverse publicity (or both). This definition is inevitably vague, and it is probably impossible to identify in advance all types of event which would constitute critical incidents. But a critical incident would normally have the following features:

- there are substantial threats to the safety of individuals or the fabric or reputation of the Centre; and
- the incident is likely to lead to the suspension of normal operations; and
- it follows that a critical incident is likely to require the calling out of the emergency services; and special communications mechanisms.

All incidents will be managed by the Centre's management team (in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Directors, if necessary) and all staff will co-operate with any emergency services on the scene. An incident that requires evacuation will follow the fire safety plan. Other than the incidents identified below, all 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 in the Centre.

The key point is that **the management team should be informed immediately of any critical incident and of any potentially critical incident.** During office hours any member of the management team will be available in the managers' office or on reception. If a manager is unavailable, contact should be made with the General Manager or the Chair of the Board of Directors.

Contacting Staff

The Centre maintains an up-to-date staff e-mail list on ParentMail (the online communication service) so that, in any emergency, all members of staff may be contacted out of working hours. (The system would only be used to communicate

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with members of staff in a real emergency – or when the Centre is shut.) The Centre also has a closed staff Facebook group which it can use to contact staff out of working hours.

All staff will be made aware of how the ParentMail and Facebook contact system will be implemented in the event of a critical incident.

The Centre has identified a number of key staff who have the authority to activate the ParentMail contact system as needs be. Where possible, the activation of the contact system should be done in consultation with the General Manager and/or Chair of the Board of Directors.

Contacting parents

In respect of contacting parents, the management team will ensure that this is done via text message and/or e-mail, both of which will be done via ParentMail.

Specific Incidents

We have identified a number of specific critical incidents and how we would respond to them if they should arise. These include:

- Flood
- Burglary
- Abduction or threatened abduction of a child
- Fire - please refer to the fire safety plan

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 risk 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.

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If flooding occurs during the business day, a decision will be made based on the severity and location of this flooding, and it may be deemed necessary to follow the fire safety plan. In this instance children will be kept safe and parents will be notified in the same way as set out in the fire safety plan.

Should the Centre be assessed as unsafe through flooding, fire or any other incident we will provide care within the Leeds University Union building. At this point decisions will be made on how long term care can be provided or alternative arrangements / facilities can be found in the local area.

Burglary

The management and domestic teams follow a lock up procedure which ensures all doors and windows are closed and locked before vacating the premises. Alarms are used and in operation during all hours the Centre is closed.

On arrival in the morning, members of the team check the premises. Should they discover that the Centre has been broken into they will follow the procedure below:

- Contact University Security on 32222 relaying as many details as possible, i.e. name and location, details of what you have found. Security will advise of the next steps which will include contacting the police.
- Contact a member of the management team if they are not already at the Centre.
- Contain the area to ensure no one enters until the police arrive. 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 management team will help the police with the 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

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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

At Bright Beginnings we take the safety and welfare of the children in our care extremely seriously. As such we have procedures in place to ensure children are safe whilst within our care, this includes safety from abduction. Staff must be vigilant at all times and report any persons lingering on Centre / University property adjacent to the Centre immediately. All doors and gates to the Centre are locked and unable to 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 visitors' policy.)

Children will only be released into the care of a designated adult, see the collection of children policy for more details. Parents are requested to inform the Centre of any potential custody battles or family concerns as soon as they arise so that we are able to support the child. The Centre 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 Centre will not restrict access unless a court order is in place. Parents are requested to issue the Centre with a copy of these documents should they be in place. We will consult our solicitors with regard 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 the Centre the following procedure will be followed:

- The staff member will notify the management team immediately and a manager will take control.
- The police must be called immediately.
- The parent(s) will be contacted immediately.
- All other children will be kept safe and secure and calmed down where necessary.

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- 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.

This Policy was adopted on	24 th July 2017
Signed on behalf of the Centre	Catherine Cho
Date for review	24 th July 2018