

## Critical Incident Policy



### EYFS Statutory Requirements – page 29 section 3.54-3.55

#### EYFS Key Themes and Commitments

<u>A Unique Child</u>	<u>Positive Relationships</u>	<u>Enabling Environments</u>	<u>Learning and Development</u>
1.3 Keeping safe 1.4 Health and Well-Being	2.3 Supporting learning	3.3 The learning environment	4.4 Areas of Learning and Development

#### Policy statement

Handling crises and dealing with difficult 'incidents' on a daily basis is viewed by some as a normal aspect of playschool life. However, there are occasions when Early Years Provisions will experience incidents of a significantly more extreme nature. What seems to distinguish these incidents is their nature and scale, and it is this type of occurrence, which has come to be termed a 'critical incident'.

A critical incident may be viewed as an 'Unexpected occurrences, which may suddenly have a major impact on playschool'. Or as a situation that 'Overwhelms or overcomes the normal coping strategies and strengths of those involved'.

It is also important to note that this approach, which views critical incidents as situations or crises that are beyond the everyday experiences of playschool life, contains an implied understanding that these incidents would be markedly distressing to a significant number of adults and children.

#### Procedures

Whilst no amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, it is hoped that some can be prevented and the effects of others minimised by taking sensible precautionary measures. It is expected that

- all staff, volunteers and children should be familiar with the playschool's routines for fire and the evacuation of the playschool building on hearing the fire bell.
- all staff should be familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with emergencies (as detailed in this Policy).
- all staff should be familiar with the playschool's security procedures, in particular that all professional visitors are asked for identification and that parent or other visitors are not left unsupervised within play rooms. All visitors to the playschool must enter via the Main Entrance. All visitors to the setting MUST sign the 'Visitors Book'.
- all staff organising playschool trips and visits follow the guidelines and write a risk assessment to be signed off by the Manager at least 48 hours before trip or visit.
- all staff should sign in and out of the premises.
- all staff are aware of pupils with medical needs or health problems.
- all staff are aware that they should assess associated risks to children before carrying out a curriculum or other activity.

- all staff are aware that they are responsible for assessing risks to themselves before undertaking an activity.

A **major incident** may be defined as (this list is not exhaustive):

- An accident leading to a serious injury or fatality;
- Severe injury or severe stress;
- Circumstances in which a person or persons might be at serious risk of illness;
- Circumstances in which any part, or whole of the playschool is unable to function as normal due to external influences, and
- Any situation in which the national press or media might be involved.

As such, **major incidents include** (this list is not exhaustive):

- Death of a child, parent, staff or volunteer; Death or serious injury on a playschool trip.
- The sudden death, in tragic circumstances of a member of staff; volunteer; parent or child.
- A transport or road traffic accident involving staff; children; parents; volunteers of the playschool community.
- Epidemic in playschool or community
- A child missing from home; Abductions or disappearances from home or playschool.
- Major fires or floods at the playschool or adjoining school.
- Destruction or major/significant vandalism in playschool; Arson attacks on playschools/schools.
- Incident involving an intruder, believed to be armed, on playschool premises
- A hostage taking; Violent attacks on children; staff and volunteers.
- A disaster in the community; A civil disturbance or terrorism (including bomb threats).
- Allegations or actual incidents of abuse against pupils by staff and staff against pupils.

In the event of such an incident the priorities of those adults in charge of the playschool; activity; visit or trip at the time must be able to:

- Save life
- Minimise personal injury
- Safeguard the interests of children; parents; staff and volunteers
- Minimise loss and to return to normal working practices as quickly as possible

**Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)** will comprise of the following: Bob Pickering, Joanna Ludlam, Nickie Anniwell, Sonia Amato, Nikki Thomson.

### **Closing the playschool**

The decision to close the playschool will lie with Joanna Ludlam (manager) and Nikki Thomson (chair). If one of these people are unavailable, then the next senior member of playschool staff will make the decision with a member of the committee. The playschool may either close for an

emergency or as a planned event. Emergency closure may be due to fire, flood or break down of an essential utility. Planned closure may be due to polling, utility works or maintenance. Advice from external agencies (Peninsula, the emergency services, Ofsted) will supersede the playschool. The minimum temperature for the playschool will be 16°, if the base temperature drops to this then the critical incident management team will decide on a plan of action.

### **Emergency Pack**

The playschool emergency pack will consist of:

- A copy of the critical incident plan
- Log book
- Contact telephone numbers
- List of all childrens names, medical details and emergency contacts.
- Staff list with emergency contacts and medical details
- Plans of the playschool
- Mobile phone and charger
- Torch
- First aid kit
- Pens and paper
- Inventory of equipment

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **Ensuring Safety**

- 1) Deploy first aiders, if necessary
- 2) Account for all children and adults
- 3) Report anyone missing to the police or other emergency service

### **IMMEDIATE ACTION – i.e. within hours of the incident occurring**

- 1) Obtain and collate information relating to the incident – uncertainty breeds rumour and accurate information is essential;
- 2) Gather and brief the CIMT (Critical Incident Management Team) – brief the team, allocate roles and responsibilities;
- 3) Trigger support from the appropriate external professional organisations and other contacts on emergency list clearly identifying who is going to contact whom;
- 4) Set up an incident management room and dedicated phone line to deal with calls from anxious parents etc. CIMT will agree a factual statement and avoid speculation.
- 5) Contact families affected. Information will be consistent and sensitively disclosed. Emotional support will be given to those families.
- 6) CIMT to agree and make arrangements to inform other parents i.e. letter or leaflet. Advice is to be sought from Peninsula before other parents are informed in respect of legal liability.

- 7) Inform staff, volunteers and students. Staff to be reminded and/or briefed about not talking to the media or responding to questions from reporters. All staff in contact with children will be kept informed and feel secure in handling comments or questions from children.
- 8) Inform children depending on their ability to understand using an age appropriate method. It is important that children receive a consistent account of the incident allowing for differences in their ability to understand.
- 9) Care needs to be exercised to protect both children and adults closely involved in the incident.
- 10) People involved will be encouraged to talk.
- 11) Seek advice from Peninsula before agreeing to speak to or be interviewed by the media. If this is not an option then an agreed text for release should be prepared by the CIMT and a designated spokesperson briefed and prepared to respond on the playschool's behalf.
- 12) Devise a plan for handling the reactions and feelings of people affected; denial, distress, guilt, anger and helplessness. CIMT need to consider outside professionals to support and debrief staff; parents; volunteers and children affected by the incident. Those providing support also need support. At this point the CIMT will need to plan their short term reaction to the incident.

### **SHORT TERM ACTION – the next stage**

- 1) Reunion of children with their families – especially where the incident occurs outside the playschool. Mostly children will need to be taken home, but CIMT need to be aware that sometimes parents and families need to visit the scene of the incident to understand how they deal with repercussions in terms of their children's fears etc.
- 2) Organise support for all Staff and Volunteers, preferably from within the playschool but using outside agencies if appropriate. Staff monitoring should be a priority, even for members of the CIMT. If a crisis persists over many hours staff will become tired, weary and upset and this affects their powers to make sensible decisions.
- 3) Encourage children to talk using age appropriate strategies and activities to enable them to talk about the incident and their feelings. Use outside agencies if appropriate. Staff will be briefed about ways to help the children affected by the incident, and how to identify patterns of behaviour etc. This may have implications for the wider curriculum i.e. training in bereavement counselling for staff, provision of a range of books, PSE discussions etc...
- 4) Debriefing Meeting – it may be appropriate to hold a debriefing meeting for staff, volunteers, children and parents to:
  - clarify what has happened
  - allow for sharing reactions
  - reassure people that reactions are normal
  - mobilise resources e.g. parental support groupsAn experienced person, possibly someone from outside the school community, will lead this meeting.

5) Re-establishing Routines – Every attempt will be made to provide continuity for the children. The return to playschool of staff or pupils directly affected by the crisis will be managed carefully and with sensitivity but the re-establishment of routine is an important stage in emotional recovery.

### **MEDIUM TERM ACTION**

1. Return to playschool for staff; volunteers or children after long absence. Reintegration will be carefully planned and may involve home visits prior to return or part time attendance initially, reducing workloads, putting in place mentoring process etc.
2. Consulting Professionals – consideration will be given to consulting the Educational Psychology Service for support and guidance, especially to help those showing unusual or prolonged reaction to the incident.
3. Keeping Parents Informed – the CIMT will consider whether it is appropriate to produce a leaflet for parents giving guidance on the possible delayed reactions of pupils to an incident and making suggestions to help them deal with these.
4. Support for Staff – ongoing monitoring and support for staff is a major consideration. CIMT especially will not be immune to reaction from their ordeal.

### **LONG TERM ACTION**

1. Monitoring the Vulnerable – the effects of a crisis can reverberate for years, and it is especially important that new staff and pupils are briefed in the playschool's history to help them understand and deal with potential repercussions especially at anniversary times.
2. Marking Anniversaries – these difficult times will be treated with sensitivity.
3. Legal Processes – the length of time taken over some legal processes can prolong the recovery process following a critical incident. CIMT will plan for this especially where staff may be involved attending legal processes, and facing extended emotional trauma.
4. Curriculum Implications – it may be appropriate to schedule INSET training for staff in loss counselling, bereavement etc.

### **Adverse Weather Procedure**

If high snow fall is threatened during a playschool day then the manager and chair of the committee (or other representatives) will take the decision as to whether to close the playschool. The decision will take into account the safety of the children, their families and the staff. In the event of a closure, we will contact all parents to collect their children.

In the event of staff shortages due to snow, we will contact all available bank staff and/or agency staff to maintain ratios until staff arrive. If we are unable to maintain statutory ratio requirements after all avenues are explored, we will inform Ofsted and record the details in our incident log. Staff and families must not put themselves at risk to get to the playschool. If we feel that the safety, health and welfare of the children is compromised then we will take the decision to close the playschool.

Staff will be sent home in adverse weather conditions in order of distance to travel. The furthest away will leave first. Those who can walk home will be asked to maintain ratio and close the playschool. All staff must report to the manager that they have arrived home safely.

This procedure applies for other adverse weather.

### Action Cards

Action Cards give responsibilities for specified staff in the event of a critical incident a. away from the playschool b. in the playschool environment. These should be used in the event of a major incident and be carried by staff on playschool visits.

<b>ACTION CARD 1. GUIDANCE FOR PLAYSCHOOL STAFF IN EVENT OF A MAJOR INCIDENT ON PLAYSCHOOL PREMISES</b>	<b>ACTION CARD 2 GUIDANCE FOR PLAYSCHOOL STAFF IN EVENT OF A MAJOR INCIDENT OFF SITE</b>	<b>ACTION CARD 3 GUIDANCE FOR PLAYSCHOOL STAFF IN EVENT OF A MAJOR INCIDENT ON SITE – e.g. Fire and/or Flood</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• obtain facts and information</li> <li>• call the emergency services using 999</li> <li>• Call Warwick Academy (01933 446900) and at same time:</li> </ul> <p><b>PROCEDURE:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evacuate the building if safe to do so and deemed necessary and assemble either on the playschool field or within Warwick Academy.</li> <li>2. Staff to bring the register; mobile/room phones if they have access to them.</li> <li>3. Office Staff to bring main phone and contact lists.</li> <li>4. Inform and keep informed playschool staff; volunteers and children as appropriate.</li> <li>5. Retain any relevant equipment.</li> <li>6. Contact appropriate authority and/or organisation for advice.</li> <li>7. Contact Chair of Management Committee.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Administer First Aid where possible.</li> <li>2. Establish a contact point with the emergency services.</li> <li>3. Allocate responsibility to ensure other children are safe and supported.</li> <li>4. Travel with casualties to hospital.</li> <li>5. Inform the playschool. Playschool to contact parents/carers.</li> <li>6. Complete Accident / Incident Forms.</li> <li>7. Inform the chair</li> <li>8. Inform Ofsted</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep a record of incident; action taken; witnesses etc..</li> <li>2. Keep others informed of situation.</li> <li>3. Arrange for non-casualties to evacuate playschool.</li> </ol> <p><b>PROCEDURE:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evacuate the building, if safe to do so and deemed necessary by the double emergency gate and assemble either on the playschool field or within Warwick Academy.</li> <li>2. Staff to bring the register; mobile/room phones if they have access to them.</li> <li>3. Office Staff to bring main phone and contact lists.</li> <li>4. Inform Warwick Academy of evacuation.</li> <li>5. Care for relatives arriving at playschool or alternative location.</li> <li>6. Consider re-location to other premises.</li> </ol>

8. Contact Health & Safety Authority and/or Ofsted 9. Prepare to deal with the media.		7. Remain available to emergency services and take their advice. 8. Inform the Chair 9. Inform ofsted
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This policy was adopted at a meeting of: Warwick Community Association

Reviewed on: May 2017

This policy will be reviewed annually in October.

This policy will be reviewed annually, with changes made as required. The manager of the setting will be responsible for maintaining this and sharing with the committee members of Warwick Community Association to be verified. This will be shown in the minutes of the meeting.