Critical Incident Policy

At Muddy Puddles Childcare 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 nursery is able to operate effectively in the case of a critical incident. These include:

- Flood
- Fire
- Burglary
- Abduction or threatened abduction of a child
- Bomb threat or terrorism attack
- National outbreaks of infection or health pandemic
- Any other incident that may affect the care of the children in the nursery.

If any of these incidents impact on the ability of the nursery to operate, we will contact parents via phone at the earliest opportunity e.g. before the start of the nursery day.

Flood

There is always a danger of flooding from adverse weather conditions or through the water and 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. Our central heating systems are checked and serviced annually by a registered engineer and they conform to all appropriate guidelines and legislation.

If flooding occurs during the nursery day, the nursery manager will make a decision based on the severity and location of this flooding. It may be deemed necessary to follow the same procedure as 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 (see Fire safety policy).

Fire

Please refer to the Fire safety policy.

Burglary

The management of the nursery follow a lock up procedure which ensures all doors and windows are closed and locked before vacating the premises. The manager or most senior member of staff on site will always check the premises as they arrive in the morning. Should they discover that the nursery has been broken into they will follow the procedure below:

• In an emergency dial 999 or non-emergency dial 101 with as many details as possible, i.e. name and location, details of what you have found and emphasise this is a nursery and children will be arriving soon

• Contain the area to ensure no-one enters until the police arrive

• Where it is safe to do so, 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. This may include temporary short-term closure 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

• Arrangements will be made to ensure the nursery is made safe and secure again.

Abduction or threatened abduction of a child

We have secure safety procedures in place to ensure children are safe while in our care, including taking reasonable steps to ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises.

Staff are vigilant at all times and report any persons lingering on nursery property immediately. All doors to the nursery 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 Arrivals and departures policy for more details. Parents are requested to inform the nursery of any potential custody proceedings or family concerns as soon as they arise, so the nursery is able to support the child. The nursery will not take sides in relation to any custody arrangements and will remain neutral for the child. If an absent parent arrives to collect their child, the nursery will not restrict access unless a court order is in place. Parents are requested to issue the nursery 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 staff member will notify management immediately and the manager will take control, dialling 999 and requesting the police, instructions from the emergency response team will be followed

• The parent(s) will be contacted

• All other children will be kept safe and secure, reassured and calmed 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 have impacted on this abduction

• Any incidents must be recorded in writing as soon as practicably possible including the outcome, who was abducted, time identified, notification to police and findings

• In the unlikely event that the child is not found, the nursery will follow the local authority and police procedure

• Ofsted will be contacted and informed of the incident

• With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary

• In any cases with media attention staff will not speak to any media representatives

• Post-incident risk assessments will be conducted following any incident of this nature to enable the chance of this reoccurring being reduced.

Bomb threat/terrorism attack

If a bomb or terrorist attack threat is received at the nursery, the person taking the call will record all details given over the phone as soon as possible, raising the alarm and contacting emergency services as soon as the phone call has ended. The management will follow the fire evacuation procedure and guidance from the emergency services to ensure the safety of all on the premises. The person who took the call will provide as much detail to the emergency services as possible. Ofsted will be notified.

With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary.

Any other significant incidents

All incidents will be managed by the manager on duty and all staff will co-operate with any emergency services on the scene, where applicable. The fire evacuation procedure will be followed for any other incident that requires an emergency evacuation. Other incidents e.g. no water supply, 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 nursery.

If there is an incident outside of the nursery building and it is safer to stay inside the building, we will follow the Lockdown policy. Emergency services advice will be taken.

National outbreaks of infection and/or health pandemics

In the event of a national outbreak of a health pandemic, we will follow 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 made 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.

This Policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
01/02/2026	Heather Black	01/02/2027