

Critical Incident Childcare

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The current version of any policy, procedure or guideline is the version held in the Knowledge Library on Workplace. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they are following the current version.

As an association 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 all our childcare services can operate effectively in the case of a critical incident. These include:

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

If any of these incident's impact on the ability of any of our settings to operate then, we will contact parents via phone, email, and our parent zone app at the earliest opportunity, e.g., before the start of the 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. Our central heating systems are checked and serviced annually by a registered gas engineer, and they conform to all appropriate guidelines and legislation.

If flooding occurs during the day, a senior member of management will decide 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 one of our settings be assessed as unsafe through flooding, fire or any other incident we will follow our YMCA operational plan and depending on which setting or settings have been affected we will endeavour to provide care in another location or provide parents with alternative arrangements in one of our sister childcare settings or offer the option of childcare facilities in the local area.

Fire

Please refer to the fire safety policy.

Burglary

The management of our childcare settings 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 settings are closed.

A member of the setting leadership team will always check the premises as they arrive in the morning. Should they discover that the setting 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 childcare setting and that 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 always available during this time to speak to parents, reassure children and direct enquires
- A member of the leadership team will assess the situation following a theft and ensure parents are kept up to date with developments relating to the operation of the setting.

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 always be vigilant and report any persons lingering on the childcare setting immediately. All doors and gates are locked and cannot be accessed unless staff members allow individuals in. However, fire doors remain unlocked to ensure staff and children can evacuate the building immediately should they be required to do so. 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 their childcare setting of any potential custody battles or family concerns as soon as they arise so that we can support the child. Our primary focus is for the duty of care of the child, and we will report any concerns to the relevant local authorities and provide any information to them or to the courts as directed. The setting will not take sides and will remain neutral for the child. If an absent parent arrives to collect their child, the setting will not restrict access **unless** a court order is in place. Parents are requested to issue their childcare setting 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 one of our settings, then 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

If a bomb threat is received at any of our childcare settings, the person taking the call will record all details given over the phone as soon as possible. They must raise the alarm by calling 999 and giving as much detail as possible. They must also call a member of senior management and raise the alarm as soon as the phone call has ended. The management will follow the fire evacuation procedure to ensure the safety of all on the premises and will provide as much detail to the emergency services as possible.

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 setting.

If there is an incident outside of the childcare building and it is safer to stay inside the building, we will put into place the lockdown procedure. Emergency advice will be taken.

National outbreaks of infection/Health Pandemics

In the event of a national outbreak of a health pandemic we will follow the Government health advice and guidance, legal advice and advice from our insurance provider.

The setting will remain open if 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 done in consultation with parents, staff, legal advice and our insurance provider. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis.

A member of senior management will notify Ofsted in the event of a critical incident.

This policy was adopted by

YMCA Thames Gateway



On	14/01/2023
Signed on behalf of the provider	
Name of signatory	Amanda Allen
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Head of Family and Children's Services

Policy review date	13/01/2024 – on or before
Name of reviewer	
Signature of reviewer	
Role of reviewer	