



Critical incident policy

Nursery Closure

Reviewed: July 2025

To be reviewed: July 2026

At Little Learners Nursery Group, 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/terrorism attack
- Any other incident that may affect the care of the children in the nursery.

Before any decision is made to close the nursery, a risk assessment should be undertaken and, using common sense, determine whether it is feasible for children and staff to remain in the school and if not, what subsequent risks could arise by sending them home. The nursery should, however, endeavour to remain open where possible.

If any of these incidents impact on the ability for the nursery to operate, we will contact parents by email.

Closure due to severe weather

The decision to close a nursery will normally rest with the Executive Lead and be confirmed with a Nursery Director. The decision should be made where possible before 7.30am and on the basis of information received from the media about weather, supplemented by on the spot observation, either personally or from staff members better placed to make such observations and through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office.

Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the school are likely to be:

- Access to the nursery, i.e. road conditions (obstructions, snow, ice, flooding etc). This will also require dialogue with school transport providers.
- Breakdown of school essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc.)

The nursery manager will advise staff and parents of any closure. Closures will be considered on a daily basis. If during term time, the school's headteacher should

be made aware.

The whole school community should be made regularly aware of this procedure as incidents can occur with little or no warning.

During Nursery Day Closure Guidance

On occasions it may be necessary for nurseries to close during the school day *i.e if the weather is deteriorating and there is doubt as to whether children can be safely returned home later in the day*. In such cases the nursery will ensure that children are collected from school. In these cases the nursery will send out an email message informing parents of the closure. This will be followed up with telephone calls where possible. Parents who are subsequently unable to collect their child and need to make alternative arrangements should telephone the nursery. It may be necessary to obtain verbal permission from parents for their child to be collected by another named parent.

Staff Attendance

Although it is recognised that severe weather conditions make it difficult for staff to get to and from work, unless advised to the contrary by the most Senior Leader, then the expectation is that staff will present themselves for work. Travel to work/school is regarded by both the Police and the Local Authority's Highways Department as an essential journey, and every effort should be made to get to work unless it is considered unsafe to do so or the Senior Leader has specifically informed you that you cannot come in.

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 nursery day, the Nursery 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 nursery be assessed as unsafe through flooding, fire or any other incident we will follow our operational plan and provide care in another location.

Fire

Please refer to the fire safety policy.

Burglary

The management of the nursery follows 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 nursery is closed.

The site is always checked each morning. Should it be discovered that the nursery has been broken into, the following procedure will be followed:

- Dial 999 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. 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 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 enquiries.
- 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

At Little Learner's Nursery Group, we take the safety and welfare of the children in our care extremely seriously. As such we have secure safety procedures in place to ensure children are safe whilst within our care, this includes safety from abduction;

- Staff will be vigilant at all times and report any persons lingering on nursery property immediately
- All doors and gates to the nursery 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 arrivals and departures policy for more details
- Parents are requested to inform the nursery of any potential custody battles 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 battle 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 the following procedure will be followed:

- 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 the nursery, the person taking the call will record all details given over the phone as soon as possible and raise the alarm as soon as the phone call is terminated. 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.

Lockdown procedures may apply.

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 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.

Ofsted

If the setting has had to move to temporary premises, Ofsted will be informed.