



## **High Legh Preschool Nursery Emergency Closure policy**

At High Legh Preschool Nursery our priority at all times is to ensure the safety and well-being of all children, parents/carers, visitors, contractors and staff.

### **Aims:**

To ensure that children, parent/carers, families, contractors, visitors and staff members are kept safe at all times, and that we are prepared to respond to emergency situations in a planned and safe way.

Certain situations, such as the failure of essential services (e.g. heating or water systems), building damage, fire outbreak, severe weather conditions, or an illness epidemic/Pandemic may occasionally make it necessary for our setting to close to ensure the safety of all.

Planning for these situations is a central part of our policy on Health and Safety and Risk Management, and it is important that all staff, parents/carers and families are aware of the actions that will be taken should it become necessary to close unexpectedly, either during session times or outside of normal hours. This procedure outlines the steps to be taken in case of emergency to ensure good communication and orderly conduct, so that the welfare of children, staff and other individuals is maintained. In a real emergency, it may be necessary for the person in charge to respond as they see fit and we recognise that this will be the case when dealing with real life situations. However, this procedure gives a common approach which should make coping with an emergency easier.

### **Procedure:**

#### **Preparation**

- All staff and volunteers should be familiar with the emergency procedure. A copy is given to all staff on induction and circulated annually.
- All staff and volunteers should take part in drills and practices which are held regularly. All those with specific roles should practise these roles when drills are carried out.
- No child should be left in our care without the parent/carer providing the following information so that they can be contacted in the event of an emergency: -

**Place of work, address and telephone number (if applicable); - Mobile telephone number (if applicable); - Names, addresses and telephone numbers of adults who are authorised by the parents/carers to collect their child, for example a child minder or grandparent; 3 - Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child; - Who has parental responsibility for the child.**

- Anyone entering our setting must register in the visitor's book as being on site.
- All staff should sign in and out on a staff register. Staff should remember to sign out and back in again when leaving for breaks.
- In an emergency, there may not be access to the building. Key details (child name/contact numbers/sessions attended) are kept in the office as well as one in the main room and a backup copy is kept off site by a designated staff member. The Administrator/Manager is responsible for making sure all records are kept up to date.
- Appropriate staff carry mobile phones to ensure that contact can be made with parents from outside the building - or walkie-talkies for "isolated" locations
- Contact numbers for services such as Gas, Electric, Water are available in the office so that they can be quickly contacted.

#### **Evacuating in an Emergency:**

- In the event of the fire alarm sounding (unless for a bell test), everyone should leave the building immediately, without stopping to collect personal belongings, and proceed via the nearest appropriate evacuation route to the assembly point. Everyone should assemble outside of the building at the assembly point where a register will be taken.
- Where necessary, the Setting Manager or designated staff member will be responsible for calling the emergency services. All staff should also be familiar with the process for calling the emergency services themselves: for example, if a fire is discovered, they should initiate calling the emergency services as well as sounding the fire alarm and evacuating the children.
- Parents/carers who are in the setting in a separate location from their children should leave the building immediately through the nearest available or designated exit and not return to collect their children. Parents will be reunited with their children at the assembly point and must not re-enter the building to go in search of their child(ren). Whenever parents/carers and children are separated in the building in this way they should be made aware of this procedure.
- If you notice any children who seem unaware of which way to go, shepherd them out in the correct direction.
- Staff members will check rooms and toilet areas as they leave to ensure complete evacuation where it is safe to do so
- Nominated staff members will take a register at the Assembly point to ensure complete evacuation. No one should re-enter the building to look for missing persons; any persons missing from the register should be reported to the Manager who can inform the emergency services.

**NO ONE SHOULD RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNLESS AND UNTIL PERMISSION IS GIVEN BY THE MOST SENIOR PERSONS PRESENT.**

**Lock-Down Procedure:** See Separate Lock Down procedure

#### **Closing out-of-hours (e.g. due to bad weather)**

- If a centre or setting needs to be closed in the morning, a decision will be reached as early as possible in the morning by the Setting Manager or designated person.

- The closure of the setting will be announced on the setting's website and other forms of social media. A pre-recorded message will be left on the answerphone where possible to advise anyone ringing the setting that it will remain closed.
- A 'telephone tree' (see Severe Weather Procedure, Appendix 1) will be used to contact all relevant staff to advise them of the closure. The Setting Manager will initiate this process. Staff are responsible for ensuring that the setting has their up-to-date contact details. This document will be reviewed and updated once a month.

#### **Closing the Centre during a session (e.g. bad weather)**

- The Setting Manager or designated person will decide if the setting needs to be closed unexpectedly (for example, due to deteriorating weather conditions).
- Staff will make every effort to contact parents/carers (or authorised person nominated by the parent/carer) of the children that are in our care.
- If parents/carers have to be called to collect their children, children will be looked after safely by staff until they can be contacted. Depending on the emergency, this may be in the setting, in another place of safety, or it may be outside. If parents/carers cannot be contacted, the Late/Non-collection of Children policy will be followed.
- Telephoning parents to ask them to collect their children will be the joint responsibility of the Setting Manager, Committee and appropriate staff members as designated.
- All appropriate staff should carry mobiles to enable parents/carers to be contacted should it be unsafe to remain in the building.
- A telephone message, outlining the procedures that are being taken, should be left on the setting's answerphone where possible to advise anyone trying to contact the setting of what has happened.

#### **Closing the setting due to sickness**

- Parents/carers should inform the setting if their child has been diagnosed with any infectious illness so that we can inform parents, staff and visitors that we have had a case in the setting. This allows other parents to be on the lookout for the symptoms in their child.
- Special notices and updates should be displayed in a visible place inside the setting.
- Children and adults who are unwell with an infectious disease should NOT attend any activity and they should NOT return until the risk of passing on the infection has passed. For more information on exclusion periods, please visit [https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Guidance\\_on\\_infection\\_control\\_in%20schools\\_poster.pdf](https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Guidance_on_infection_control_in%20schools_poster.pdf)
- If a child at the setting displays the symptoms of an infectious disease, the parents/carers should be contacted to take the child home and to seek medical advice. They should not return to the setting until they are symptom-free for 48 hours. This also applies to parents.
- Healthy children, with no symptoms, even if they have travelled to a region where there is an outbreak of a disease, should not be kept away from setting unless stated by government official guidance applicable at the time
- Where there is a risk of an epidemic or pandemic in the community, we will at all times follow the official government health guidelines, including closing the setting if necessary, to prevent the spread of infection. If the decision is taken to close the setting, it will be taken

by the Setting Manager or chair of the committee in conjunction with the appropriate health authorities

- When we are informed that a disease is notifiable, we will advise the necessary authorities including Ofsted.

#### **Re-opening the setting after emergency closure**

- The decision to re-open the setting will be taken by the Setting Manager or Chair of the committee in conjunction with the emergency services if necessary. Staff will be contacted via the 'telephone' tree to advise them that the setting has re-opened where necessary. The Setting Manager or designated person will initiate this process.

- The reasons for closing the setting will be recorded in the Incident Book or other formal record kept by the setting.

- Where possible, the setting's website or other social media will be updated to advise parents/carers that the setting has re-opened.

#### **Charging:**

If the setting is forced to close due to an emergency any fees already paid will not be reimbursed and parents/guardians will be liable to pay during the closure up to a maximum of four weeks.