

# Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment: Safety

## Staff personal safety including home visits

### Policy statement

The safety and wellbeing of all staff, volunteers and students are essential to the effective operation of our setting. We are committed to creating a secure working environment and ensuring that staff are protected from foreseeable risks both **on-site** and **off-site**, including during **home visits**.

We recognise the diverse needs of children and families and aim to work collaboratively with them while ensuring that all staff follow safe working practices, robust safeguarding procedures and effective communication protocols.

### Procedures

#### **General Staff Safety on the Premises**

We ensure staff safety by implementing the following:

#### **Building Access & Lone Working**

- Staff working early mornings or late afternoons/evenings ensure all entrances, external gates and windows are secured.
- Where possible, the first two staff members arrive together, and the last two staff members leave together, to reduce lone-working risks.
- Lone working is avoided wherever possible and always subject to a specific risk assessment.
- Emergency contact numbers, including senior leadership, are accessible at all times.

#### **Visitors**

- Visitors are only admitted with prior appointments, unless pre-approved by management (e.g., emergency services or essential contractors).
- All visitors must:
  - Sign in and out
  - Present identification
  - Be supervised while on site
- Unknown or unexpected visitors are not admitted until identity is verified.

#### **Cash Handling & Personal Safety**

- Only minimal petty cash is held on site.
- When taking cash to the bank:
  - Staff follow a risk-assessed procedure
  - Routes and times are varied
  - Staff remain alert and avoid carrying cash alone where possible

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### **Staff Movements & Off-site Meetings**

- When leaving the setting for work purposes, staff record:
  - Destination
  - Time leaving
  - Expected time of return
- Staff carry a fully charged mobile phone provided or approved by the setting.
- If a staff member does not return at the expected time, the manager follows the escalation protocol.

### **Partnership with Local Police**

- Where necessary, leadership consults Bromley Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams for advice regarding community safety, domestic abuse concerns or known risks associated with specific locations or individuals.

### **Home Visits**

Home visits are only undertaken when:

- There is a clear rationale for the visit
- The Manager has authorised it
- A specific risk assessment has been completed

### **Home Visit Procedures**

Before the visit:

- A written risk assessment is completed covering:
  - Family background or known concerns
  - Environmental risks (e.g., pets, neighbourhood issues)
  - Domestic abuse indicators
  - Potential hazards (e.g., smoke, overcrowding)
- Staff attend in pairs, one being the manager, deputy, or senior leader where possible.
- Details of the visit (family name, address, expected time of return) are recorded in the staff movement log.

During the visit:

- Staff phone an agreed contact before entering the home and upon leaving.
- Staff do not enter the home if:
  - A parent/carer appears under the influence of alcohol or drugs
  - There are signs of aggression or hostility
  - They feel uncomfortable or unsafe for any reason
- Staff maintain professional boundaries and avoid personal conversations or accepting gifts of value.

After the visit:

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- Staff report back verbally and record any concerns immediately.
- Any safeguarding concerns are logged following the setting's Safeguarding Policy.

### **Emergency Protocol During Home Visits**

If staff are overdue:

1. The designated contact phones staff involved.
2. If no answer, attempts are repeated for 10 minutes.
3. If still no contact, the manager calls:
  - Police (999 if urgent)
  - The home address if safe to do so
4. An incident form is completed.

### **Dealing With Agitated, Aggressive or Distressed Parents on the Premises**

Staff are trained to manage conflict calmly and professionally.

#### **Initial Response**

- At least two members of staff accompany the parent to a semi-private area with an open door.
- Staff remain standing if the parent is standing (equal positioning).
- Staff maintain safe distances and do not block exits.

#### **Communication Approach**

- Speak slowly, calmly, and clearly.
- Avoid confrontational language such as "calm down" or "you're overreacting."
- Acknowledge feelings: "I can see this is very important to you."
- Set boundaries respectfully: "I am here to help, but I cannot do that while voices are raised."

#### **If Aggression Continues**

- Staff state that the behaviour is unacceptable.
- Staff inform the parent that the meeting will end if aggression continues.
- If necessary, staff withdraw and inform the parent that police will be called to protect children and staff.

#### **If a Serious Threat Is Made**

- Staff call 999 immediately.
- Staff ensure children are removed from the area if possible.
- The building lockdown procedure is activated if appropriate.

#### **After the Incident**

- A detailed written record is made including:
  - What happened
  - Exact words used (where possible)

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- Actions taken
- Names of witnesses
- Management decides on next steps, which may include:
  - Behaviour expectations letter
  - Barring the individual from the premises
  - Police involvement
  - Review of risk assessments
- A copy of the incident log is stored securely in line with Safeguarding and Data Protection legislation.

### **Legal and Statutory Framework**

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- EYFS Statutory Framework 2024/25
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998