

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.

This policy has been reviewed against the EYFS statutory framework effective 1 September 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, current HSE lone-working and work-related violence guidance, and current Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership/London safeguarding procedures.

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.

□ Lone-working assessments consider violence/aggression, stress and wellbeing, medical suitability, the location and environment, travel, communication coverage, emergency arrangements and whether the task can safely be undertaken alone.

□ Managers provide appropriate information, instruction, training, supervision and monitoring for lone workers. A reliable check-in/check-out system is used and escalation arrangements are agreed before higher-risk off-site work.

Visitors

- Visitors are only admitted with prior appointments, unless pre-approved by management (e.g., emergency services or essential contractors).
- All visitors must:

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- 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

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)

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o Any known history of violence, threats, harassment, weapons, unsafe animals, substance misuse, domestic abuse or risks identified by other agencies, where information can lawfully be shared for safeguarding or staff safety.

□ The visit is postponed, relocated to a safer venue, undertaken by two staff, or supported by another agency where risks cannot be reduced to an acceptable level.

□ Staff do not routinely disclose unnecessary personal information. Visit details and family information are shared only with those who need them for safety, safeguarding or service delivery.

- □ The manager decides, through the visit-specific risk assessment, whether one or two staff should attend. Visits with known or reasonably foreseeable risks of violence, aggression, domestic abuse, unsafe animals, substance misuse or other significant hazards are not undertaken alone.
- 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.

□ Staff position themselves so they can leave safely, remain alert to changes in behaviour or environment, and leave immediately if risk increases. They do not attempt to physically intervene unless necessary and lawful to prevent immediate harm.

□ If a child appears to be at immediate risk of significant harm, staff prioritise safety, contact emergency services where required and follow the setting's safeguarding procedure. Staff must not place themselves at unreasonable personal risk.

After the visit:

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

□ Safeguarding concerns are shared promptly with the DSL and, where threshold is met, through Bromley's current Children and Families Hub/emergency safeguarding route. Information sharing follows current statutory safeguarding requirements and is limited to what is necessary and proportionate.

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□ Any threat, assault, harassment or near miss involving staff is recorded as a work-related safety incident, reviewed by management and used to update risk assessments. Staff are offered appropriate post-incident support and debriefing.

Emergency Protocol During Home Visits

If staff are overdue:

1. The designated contact phones staff involved.
2. If there is no answer, the designated contact follows the agreed overdue-worker escalation plan immediately; urgency reflects the known risks and circumstances of the visit.
3. If contact cannot be established, the manager escalates promptly, including calling police (999 for immediate danger or concern for life; otherwise 101 where appropriate) and contacting the visit location only where safe and appropriate.
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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.

□ Work-related violence includes abuse, threats and assault, including verbal threats. Staff are not expected to tolerate threatening, discriminatory, harassing or violent behaviour as part of their role.

□ Where risk is escalating, staff prioritise children's safety, summon assistance, withdraw where safe, use lockdown/invacuation arrangements if appropriate and call 999 for immediate danger or threat to life.

Initial Response

- □ Staff do not move an agitated or aggressive person into a more isolated area simply to preserve privacy. The response is dynamically risk assessed; staff maintain access to support and a safe exit, and children are kept away from the situation.
- □ Staff use calm, non-threatening positioning, maintain personal space and avoid actions that could increase risk; there is no requirement to mirror whether another person is standing or seated.
- 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."

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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)
 - 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.

□ Risk assessments consider whether any worker may be at increased or different risk, including new or inexperienced staff, pregnant workers, disabled staff or staff with relevant health needs. Reasonable adjustments and occupational-health advice are used where appropriate.

□ Staff safety arrangements are applied fairly and must not rely on discriminatory assumptions about a child, family, neighbourhood, culture, race, disability or other protected characteristic. Decisions are based on specific, relevant information and assessed risk.

Legal and Statutory Framework

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- □ EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2026)
- □ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

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- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998

- HSE: Lone working - Protect those working alone (current guidance)
- HSE: Violence and aggression at work - risk assessment and control measures
- Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and London Safeguarding Children Procedures