



**Clapham &  
Clapham Park  
Montessori**

## **Critical Incident Policy**

At Clapham & Clapham Park Montessori 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 or terrorist attack
- Incidents requiring the premises to be locked down
- National outbreaks of infection or health pandemic
- Any other incident that may affect the care of the children in the nursery.

If any of these incidents impacts on the ability of the nursery to operate, we will contact parents via telephone at the earliest opportunity, e.g. before the start of the nursery day.

### **Flood**

There is always a danger of flooding from adverse weather conditions or through the water and central heating systems. We cannot anticipate adverse weather; however, our landlords carry out regular maintenance and checks of our water and heating systems to reduce the possibility of flooding in this way and we notify them of any problems with the water and heating systems as soon as we become aware of them.

If flooding occurs during the nursery day, the manager will make a decision based on the severity and location of this flooding, and it may be deemed necessary to follow the same procedure as the fire evacuation procedure (see below). In this instance children will be kept safe and parents will be contacted to ask them to collect their children.

### **Fire**

The manager has overall responsibility for the fire drill and emergency evacuation procedures which are carried out and recorded for each group of children every half term or more frequently if appropriate. These drills are planned to occur at different times of the day and on different days of the week to ensure that evacuations are possible under different circumstances and all children and staff participate in the rehearsals. (See also the Fire Drill Procedure.)

All members of staff receive fire safety and evacuation training (including as part of induction) to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. This includes the steps they must take to ensure the safety of children, for example keeping fire doors free from obstruction, how to safely evacuate the children and where the evacuation

meeting points are situated. Each nursery has a specific evacuation plan, which includes information such as evacuating non-mobile babies and using alternative exits depending on where the fire may be situated. The manager is responsible for checking the presence of fire control equipment and that fire exits are not obstructed.

An accurate record of all staff and children present in the building must be kept at all times with children and staff marked in and out on arrival and departure. An accurate record of visitors is kept in the visitors' book. These records are taken out along with the register and emergency contacts list in the event of a fire.

The nursery operates a strict no smoking/vaping policy.

On discovering a fire, staff must follow the following procedure:

- Calmly raise the alarm by blowing the whistle (situated in the staff cupboard) with one long blast /setting off the fire alarm
- Immediately evacuate the building under guidance from the manager who will decide the best means of exit and who will be the last to leave the building, having checked the classroom and bathroom to ensure that all children and adults have been evacuated before leaving herself
- Using the nearest accessible exit lead the children out, assemble at the designated assembly point:

Clapham Montessori:

Front door: Railings at Rectory Grove end of Churchyard

Back door: Railings at the side adjoining Matrimony Place

Clapham Park Montessori and Infant Community:

Front door: War memorial on Narbonne Avenue

Back door: Gate at the side of the church

- Close all doors and windows behind you wherever possible
- Children who are unable to walk or who have mobility difficulties may need to be carried by an adult
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings on evacuating the building
- Do not attempt to go back in and fight the fire
- Do not attempt to go back in if any children or adults are not accounted for
- Wait for emergency services and report any unaccounted persons to the fire service and/or police.

If you are unable to evacuate safely:

- Stay where you are safe
- Keep the children calm and together
- Wherever possible alert the manager of your location and the identity of the children and other adults with you.

The manager is to:

- Pick up the register, nursery mobile telephone, keys, visitors' book, fire bag/evacuation pack (containing emergency contacts list, nappies, wipes and

blankets) and all emergency medication (e.g. asthma inhalers and adrenaline pens)

- Telephone emergency services: dial 999 and ask for the fire service
- At the fire assembly point area, account for all children against the register
- Account for all adults: staff and visitors
- Advise the fire service of anyone missing and possible locations and respond to any other questions they may have.

### *Remember*

- Do not stop to collect personal belongings on evacuating the building
- Do not attempt to go back in and fight the fire
- Do not attempt to go back in if any children or adults are not accounted for.

### **Burglary**

All windows are closed and doors to the Children's Houses are locked before vacating the premises. For the Infant Community, all paperwork and equipment is kept in a locked cupboard outside of session times.

The manager or the most senior member of staff on site will always check the premises as they arrive in the morning. Should they discover that the nursery has been broken into they will follow the procedure below:

- In an emergency dial 999 or non-emergency dial 101 with as many details as possible, i.e. name and location, details of what has been 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.
- Where it is safe to do so, 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. This may include temporary short-term closure of the nursery to ensure the safety of the children
- The manager will help the police with enquiries, e.g. by identifying items missing, areas of entry etc.
- A manager or deputy manager will be available at all times during this time to speak to parents, reassure children and direct enquiries
- The manager will assess the situation following a theft and ensure parents are kept up to date with developments relating to the operation of the nursery
- Arrangements will be made to ensure the nursery is made safe and secure again.

### **Abduction or threatened abduction of a child**

We have secure safety procedures in place to ensure children are safe while in our care, including taking reasonable steps to ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises, thereby reducing the risk of abduction.

Staff are vigilant at all times and report any persons lingering on nursery property immediately. Visitors and general security are covered in more detail in the Security Procedure.

Children will be released only into the care of a designated adult; see the Registration and Collection of Children Policy for more details. Parents are requested to inform the nursery of any potential custody proceedings 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 arrangements 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 seek legal advice 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 the nursery, we have the following procedures which are followed immediately:

- The staff member will notify the manager and one of the proprietors immediately and the manager will take control, dialling 999 and requesting the police; instructions from the emergency response team will be followed
- The parent(s) will be contacted
- All other children will be kept safe and secure, reassured and calmed 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 have impacted on this abduction.
- Any incidents must be recorded in writing as soon as practicably possible including the outcome, who was abducted, time identified, notification to police and findings
- In the unlikely event that the child is not found, the nursery will follow the local authority and police procedure
- Ofsted will be contacted and informed of the incident
- With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary
- In any cases with media attention staff will not speak to any media representatives
- Post-incident risk assessments will be conducted following any incident of this nature to enable the chance of this re-occurring being reduced.

### **Bomb threat/terrorist attack**

If a bomb threat or threat of a terrorist attack is received at the nursery, the person taking the call will record all details given over the phone as soon as possible, raise the alarm and contact emergency services as soon as the phone call has ended. Staff will follow the fire evacuation procedure and guidance from the emergency services to ensure the safety of all on the premises. The person who took the call will provide as much detail to the emergency services as possible. Ofsted will be notified.

With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary.

### **Incidents requiring the premises to be locked down**

Very rarely it may be necessary to lock down the premises so that no one can enter it from the outside. This would be carried out to ensure the safety of children, staff and visitors in situations where there is a hazard in the near vicinity or an intruder.

The following procedure will be followed:

- The alarm will be raised by blowing a whistle with several short blasts
- All individuals (including children) will remain in the area they are in, if safe to do so. If the children are outside, staff are to promptly and calmly direct children into the building, if this will not endanger them. Staff will make efforts to close and lock doors wherever safe to do so
- All individuals will keep away from the windows and doors and children will be occupied in the centre of the room so they are not placed at risk or able to see any situation developing outside
- Internal communications will be kept to a minimum. Communication between rooms will be through mobile telephones
- The manager will ensure that all children, staff and visitors are accounted for and safe. The manager will manage the situation depending on the information available and will have the nursery mobile telephone with them, ensuring that it is switched to silent. The police will be called immediately if the nursery is in immediate danger from an intruder. In other cases where the situation has been alerted by the police or other emergency services then the nursery will await further instructions
- Staff keep calm and do not let the children become anxious or worried. They may engage them in a quiet activity or game to distract them
- Once the all-clear has been given externally, the manager will issue the all-clear internally
- After this time the staff will try to return to normal practice to enable the children not to be disrupted or upset by the events
- Any children showing worries or concerns will have one-to-one time with their key person or another member of staff to talk about these
- Parents will be informed about the situation at the earliest safest opportunity and will be kept updated when the information changes
- After the event a post-incident evaluation will be conducted to ensure that each child and staff member was supported fully and the procedure went as planned
- Ofsted will be informed
- Regular drills will be held to practice exercising the lock down procedures, using non-alarming scenarios.

### **Any other significant incidents**

All incidents will be managed by the manager on duty and all staff will co-operate with any emergency services on the scene, where applicable. The fire evacuation procedure will be followed for any other incident that requires an emergency evacuation. Other incidents, e.g. no water supply, 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.

If there is an incident outside of the nursery building and it is safer to stay inside the building, we will follow the lock down procedure. Emergency services' advice will be taken.

### **National outbreaks of infection and/or health pandemic**

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

Unless we are told to close, the nurseries will remain open as long as 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 nursery for a set period of time, to prevent the spread of infection. This decision will be made in consultation with parents, staff, legal advice and our insurance provider. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis.

One of the proprietors will notify Ofsted in the event of a critical incident.

This Critical Incident Policy should be read in conjunction with the Security Procedure, the Registration and Collection of Children Policy and the Fire Drill Procedure.

<b>Policy reviewed:</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of the nursery:</b>	<b>Date for next review:</b>
April 2025	Ros Bowles and Lucía Gómez-Santana	April 2026