

# THE LITTLE LOT NURSERY

## Critical Incidents Policy

### **Introduction and five guiding principles including definition of a critical incident.**

We consider that a **critical incident** is an event that is potentially traumatic, and affects a large part, or the whole of our nursery, rather than just one or two individuals.

Such events are likely to cause many adults and children in our community distress and may threaten to overwhelm our capacity to cope.

*This policy might also be useful to support our setting's response to serious incidents that affect just one or a few children by using the guidance to shape our response to the specific child/children affected.*

This policy is based on five evidence-informed principles that will help us respond to a critical incident in ways that reduce the impact of trauma and create the best environment for recovery. These principles help children to feel:

- *Safe*
- *Calm*
- *Connected*
- *In control*
- *Hopeful*

### **Purpose and benefits of policy**

The purpose of this policy is to help the management committee and whole staff team respond to critical incidents in a way that will best support the psychological recovery of our children and staff and enable our nursery to function effectively.

Using this policy will benefit us by guiding us to:

- feel confident that the responses we make are underpinned by the best available evidence.
- support our staff and children following a critical incident,
- facilitate psychological recovery and reduce the potential traumatic impact of the event.
- empower our setting to function effectively.
- help identify children who might be more at risk to the potential impact from the trauma of the event.

**Links to other key policies** This policy will be implemented alongside our other relevant early years policies.

### Key staff roles in the event of a critical incident:

In the event of a critical incident the Critical Incidents Management Team (CIMT) will be formed to undertake the following roles:

Overall CIMT lead	Emma Berry
Site safety/first aid co-ordinator- including communication with emergency services	Emma Berry
Communication with and support for staff	Emma Berry
Communication with and support for children	ALL STAFF
Communication with parents/carers	Emma Berry/Vicky Mellers
Liaison with external agencies	Emma Berry
Media liaison	Eleanor Haines
CIMT support (person responsible for supporting the above team)	Eleanor Haines

Adaptations to roles might be required depending on the nature of the event and who is involved. Some staff might also take on multiple roles where appropriate. Staff will be able to decline any task that they currently feel unable to do. We will work closely with the Management Team of Stockton Heath Community Primary School and liaise with their Headteacher.

### Our response

At each stage of our response to a critical incident we will ask *what we can do that will help our children and staff feel:*

- *Safe*
- *Calm*
- *Connected*
- *In control*
- *Hopeful*

### Preparation

**In our preparation for a potential critical incident, to help our nursery to feel safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful we will...**

- Use a management committee meeting to review our current policy.
- Deliver an INSET session to all staff and management committee members (**UKTC Critical Incidents INSET resource**).
- Update our critical incidents policy in light of discussion from the INSET session and drawing on evidence-based principles (UKTC Critical incidents guidance).
- Prepare our CIMT (Critical Incidents Management team) identifying staff who are best placed to undertake key roles.

## **Immediate response-**

**In the first hours and days that follow a critical incident in order to help our early years community to feel safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful we will....**

- i. Contact and use emergency service support as appropriate.
- ii. Ensure that all staff and children are accounted for and that the whereabouts of all people involved is known. If people are missing this will need to be acted upon.
- iii. Speak to staff / children directly involved in the incident to consider immediate safety needs and any support required.
- iv. Ensure our children and staff needs for water, food and rest are accommodated.
- v. Seek to establish as far as possible the facts of the incident – who, what, where, when?
- vi. Decide whether or not the event qualifies as a critical incident.
- vii. Meet with senior staff and the management committee where possible and agree which members of staff will form the Critical Incidents Management Team.
- viii. Speak to involved professionals such as the police, medical professionals and social care to gather information and to agree any restrictions on what can be said and to whom.
- ix. Provide staff all with an initial outline of the incident and outline any first steps to be taken at this stage.
- x. Make contact with the families of those staff and children directly involved to ensure that they are aware of the incident and of what has happened to their family member including where they are.
- xi. Make contact with key stakeholders: our management committee and the local authority to inform them of the incident and to seek the support of specialist staff such as the Educational Psychology Service or media officer if appropriate.
- xii. Inform the rest of our early year community, providing accurate and honest information. Consider sharing information in small groups if possible, and by staff who feel confident doing this. (See **UKTC Critical Incidents guidance** immediate response for details on giving information).
- xiii. Inform other professionals who regularly work in our setting but who might be missed as part of general staff communications such as peripatetic specialists.
- xiv. Make plans to deal with the enquiries of children, families and the press. This can be done in collaboration with a media officer.
- xv. Decide how the nursery can operate or whether it will be better to close it for a short while. If being kept open will the usual timetable be suspended temporarily and what alternative arrangements will be put in place?
- xvi. Consider the practical implications of the incident on the running of our setting, for example covering the groups of members of staff who are not able to be there.
- xvii. If the critical incident is on a large scale, triggering the involvement of multiple services, decide if a Team Around the Setting is required to help co-ordinate

- multiple agency involvement. If so, establish who this will include and schedule initial meetings (see **UKTC Critical Incidents guidance** supplement 5).
- xviii. Begin to identify those in our community (staff and children) who may be more vulnerable and need closer attention and support (see **UKTC Critical Incidents guidance** supplement 4 for further information).
  - xix. Restore our familiar routines and structure within the setting as far as is possible and helpful.
  - xx. Staff to explain and normalise distress, encouraging and helping children to use what helps them feel calmer.
  - xxi. Share and teach strategies to help regulate emotions (**UKTC Critical Incidents lesson plans** 3-6 years).
  - xxii. Facilitate connection between peers, staff and home.
  - xxiii. Work to include our nursery in decision making to give them some influence and control where possible.
  - xxiv. Provide parents and carers with information about how to best help their child.
  - xxv. Keep a sense of hope visible, explicitly affirming how we will get through this together.

### **Medium term response-**

**In the first weeks that follow a critical incident to help our nursery to feel safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful we will....**

- i. Update staff, children, parents and carers as new information and more details become available.
- ii. Build on news about how services are working to keep the community safe.
- iii. Present information in printed form for children who would benefit from this, using simple text or their preferred symbols.
- iv. Where appropriate, develop partnerships with external professionals that hold expertise in the event we have experienced.
- v. Closely monitor children in our community that may need targeted support including personalised care plans as they are at risk of developing more persistent problems (See **UKTC Critical Incidents guidance** medium term response and supplement 4)
- vi. Monitor staff wellbeing, encouraging personal and collective responsibility to seek help both internally but also ensure information about external services is readily available.
- vii. Facilitate further opportunities for peer and community support in planning ways to help and /or memorialise those impacted.
- viii. Make plans that involve discussion about the future.

### **Ongoing response**

**In the months and years that follow a critical incident, in order to help our nursery to feel safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful we will....**

- i. Seek to develop a new normal, embedding routines and structures that have been helpful.

- ii. Make referrals to services for children that might need specialist support, involving them and their parents/carers in the decision making.
- iii. Acknowledge key dates and triggers that might be more difficult for some and put in measures to identify and support those most affected.
- iv. Collectively plan how we will mark the first anniversary using this as an occasion to remember what happened, name those who died, were bereaved, or affected by the event and also to acknowledge how we have all coped.
- v. Consider how we might develop an ongoing legacy of the incident that helps us show the value of those in our setting.
- vi. Seek feedback from our early years community about how we responded to this critical incident to identify lessons learned.
- vii. Record and share these lessons, reviewing our policy considering them.
- viii. Highlight and celebrate plans and explicitly acknowledge how far we have come.

### **How & when dissemination and review**

This policy was signed and shared with staff. It will be stored in our Policy file as a hard copy and on our office computer and accessible to all staff as needed. Manager/management committee have ownership to review and update it at least every three years.

### **Who else can help?**

When seeking outside support, we will draw from those who share our understanding about what can help and empower us to embed the guiding principles. This might also include developing a Team around the Setting.

Contact details for key services/organisations we may draw on include:

- Local authority critical incidents team
- Local authority early years specialists
- Educational Psychology team
- Child Death lead for local authority
- Social care
- Police/ other emergency services as appropriate
- LEA media spokesperson as appropriate.

Other organisations who hold specific expertise relevant to the critical incident will be identified e.g., following a suicide.

Where our children need specialist support for enduring difficulties, we will make referrals to:

- General Practitioners (GPs)
- Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Charities (such as counselling and child bereavement services)
- Early years specialist teachers
- Family hubs

## Links to other resources/websites

### UKTC Critical Incidents resources

- UKTC Critical incidents guidance.
- UKTC Critical incidents INSET session for staff consider and prepare their educational community response.
- UKTC Critical incidents lesson plans to help children regulate emotions ages 3-6 years.
- UKTC Working with parents and carers resources.

See **UKTC Critical Incidents guidance** supplement 6 for further resources/websites and organisations.

This policy is based on a template by the **UK Trauma Council** as part of their **Critical Incidents resources**.

This policy was adopted by

The Little Lot Nursery

On

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(date)

Date to be reviewed

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

Signed on behalf of the provider

\_\_\_\_\_ -

Name of signatory

\_\_\_\_\_

Role of signatory  
(e.g. chair, director or trustee)

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