

THE MULBERRY BUSH MONTESSORI NURSERY

**EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE**

This document will provide guidance on how we plan to respond to emergencies. Every emergency is different, but this document will look at how we can minimise the impact on children’s education and wellbeing when making emergency and risk management actions. Safeguarding children and promoting children’s welfare are of paramount importance.

The aim of this plan is to detail what we would do and how we will respond if we need to take temporary actions in the event of an emergency. To help staff respond effectively. Our emergency plans are generic enough to cover a range of potential incidents, that may occur inside and outside of the setting and normal nursery hours. We will inform our staff and prepare our young children for how to handle an emergency situation by promoting listening and attention skills, practicing drills and maintaining a calm ethos with safe practices.

**Public Health Incidents:** This may include a significant infectious disease. We will follow Public Health England’s advice on any circulating diseases including notifiable cases, isolation and exclusion times, robust cleaning and deep cleaning routines to minimise the spread of any infectious disease. We will follow Government guidance on any lockdown/closure as required to minimise the spread of disease.

**Role & Responsibility**: This would be the responsibility of the nursery manager Cheryl Knight but in her absence, Deputy managers Jo Walton or Leander Trunks as the person in charge.

**Advice:** Contact: Health Protection England: **UKHSA East of England Health Protection Team**: Suite 1 First Floor Nexus, Harlow Innovation Park, London Road,
Harlow, CM17 9LX

email: EastofEnglandHPT@phe.gov.uk

Phone: 0300 303 8537 option 1

**Action: Communicable diseases:** If we have two or more suspected or diagnosed cases of a notifiable disease the person in charge would notify the HPT and follow their advice. Parents and staff would be notified as soon as practicably possible by email or telephone.

We will provide Parents of children that need to be excluded / isolate from nursery but are feeling well with activities and ideas. Parents can maintain their learning and development through their Tapestry account too.

We will contact, support parents, and carry out home visits of vulnerable children that cannot attend nursery for any length of time. Children with SG concerns will be visited by the manager/SDL.

**Serious injury:** to a child, student, member of staff or visitor to the premises.

**Actions:** as Early years employers we will:

* Take all practical steps to prevent accidents from occurring
* Ensure H & S is part of our Induction process and staff are aware of their personal responsibility for H & S and have received relevant training.
* Ensure that accidents, where they do occur, and “near misses” are reported and appropriately investigated, implementing any lessons learn.
* Keep an adult accident book in which all accidents and near misses are recorded, monitored and reviewed for familiar patterns or trends by the setting manager and H & S Officer.
* Report certain work-related accidents and events to the Health and Safety Executive wherever the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) applies
* Conduct an internal investigation following a serious injury /accident.

**Employees' Duties:** Early years employees must:

* Take all reasonable steps to ensure that no child in their care is exposed to unacceptable risks
* Comply with all organisational policies and procedures
* Report all work-related dangerous occurrences, near misses and accidents immediately, escalating the report as indicated by severity
* Co-operate in any accident or incident investigation.
* In Practice: Accidents and the Early Years Framework
* Ensure First aid box is accessible at all times with appropriate content for use with children
* Keep a written record of all accidents or injuries and first-aid treatment given and by whom.
* Inform parents and/or carers of any accident or injury sustained by the child on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable, of any first-aid treatment given.
* Contact parents immediately of any serious accident or injury requiring emergency medical treatment

We will notify Ofsted of any serious accident, illness or injury to, or death of any child while in our care, and of the action taken. Notification must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but in any event within 14 days of the incident occurring. The EYFS states that any registered provider, who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence.

Ofsted guidance: Further guidance for the early years sector is provided by Ofsted in their online document, [*Childcare: Reporting Children’s Accidents and Injuries*](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childcare-reporting-childrens-accidents-and-injuries).

The guidance, updated in February 2022, states that registered childminders or day-care providers must report to Ofsted all serious childcare incidents that occur to children while they are in their care. This includes all serious accidents, injuries and illnesses such as:

* anything that requires resuscitation
* admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours
* a broken bone or fracture
* dislocation of any major joint, such as the shoulder, knee, hip or elbow
* any loss of consciousness
* severe breathing difficulties, including asphyxia
* anything leading to hypothermia or heat-induced illness.
* Ofsted states that providers must also report if a child suffers any loss of sight, whether it is temporary or permanent, and if any child suffers any injury from

the absorption of any substance, from exposure to a harmful substance or toxin, or in the case of an electric shock or electrical burn.

Ofsted confirms that minor accidents, injuries or illnesses suffered by a child while in a provider’s care do not need to be reported. This includes:

* animal and insect bites, such as a bee sting that doesn’t cause an allergic reaction
* sprains, strains and bruising, for example if a child sprains their wrist tripping over their shoelaces
* cuts and grazes
* minor burns and scalds
* dislocation of minor joints, such as a finger or toe
* wound infections.

**Severe Weather:**

**Extreme Heat:** Children’s susceptibility to high temperatures varies; those under 4 years of age, who are overweight, or who are taking certain medication may be at increased risk of adverse effects. Some children with disabilities or complex health needs may be more susceptible to high temperatures.

Children cannot control their body temperature as efficiently as adults during hot weather because they do not sweat as much and so can be at risk of ill-health from heat. Heat- related illness can range from mild heat stress to potentially life-threatening heatstroke. The main risk from heat is dehydration. With sensible precautions in place children are unlikely to be adversely affected by hot conditions, however, all child carers should look out for signs of heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

**Heat stress**: Children suffering from heat stress may seem out of character or show signs of discomfort and irritability (including those listed below for heat exhaustion). These signs will worsen with physical activity and if left untreated can lead to heat exhaustion or heatstroke.

**Heat exhaustion**: Symptoms of heat exhaustion vary but include one or more of the following:

* tiredness
* dizziness
* headache
* nausea
* vomiting
* excessive sweating and pale, clammy skin
* confusion.

**Heatstroke:** When the body is exposed to very high temperatures, the mechanism that controls body temperature may stop working. Heatstroke can develop if heat stress or heat exhaustion is left untreated, but it can also occur suddenly and without warning.

**Symptoms of heatstroke may include:**

* high body temperature – a temperature of or above 40°C (104°F) is a major sign of heatstroke
* red, hot skin and sweating that then suddenly stops
* fast heartbeat
* fast shallow breathing
* confusion/lack of co-ordination
* fits
* loss of consciousness

**Actions to protect children suffering from heat illness**

The following steps to reduce body temperature should be taken immediately:

1. Move the child to as cool a room as possible and encourage them to drink cool water (such as water from a cold tap).
2. Cool the child as rapidly as possible, using whatever methods you can. For example, sponge or spray the child with cool (25 to 30°C) water – if available, place cold packs around the neck and armpits, or wrap the child in a cool, wet sheet and assist cooling with a fan.
3. Dial 999 to request an ambulance if the person doesn’t respond to the above treatment within 30 minutes.

If a child loses consciousness, or has a fit, place the child in the recovery position, call 999 immediately and follow the steps above until medical assistance arrives.

**Protecting children outdoors:** During periods of high temperature, the following steps should be taken:

* children should not take part in vigorous physical activity on very hot days, such as when temperatures are in excess of 30°C
* encourage children playing outdoors to stay in the shade as much as possible, use outdoor sun awnings,
* children should wear loose, light-coloured clothing to help keep cool and sunhats with wide brims to avoid sunburn
* ask parents to apply 8 hr sun protection with high sun protection factors to protect skin if children are playing or taking lessons outdoors for more than 20 minutes – apply generously. Ask parents to supply sun protection which we will reapply as required, especially after activities that remove them, such as paddling or towelling.
* provide children with plenty of water (such as water from a cold tap outside) and encourage them to drink more than usual when conditions are hot.

**Protecting children indoors**: During periods of high temperature, the following steps should be taken:

* Open windows and doors as early as possible in the morning before children arrive to allow stored heat to escape from the building.
* Almost close windows when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors – this should help keep the heat out while allowing adequate ventilation
* Close indoor blinds or curtains to keep sunlight out, but do not let them block window ventilation
* Keep the use of electric lighting to a minimum (led lighting)
* Switch off all electrical equipment, including computers, monitors and printers when not in use – equipment should not be left in ‘standby mode’ as this generates heat.
* If possible, use those classrooms or other spaces which are less likely to overheat, and adjust the layout of teaching spaces to avoid direct sunlight on children
* Oscillating mechanical fans can be used to increase air movement if temperatures are below 35°C – at temperatures above 35°C fans may not prevent heat-related illness and may worsen dehydration.
* Use air conditioning unit in the art room. Put on first thing in the morning and keep the blin and doors closed to cool the room and maintain cooler temperatures.
* If necessary, we may consider rearranging school start, finish, and play times to avoid teaching during very hot conditions
* Encourage children to eat normally and drink plenty of cool water (cool water available in the art room at all times, but also maintain a supply cups and water in the classroom and garden at all times.

**Cold & Snow:** Staying Safe in Winter: The days are getting shorter and the nights are getting darker. It is very likely that at some point we will have ice and snow to contend with as well... To keep children and staff safe in the colder months we need to: What is the legal minimum temperature in an early years setting?

If the heating in the setting fails we will risk assess whether it is option to stay open. We will consider Regulation 7 which requires that temperatures shall be “reasonable” and the accompanying Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) defines this as "normally at least **16°C**" (60°F) during the length of time people are likely to be there. If the temperature drops consistently below 16c we will contact parents and send the children home until either the electricity supply is regained or the heating has been repaired.

Think about layers – make sure children are layered up. Speak to parents and ask them to start with a vest and then a t-shirt and then another layer on top so you can put on and take off layers through the day**.**

Remind parents that you take their child outside every day and ask them to provide a good pair of Wellington boots and a warm winter coat their child can move around in - not one that restricts movement. Gloves in pockets and hat in hood! (we do provide puddle suits).

We ask our parents to send in a pair of cosy slippers and to consider sending all children in warm, thermal socks or thick tights – yes, the boys as well. We need to keep tiny toes warm and it can be chilly around the floor area as the nursery is a wooden structure that is raised off the floor.

**There are lots of hazards when considering children’s winter clothing – scarves and hood strings can strangle –** Welly boots can be too tight and make feet sore or restrict movement and circulation making feet feel colder– shoes can be slippery underneath and not give children purchase on ice and snow. Keep an eye on children’s winter clothing and let parents know if you have any concerns.

Keep a close eye on the children when they are playing in the colder weather – if they are not moving around very much or if they are starting to shiver, bring them inside and warm them up. Teach the children the difference between being warm enough and cold – talk to them about their hands or feet being cold and how we warm them up slowly so we don’t damage the skin.

Plan some winter themed activities which teach children about hot and cold, how we can help by wearing warm clothing and reminding them that the fires and radiators are hot this time of year and the floors might be cold.

We will plan lots of active outside play so children stay warm and watch for symptoms of hypothermia such as shivering, lips going blue, slurred speech, clumsiness, lack of coordination or confusion. Some of our favourite active games are: obstacle courses, riding on the bikes and scooters, music and movement outside, jumping and skipping, bouncing up and down the hopscotch and going on a mitten hunt.

We find a hot chocolate or a cup of warm vegetable soup goes down well this time of year! The children love helping to make soup preparing the winter vegetables together.

We crawl around the floor when the weather starts to turn colder and find any draughts so that we can replace draught excluder and seals as needed. Young children cannot always tell us that they are sitting in a draught because they don’t know how to describe the chilly feeling that comes over them but you might observe that they are resistant to playing in a certain part of the house, often near or in the slipstream from an open or badly fitting door or window.

Practitioners need to think about staying warm as well and layer their clothes as well. We sometimes find that we dash about sorting the children and forget about ourselves by the time everyone is dressed and ready to go.

The person in charge must carry out a visual risk assessment of paths and take action by clearing, sweeping and gritting where necessary.

Children are encouraged to walk on the paths and run on the grass. This is particularly important in icy weather conditions.

Inform visitors there is no planned fire or lockdown drill during their visit and therefore they must follow staff instructions if the alarm for either event is raised.

**Storm:** We will pay attention to weather reports and bad weather warnings for our area.The person in charge will carry out a visual risk assessment in storms or high winds. Staff may plan alternative activities inside such as music and movement, sticky kids or yoga if we feel it is not safe to be outside**.**

**Flooding:** We will pay attention to weather reports and warnings of local flooding on local TV and radio, and from the Environment Agency.

**Be prepared**

* If a red weather warning is issued for our area, it means that there could be a threat to life due to the weather. If such a warning is given, then in all likelihood flooding within the region will happen.
* Contact Colchester County council to see where they are distributing sandbags and whether we can have any.
* Consider all ways water could access our property, not just the doorways.
* Have an evacuation plan ready. Take the quickest and safest route out of the setting and road route to get the children to safety out of flooded areas.
* Switch off electricity supplies if we are advised of imminent flooding.
* If flooding is becoming likely to be a real threat, we will make up a “Flood Pack”, and make sure staff know where it is. This could contain torches, battery operated radios (with spare batteries), a first aid kit, spare clothes and/or blankets, and bottles of water.

**Protect your assets**

* We keep all insurance documents somewhere easily accessible.
* We back up electronic documents in case computers are damaged.
* Ensure that the property is adequately protected against theft and burglary whilst evacuated.
* Relocate any items that could be damaged at low levels. As a minimum, make sure items which could be easily damaged by water are not stored directly on the floor.

**Fire:** We carry out visual and formal risk assessments to identify the risk of fire and any hazards. We take precautions to minimise the risk of fire such as:

* We carry out a daily visual risk assessment of the premises.
* The manager tests the smoke detectors each week.
* Heater covers are kept clear.
* Fire exits have clear signs and are kept clear for easy exit.
* Exit doors will be locked from the inside with a hook or slip bolt not a key.
* We have an electrical wiring check carried out by a competent electrician every 5 years.
* We have portable appliance testing carried out by a competent person annually.
* Faulty electrical equipment is removed, repaired or replaced.
* Electric sockets are covered.
* We have our fire fighting equipment serviced, checked annually by a competent person and items are replaced as needed.
* Staff complete Fire awareness training and refresh every three years.
* Senior staff complete Fire Warden training and refresh every three years.
* We inform all new staff, students and volunteers of our fire evacuation procedures during their induction.
* We carry out a fire drill at least once each term to ensure staff, students are confident in evacuating the children promptly and safely in the event of a fire.

**What we will do if our setting gets flooded or damaged by fire**: If the worst should happen and our property is damaged through flood or fire, we will contact our local council as our landlord regarding buildings insurance and also our contents insurers.

We may also contact the Environment Agency’s Floodline for advice: 0845 988 1188

**First steps**: Ensure that nobody touches electrical equipment. Qualified professionals will need to check electrical and smoke alarm systems following a flood or fire to ensure it is safe.

Once the water has started to recede, open windows to try to dry the building out, but only in the mornings, as the air is likely to turn damp in the afternoons. Don’t be tempted to use extreme sources of heat to try and dry out contents; this can cause more damage and cost more in the long run.

Store any damaged furniture and photograph any damage.

Floodwater is often contaminated, so be careful what you touch. If you do enter, wear overalls, overshoes/Welly boots and rubber gloves — your welfare is of prime importance.

*We may need to take steps such as removing debris from airbricks and taking rubber-backed carpets outside to dry.*

*Don’t be tempted to redecorate following a flood until you are certain that the property has dried out – it can take months and you could end up with mould problems. It is important to check with a decorator or other expert to ensure that the walls and other surfaces are fully dried out and, if necessary, treated to prevent mould.*

*Your insurers and/or your landlord’s building insurers may appoint contractors to clean and dry the property where appropriate, while your contents insurers may appoint contractor to clean and dry your contents, should it be worthwhile.*

*The contractors can start to make lists of the items which are beyond economic repair and need to be disposed of. Installation of drying equipment and air movers will occur.*

*Where the loss is significant a loss adjuster will be appointed by either your buildings and/or contents insurers to assist you in dealing with this traumatic experience. The loss adjuster will be there to help co-ordinate the buildings re-instatement works and/ or assist with the settlement of your damaged contents/ business interruption claim.*

**Getting back on track**: If the worst should happen, it is essential that we get our setting back on its feet as quickly as possible. If the flooding or fire means that we cannot operate look for nearby locations where we can operate from temporarily, make enquires if these can be rented.

We will ensure that all the parents are kept up to date with the progress of works to reinstate the setting, as good communication is essential.

Our [insurance is organised through the Early Years Alliance](https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/insurance): 0207 697 2585.

**Security:** Keeping children safe from leaving the setting unattended and preventing any unapproved persons from entering the premises.

Senior staff operate the main gate to welcome and greet the children and parents/carers in the morning and at home time. The gate has a triple lock system once all the children are safely in the setting and parents have left. At home time once parents have been allowed to enter they wait in the lobby area and staff send each child out to their parent/carer. Any unidentified adult will be asked their name and relationship to the child and checked against the permission to collect form completed by the parent prior to being admitted.

Staff understand their responsibility in answering the door during session time. They will not admit anyone they do not recognise without an appointment or first checking their ID. If they are unsure they must ask the person to wait and report to the person in charge.

**Lock Down:** Procedure to ensure the safety of children, parents and staff in the event of a local threat or emergency situation such as an armed person, aggressive animal on the loose, bomb attack or a gas leak in the local area or it may be a terrorist attack threat which may result in our setting being placed into a security-related lockdown (as opposed to a Covid-19 related lockdown). Most of our existing procedures for handling an emergency situation will involve evacuation of the premises and will be focused on an event happening in our building. However, in some situations, it is likely we could be advised to stay put and lockdown rather than evacuate the premises.

In the event of an incident, ‘lockdown’ of a building or buildings is an emergency procedure to secure and protect occupants near an immediate threat. By controlling movement in an area, emergency services can contain and handle the situation more effectively.

**Be prepared**: With regard to terrorism alert levels the manager will keep informed with via local and national news coverage and follow any advice for managing emergency situations issued by your Local Authority.

We have completed a risk assessment of the likelihood of a terrorist incident happening in our area i.e. our location, are we near a busy tourist attraction, power station, or city centre etc. We have assessed our risk level as; low

Review our existing emergency procedures documents such as our lockdown policy and procedure annually.

Explain to parents and carers what “Lockdown” is. Share information with them to advise them of the actions we will take in the event of a ‘lockdown’ and what they should do.

Make sure all staff are aware of their role during ‘lockdown’ and have read and are familiar with our Lock down procedures.

We will Inform visitors there is no planned fire or lockdown drill during their visit and therefore they must follow staff instructions if the alarm for either event is raised.

Consider the wording of a text or phone message that will be issued to all parents as soon as lockdown is announced and you are sure the situation is not a false alarm.

***Suggested wording for message to parents:*** *Due to an incident, we have been advised by the emergency services to secure the premises and stay put until we are given the ‘all clear’. Please do not attempt to collect your child until it is safe to do so. We will let you know as soon as we are able when that is likely to be.* *In the meantime we need to keep our telephone lines clear and would appreciate your cooperation in not calling unless it is absolutely vital that you speak to us.*

**Lockdown procedures**: If an emergency happens the setting manager will act quickly to assess the likelihood of immediate danger. In most cases the assumption should be that it is safer to stay put and place the setting into ‘lockdown’ until the emergency services arrive.

**Upon alert to lockdown**

* Stay calm. Lock doors and alert staff using code word for LOCKDOWN.
* Call emergency services
* Collect landline phone and a mobile and the register (for attendance and parents contact details).
* Depending on where the threat is located we may decide to ensure staff and children stay in their designated areas. Stay in the room you are working in, secure all doors and windows and await further instructions or we may feel it is safer to lead the children into the Fire exit in the home corner, locking doors (bolts) behind you).
* Close curtains and blinds where possible.
* Stay away from windows and doors.
* Stay low and keep calm.
* Lock-down drills must be rehearsed and recorded termly.
* Tune into a local TV or radio station for more information.
* Do NOT make non-essential calls on mobile phones or landlines.
* If the smoke alarm is activated, remain where you are and await further instructions from emergency services unless the fire is in your area or is a real threat. In which case, follow your usual fire evacuation procedures.
* As soon as the emergency services arrive it is essential staff comply with instructions at all times.

**Be Alert:** Do NOT open the door once it has been secured until you are officially advised ‘all clear’ or are certain it is emergency services at the door. This is another element of our ‘lockdown’ procedure that can be practised in an age-appropriate way with the children to avoid them becoming anxious when staff do not respond to the doorbell in the usual way.

Do NOT travel down long corridors. Do NOT assemble in large open areas.

Do NOT call 999 again unless you have immediate concern for your safety, the safety of others, or feel you have critical information.

**Following the lockdown**

* Co-operate with the emergency services to help in an orderly evacuation.
* Ensure you have the Register and children’s details with you.
* Any staff or children who have witnessed an attack or incident will need to tell the police what they saw.
* The police may require other individuals to remain available for questioning.

**Managing parents:** In the event of an incident it is inevitable parents will want to come to the setting and collect their children immediately. They must be discouraged from doing so, until the emergency services give the all clear. Even then, depending on the severity and type of incident, children may need to be checked by medical teams or questioned by the police.

It must be made absolutely clear to parents that we will be acting on the advice of the emergency services at all times.

With regard to getting information to parents during ‘lockdown’, you should use the existing systems you have in place for sending group messages, such as social media, text, emails. Discourage parents from ringing you directly for further updates during ‘lockdown’; it will be vital your phone lines remain clear.

**Threat levels**: are designed to give a broad indication of the likelihood of a terrorist attack.

**LOW** means an attack is unlikely.

**MODERATE** means an attack is possible but not likely.

**SUBSTANTIAL** means an attack is a strong possibility.

**SEVERE** means an attack is highly likely.

**CRITICAL** means an attack is expected imminently.

Members of the public should always remain alert to the danger of terrorism and **report any suspicious activity to the police on: 999**

**or the anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321**.

For **non-emergency calls to the police, call 101.**

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Written by Cheryl Knight. Supporting document for our Policies and Procedures 19/01/23