

Child protection

Response to Terrorism and Lock Down Policy

Introduction

Last year, we had a local terrorist scare, which led us to consider our procedures for action should such an event occur again. Also, some of our parents work in central London, which has unfortunately been subject to terrorist attacks in previous years. As part of our approach to Health and Safety and Safeguarding at Handsworth Pre-School we have therefore decided that it is appropriate to set out procedures in the event of a terrorist attack both locally and in central London. These procedures would also be followed if there was any other form of threat or major disruption either locally or centrally which may affect the safety or wellbeing of the children at Pre-School or their families at work.

Terrorist Attack in Central London

Our concern here is to ensure that children whose parent(s) work in central London are supported by Pre-School during any attack and are collected safely by an appropriate person.

In the event of news of a terrorist attack breaking during Pre-School hours, staff will notify the Pre-School Leader if they think that a key child's parent(s) are working in London and may be affected.

Staff will not say anything about the attack to the child themselves; and should not discuss it in front of any of the children.

The Pre-School leader will check the news updates to try to ensure a clear picture of what is happening. If it is possible or probable that a child's parents may be caught up in events, the Pre-School Leader will attempt to contact them by phone.

If, after a reasonable time, the Pre-School Leader is unable to contact the child's parents, she will contact the person known to be collecting the child (if different). The Pre-School Leader may also contact the emergency contacts and/or next of kin listed on the child's registration form. The purpose of the contact is to check that the child's parent is safe and/or that the child will be collected by an appropriate adult.

The Pre-School Leader will take guidance from the child's parent(s) and/or emergency contact about what, if anything, to say to the child concerned. The child's parent(s) and/or contacts may not wish the child to be informed of any concerns, and all staff will respect these wishes.

If it is likely that the child's parent(s) or other adult who is collecting the child at the end of the session may be delayed, the Pre-School Leader will either speak to the parents about who to contact to arrange collection; or contact those named on the emergency contacts list on the child's registration forms.

If no-one is available to collect the child, or no contacts can be made in good time, we will follow the procedures set out in our 'Uncollected Child' policy.

Terrorist Attack Locally – Lock Down Policy and Procedures

Should we become aware of a terrorist – or other – threat locally, the Pre-School Leader will consider whether or not we should go into lock down.

Lock Down is Unnecessary

Should it appear that a local threat is unlike to affect us at Pre-School – for example, is taking place in the centre of Highams Park and appears unlikely to spread – then the Pre-School Leader will take the following precautions:

- Check that all external doors are locked from the inside; and all windows are shut.
- If other users are in the front hall, to inform them of the threat (if they do not know) and ask them to ensure that all doors and windows are kept shut and locked.
- To ensure the door to the Cowling Hall is locked; and all windows that open out on to the 'square' are shut.
- It may, or may not, be appropriate to bring the children in from the garden.
- Any parent contacting the Pre-School should be told that children will not be sent home early unless or until the threat has receded. Parents should be advised to keep away from Pre-School – to keep themselves safe and out of the area – until the threat has diminished and Police/emergency services have confirmed that the area is safe.

If it appears that the threat will not diminish until after 12pm, the Pre-School Leader will make the decision whether or not it is in the children's best interests for them to go home. Parents will be informed by text or email if we advise them to keep away from the area until the Police/emergency services confirm it is safe. The Pre-School Leader may speak to the Police direct; or seek advice over the telephone from the local schools that are themselves in contact with the Police.

If it is unsafe for the children to go home, staff will keep them in the hall until we have received the 'all clear' from the Police/emergency services.

If it appears that a child's parent(s)/carers may have been caught up in a local threat, and are delayed in collecting them, the Pre-School Leader will attempt to contact them by phone. If she is unable to make contact, she will call the emergency contacts listed on the child's registration form. If no contact can be made, and the child remains uncollected (and it is safe to leave Pre-School), then we will follow the procedures set out in our 'Uncollected Child' policy.

Severe Threat: Lock Down is Required

On very rare occasions it may be necessary to seal the Pre-School so that it cannot be entered from outside. This will ensure that the children, staff and visitors are kept safe. We would only expect to implement lock down in very extreme circumstances.

Staff will be notified that lock down is to be implemented by the Pre-School Leader or, in her absence, the Deputy Pre-School Leader.

Staff will close and lock all windows and doors. This includes locking the office and the bunker doors. If there are no other users of the site, this involves shutting and locking the main hall door and windows. If there are other users on the site, they should be informed that we are going into lock down. If it is appropriate for the other users e.g.: Sing and Sign and Bong-a-long to join us in the Cowling Hall, with supervision, they may be asked to do so quickly and quietly. All bags and belongings should be left in the halls – only children and their carers/staff should join us.

The designated room for lock down is Cowling Hall. If the threat appears sufficient and immediate, we may use the bunker as this is secure and less in-sight. If appropriate, also, the children could be moved into the garden – out of immediate sight in the hall.

Also, if appropriate, for example, if the threat comes from the river area, we should consider moving into other areas of the hall complex e.g.: the main front hall, the lounge and/or the church itself. However, the aim should be to minimize movement, stay out of sight and to keep quiet.

Staff are responsible for moving all the children in the area in which they are working swiftly and quietly into the lock down area. The member of staff on duty in the Big Hall must check the toilet area.

All mobile phones should be put on silent and any computers should be shut down. Once lock down is in place, the Pre-School Leader will perform a headcount and/or check the register to ensure that all children are kept safe.

Children should only be allowed to go into the toilet area if it is considered safe to do so. Once in lock down, if a child needs the toilet, staff may need to improvise using buckets, bowls, bags etc.

The Pre-School Leader will ensure she has access to a mobile phone whilst in lock down. She will text or call the Administrator to request that a message is sent out to parents. Parents will be told that “the Pre-School is in full lock down. During this period, no one is allowed in or out of Pre-School. We will contact you again once it is safe to collect your child.” Parents may be asked not to collect their child from Pre-School if this would put them or their child in danger. The doorbell will not be answered during lock down and the door will not be opened, unless and until we receive the ‘all clear’ from the Police/Emergency Services.

Once the ‘all clear’ has been received, we will contact parents and ask them to collect their children. We do not expect to go into lock down unless a threat is real or severe. In which case, we expect the experience to be unsettling and upsetting for children and staff. We therefore think it will be most appropriate for the children to go home, as far as possible, as soon as lock down is lifted and once the threat has diminished.

Useful Numbers:

Chingford Police Station: 0871 433 3000 020 8345 3025
Selwyn Primary School: 020 8527 3814
Handsworth Primary School: 020 8527 5991
Oak Hill Primary School: 020 8527 3309

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Handsworth Pre-school	name of setting
Held on	16 October 2018	(date)
Date to be reviewed	16 October 2019	(date)
Signed on behalf of the management committee		
Name of signatory	Elizabeth Kent	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	Chair	