

## Responding To An Emergency – Partial Invacuation

(Previously titled Responding To An Emergency - Full Lockdown)

### Policy Statement

Chestnut Playgroup is committed to the safety of children, staff and others on the premises. This policy has been introduced to ensure safety in the event of a local threat or any other emergency situation which may result in the setting being placed into partial 'invacuation' (previously referred to as 'lock-down'). A partial invacuation is a precaution aimed to keep children and staff safe while remaining indoors. This is where it is important to stay within the setting, rather than evacuate, but where free movement within the setting remains safe. Most procedures for handling an emergency are focussed on an event happening in the building. However, in some situations we will be advised to stay put (invacuation/lock-down) rather than evacuate. 'Invacuation' where the lock-down of a building/group of buildings is intended to secure and protect occupants in the proximity of an immediate threat. By controlling movement in an area, emergency services can contain and handle the situation more effectively.

Invacuation procedures should be seen as a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of children and adults in the setting. Procedures should aim to minimise disruption to the learning and play environment whilst ensuring the safety of all children and adults.

### Partial Invacuation Will Be Enacted:

- In the event of a reported incident or disturbance within the local community, with the potential to pose a risk to those in the setting, but with no immediate threat to their safety within the building.
- In emergency situations within the grounds of the playgroup where there is potential risk from spills or poisonous fumes preventing an evacuation of the children.
- A warning being received regarding an environmental risk locally e.g. air pollution or major fire in the vicinity.
- When instructed to do so by the emergency services or other relevant authorities or authorised personnel.
- The close proximity of a dangerous animal.

The partial invacuation procedure will be practised at least once a year following Cambridgeshire County Council guidance, but we will aim to do so once a term where possible for good practice, so that staff and children are familiar with it. This will be carried out in a way appropriate to the age of the children in the setting.

A copy of this policy will be kept in the Register at playgroup to ensure it is easily accessible if needed.

Our Partial Invacuation policy is based on the guidance provided by the Cambridgeshire County Council and the Early Years Alliance (formerly the Pre-school Learning Alliance).

### Procedures

If an event occurs which may compromise the safety of children, staff or visitors in the outdoor areas of the setting, but where activities may safely continue inside, then the partial invacuation procedure will be initiated. In most cases the assumption will be that it is safer to stay put and place the setting into 'invacuation' until the emergency services arrive. As soon as the emergency services arrive at the scene staff comply with their instructions.

- If partial invacuation is required, the Preschool Leader, or most senior staff member, will signal this by notifying all staff verbally or by using a designated alarm signal.
- Children, staff and visitors will come in from the outside play areas immediately, with a head count and register taken.
- Staff will lock any unlocked external doors and close all opened windows.
- In the event of an issue with air pollution, or chemical, biological or radiological contamination:
  - fans (located in the toilets) will be closed up with bin liners and tape, any fans will be turned off, and staff will contact the building manager to request that the thermostat for the heating system be set to zero.
  - cracks around external doors will be sealed with tape.
- Free movement within the building may continue dependent upon circumstances.
- No person may enter or leave the building while in partial invacuation.
- It may be necessary to contact the emergency services in the first instance and if so then the Preschool Leader, or most senior staff member, will do so as appropriate in the circumstances. The directives of the emergency services will be followed.
- At no time will staff attempt to physically remove an unwanted visitor.
- Staff do NOT make non-essential calls on mobile phones.
- Staff may tune into a local TV or radio station for more information if and where necessary.
- If the fire alarm is activated, staff and children remain inside and await further instructions from emergency services, unless the fire is in that area. In which case, they will move to the next room/area, following usual fire procedures.
- During invacuation staff do NOT call 999 again unless there is immediate concern for their safety, the safety of others, or they feel they have critical information that must be passed on.

- The door will not be opened once it has been secured until the Preschool Leader, or most senior staff member, is officially advised “all clear” or is certain it is emergency services at the door.
- Staff will cooperate with emergency services to assist in an orderly evacuation. Staff will ensure that they have the day’s register and children’s details.
- The Chair of the Committee will be contacted by telephone as soon as possible. In some situations, this may not be until after the event. The Chair or a staff member will organise for the parents/carers of affected children to be informed. It is essential that parents/carers know that we need to keep our telephone lines clear and that we are acting upon the instructions of the emergency services. Parents/carers will be discouraged from coming to collect their child until the emergency services give the ‘all clear’. Staff will always act on the advice of the emergency services.
  - Parents/carers will be contacted by email, sent via Parentmail. The following text will be used:  
*Due to an incident we have secured the premises and will stay put until we are given the ‘all clear’ by the emergency services. Please do not attempt to collect your child until we notify you that 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.*
  - Parents/carers will be contacted by telephone whenever possible.
- Any staff or children who have witnessed the incident will need to tell the police what they saw and may need to be checked by medical teams before they can be released to their parents/carers. The police may require other individuals to remain available for questioning.
- The Preschool Leader, or most senior staff member, will ensure that the Chair is informed when it is safe to bring invacuation to an end. The Chair or a staff member will then arrange for parents/carers of affected children to be notified and arrangements made for children to be collected as appropriate.

**Following A Partial Invacuation:**

- The Committee will decide upon next steps in returning to a functioning setting, as appropriate in the circumstances.
- A full record of the invacuation will be completed by the Preschool Leader.
- Details of the incident will be reported to OFSTED within 14 days.
- As soon as practicable after an invacuation has taken place, a letter will be sent to the parents/carers of all children to provide details of the context of the invacuation.
- Policies and procedures will be reviewed as soon as possible to identify any areas for potential development.
- We will assist staff where possible, to find Early engagement of Mental Health professionals to which staff can access for appropriate psychological support wherever available.

**Further Guidance**

*Responding to an emergency – the Pre-school Learning Alliance mini guide*  
*Guidance for Early Years Settings – Developing a Lockdown Procedure and Policy – Cambridgeshire County Council*  
*Guidance for Early Years Settings – Developing Procedures and Policies for Emergency Situations: Evacuation and Invacuation – Cambridgeshire County Council (Jan 2023)*

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, call the police on 101.

Policy adopted: May 2018

Last reviewed: October 2025

Signed: .....

Name: Caroline Wilson

Position: Chair