

Planning for Emergency Situations in Early Years Settings

Early Years providers are well practised in knowing what to do in the event of a fire when you have to evacuate the premises but have you thought about what you would do in the unlikely event of other emergency situations?

How will you ensure that you can provide continuity of care and services and build resilience?

This guide has been put together with support from Oxfordshire's Emergency Planning Unit <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/emergency-planning-unit/emergencyplanning>

EYFS and Ofsted

The [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#) states:

3.55. Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the case of fire or any other emergency, and must have an emergency evacuation procedure. Providers must have appropriate fire detection and control equipment (for example, fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire blankets and/or fire extinguishers) which is in working order. Fire exits must be clearly identifiable, and fire doors must be free of obstruction and easily opened from the inside.

3.20 Providers must ensure that all staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training must include information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues.

3.25. At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and must accompany children on outings. The certificate must be for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A. Childminders, and any assistant who might be in sole charge of the children for any period of time, must hold a full current PFA certificate. PFA training must be renewed every three years and be relevant for workers caring for young children and where relevant, babies. Providers should take into account the number of children, staff and layout of premises to ensure that a paediatric first aider is able to respond to emergencies quickly. All newly qualified entrants to the early years workforce who have completed a level 2 and/or level 3 qualification on or after 30 June 2016, must also have either a full PFA or an emergency PFA certificate within three months of starting work in order to be included in the required staff:child ratios at level 2 or level 3 in an early years setting. Providers should display (or make available to parents) staff PFA certificates or a list of staff who have a current PFA certificate.

[Ofsted's Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills](#) paragraph 28 states:

'Inspectors should look for evidence that the early years setting, school or college is implementing its safeguarding policy and processes effectively and keeping them under review. As well as ensuring that children and learners are safeguarded while on the premises, the setting should be proactive about anticipating and managing risks that children and learners face in the wider community'.

Devising your plan

It is important that Providers have a plan in place to deal with a range of emergency situations and that all staff are aware of the plan, have opportunities to discuss and contribute to the plan, practise and review it regularly.

Your plan should be short and succinct. It needs to be based on procedures and a set of principles you wish to achieve and agreed steps/actions/communications you would/wouldn't do or allow. You then need to prioritise these steps, actions and communications.

As a team think about

- the range of emergency situations you might face
- situations when it is safer to evacuate the building or site
- situations when you might need to go inside the building to stay safe

Think about where you will go if you need to move to a secondary site, and how you will communicate this.

Think about situations where you may need to separate the children, e.g. evacuate one portion of the children to a different rendezvous point whilst the other children need to remain.

Think about the shelter you will provide, e.g. away from windows and doors.

Think about having 'Grab Bags' which contain non-perishable food, communication devices and chargers, and a copy of your plan. You will also need to have access to contact details.

Communicating your plan

Think about how the plan will be shared and communicated, e.g. induction (*need to know the plan*); training for staff (*need to know the plan*); prospectus (*simple awareness that there is a plan*); newsletters (*awareness of plan, of updating and exercising*); website for parents (*awareness and guidance on what parents might need to do*).

Think about:

- who you will need to tell if an emergency arises
- the priority order in which you tell people
- how you will cascade this information

Who to tell may include all staff including managers/management committee, other site users including contractors or delivery provision to site (e.g. Lunches), parents/guardians, the emergency services (Police, Fire service, Ambulance Service), utilities, the Local Authority, Ofsted.

Ensuring that up-to-date emergency contact details are held securely is essential.

Create the wording/template for a text or phone message that will be issued if required.

Exercising your Plan

Exercising your emergency procedures regularly is essential. Procedures can be safely practised in pre-schools and school settings using non-alarming scenarios, e.g. a fire on a neighbouring site, a smoke plume blowing over the site making children cough, or a bee hive/wasp nest in the garden.

Think about situations which might require you to leave the building or site, such as fire, flood, utility failure, noxious substances, serious injury or structural damage.

Think about situations where you may need to keep the children inside such as a bee swarm or a wild/potentially dangerous animal in the garden, a freak weather event, damage to the site that you do not want children to go near, or an intruder in the grounds.

Lockdown

It is good practice for a site to have a lockdown procedure in place **if the site provides suitable ability to lockdown and to shelter.**

You will need to do a thorough risk assessment for your site/premises to decide if it is suitable for lockdown. For example, it is difficult to lockdown in a single door site as if the door is compromised, there is no escape. Lockdown in the setting might not be possible as the building might not be securable. Children and staff may need to be moved to a secondary site.

Think about sources of light and sources of air and ensure any lockdown does not shelter alongside particular hazards, such combustible or chemical materials.

Create a Lockdown Pack. Ensure any electrical devices have capability to be charged, and charging points are available. Consider buying solar charging blocks and docking batteries so that devices can be recharged once in lockdown. Include a wind-up torch and wind-up radio.

Lockdown procedures rely on good communication at three junctures:

1. **When you write the plan**, communicate and train it to all staff, any of whom should be competent of activating it quickly, safely and securely;
2. **When you activate the plan**, so all are brought in and it is clear who is present, who is not, who chooses to leave, and visitors/deliveries stay away;
3. **When you unlock**, so that all are aware the site is open, key stakeholders are contacted, and service resumption is swift but not chaotic.

A simple, single line of communication is essential to prevent an overload of concerned inbound calls. Make it clear that there is a single channel for communication and push all those trying other approaches back to the single channel.

In situations where lockdown might be necessary Managers must act quickly to assess the likelihood of immediate danger and put measures in place until the emergency services arrive. Police and the Local Authority (or governing body/committee) need to be informed that you have locked down, giving your exact location, numbers locked in, means of contact, and

any other important information (e.g. “parents would ordinarily be coming to the gates at 15:30”). It is essential that staff comply with the advice of the Emergency Services at all times.

Do not make any non-essential calls on mobiles or landlines.

Responsible individuals should maintain monitoring of news sources from the outside world, but do not recommend all involved do this because:

- a) it's a distraction
- b) it can be emotive or scary or worrying
- c) it can be visible to the young people and distressing
- d) creating other channels of attention, amusement and interaction keep the young people/children occupied during the lockdown.

Government advice

Ensure you are familiar with [Run Hide Tell](#) and with [ACT](#) (Action Counters Terrorism)

HOT Protocol for suspicious or unattended items:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzJCIG1UrVA>

Counter-Terrorism advice <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-support-for-businesses-and-communities/working-with-counter-terrorism-security-advisers>

[Advice for Schools](#) on School Security

[Schools and Settings Emergency Planning and response](#)

Websites

Local authority	https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk
National Health Service	www.nhs.uk/111
Department for Education	www.gov.uk/dfes
Environment Agency	www.gov.uk/ea
Met Office	www.metoffice.gov.uk
Health and Safety Executive	www.hse.gov.uk