



Critical Incident Policy

Grass Roots Nursery Group: Critical Incident Policy

Purpose

To establish rigorous procedures for managing critical incidents, ensuring a prompt, legal, and effective response to emergencies to protect the safety of all children, staff, and visitors.

Key Principles

- **Immediate Response:** Act promptly and effectively in every emergency.
- **Safety First:** Prioritise the well-being of children, staff, and visitors above all else.
- **Legal Compliance:** Maintain transparent communication and fulfill all statutory reporting duties to Ofsted, the HSE, and local authorities.
- **Prevention:** Implement measures and conduct investigations to prevent recurrence.

Definition of a Critical Incident

A critical incident is any event posing a significant threat to the safety or operation of the nursery, including:

- **Medical/Safety:** Serious injuries, illnesses, or deaths.
- **Safeguarding:** Known or suspected child sexual abuse (subject to the Mandatory Reporting Duty 2026), child protection concerns, or radicalisation risks (Prevent Duty).
- **Operational:** Natural disasters, security breaches (e.g., intruders), acts of violence, or substance abuse.

Mandatory Reporting & Contact Details

Organisation	What to Report	Deadline	Contact Details
Emergency Services	Immediate danger to life or property.	Instantly	999
Ofsted	Death of a child, serious injury (e.g., broken bones, loss of consciousness), or serious safeguarding allegations.	Within 14 days	0300 123 1231 / Online Portal

Social Care / Police	Disclosures or witnesses of child sexual abuse (Mandatory Duty 2026).	Promptly	Call MAST (Multi-Agency Screening Team): 01422 393336 (in normal working hours) Out of hours call the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on: 01422 288000
HSE (RIDDOR)	Specified workplace injuries, fatalities, or dangerous occurrences.	Within 10–15 days	www.hse.gov.uk/riddor
LADO	Allegations against staff members or volunteers.	Within 24 hours	01422 392897 / 07596 888147 and email: laloadmin@calderdale.gov.uk

In the event of a critical incident, the following authorities must be notified:

Emergency Procedures

- **Evacuation:** Maintain clear, practiced plans for various emergencies (fire, gas leak, etc.).
- **First Aid:** Ensure adequate supplies and that staff hold current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificates.
- **Emergency Kits:** Maintain "Grab and Go" kits with essential supplies and up-to-date contact lists.

Post-Incident Actions

1. **Secure the Scene:** Prevent further harm and preserve evidence for investigation.
2. **Investigation:** The Manager will interview witnesses and document all findings.
3. **Corrective Action:** Implement changes to risk assessments or procedures to prevent future incidents.
4. **Support:** Provide trauma management support for affected children and staff.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually or following any major incident.

Post-Incident Recovery Plan

Phase 1: Immediate Aftermath (0–48 Hours)

- **Staff Debrief:** Conduct a "Psychological First Aid" session. Allow staff to share their experiences in a safe, non-judgmental space before they go home.
- **Stakeholder Communication:** Send a reassuring update to all parents (maintaining confidentiality) explaining that an incident occurred and outlining the immediate steps taken to ensure safety.
 - Directly call the families most affected to offer dedicated support.
- **Regulatory Reporting:** Ensure notifications to Ofsted (within 14 days), RIDDOR (within 10 days), and the LADO/Police (if applicable) have been completed and logged.

Phase 2: Short-Term Recovery (Week 1)

- **Operational Restoration:**
 - **Environment:** Deep clean or repair any physical damage to the setting. Ensure the environment is "child-ready" and does not serve as a traumatic reminder.
 - **Risk Assessment:** Review the specific risk assessment related to the incident. Update it to include "lessons learned" to prevent recurrence.
- **Emotional Support for Children:**
 - **Routine:** Return to a normal nursery routine as quickly as possible; consistency provides a sense of security for young children.
 - **Observation:** Task Key Workers with monitoring children for behavioral changes (e.g., regression, clinginess, or aggression).
 - **Special Needs:** Provide extra patience and simplified explanations for children with SEND, using visual aids if necessary.

Phase 3: Medium-Term Recovery (1–3 Months)

- **Staff Wellbeing:** Schedule follow-up 1-to-1 supervisions to check for signs of secondary trauma or burnout.
 - Provide access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or counseling if required.
- **Community Reassurance:** Host a "Parent Information Evening" or coffee morning to answer general safety questions and demonstrate the setting's improved security/safety measures.
- **Training Audit:** Identify if the incident revealed a gap in staff knowledge (e.g., first aid, fire safety, or safeguarding) and book refreshed training immediately.

Phase 4: Long-Term Monitoring (6 Months+)

- **Policy Review:** Formally update the Critical Incident Policy and Business Continuity Plan based on the findings of the investigation.
- **Anniversary Management:** Be sensitive to the one-year anniversary of the event, as this can trigger renewed distress for staff and families.
- **Final Reporting:** Close any outstanding files with the local authority or insurance providers.

Recovery Checklist for Managers

Action Item	Responsibility	Completion Date
Verified all statutory notifications sent (Ofsted/HSE)	Manager	
Staff debriefing session held	DSL / Manager	
Parent "reassurance" communication sent	Manager	
Risk assessment updated and signed by staff	Health & Safety Lead	
Counselling/Support resources shared with staff	HR / Manager	
Follow-up calls made to affected families	Key Worker / Manager	