

Lockdown Procedure

Purpose

To protect children, staff and visitors if there is a threat inside or near the premises.
A lockdown keeps everyone safely contained until the situation is resolved.

When to Initiate a Lockdown

A lockdown is activated if there is:

- A dangerous person nearby or attempting entry
- A police incident in the local area
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour from a parent or member of the public
- Environmental hazards (gas leak, dangerous animal, chemical spill)
- Any situation where evacuation would increase risk

The decision may be made by Charlotte, Natasha, or following police instruction.

Lockdown Signals

Verbal Code Phrase: "SAFE HANDS"

- Used calmly to alert staff without alarming children.

Secondary Signal: Close blinds/curtains immediately.

- Children are guided into a calm activity; the word lockdown is not used with them.

Immediate Actions

- Secure the Building
- Lock all external doors
- Close and secure windows
- Close blinds/curtains
- Turn off lights if needed
- Move Children to the Safe Area
- Away from doors and windows
- Into the designated safe space (upstairs sleep area)
- Keep children calm with quiet activities (books, sensory toys, soft singing)
- Call or text 999 if the threat is immediate
- If safe, send pre-agreed text to partner: "LOCKDOWN IN PLACE – SAFE"
- Silence mobile phones after communication

During Lockdown

- Maintain calm, quiet environment
- Do not open the door to anyone except police
- Do not allow parents to collect children until all-clear
- Keep a brief written log: Time lockdown began, who is present, any actions taken

All-Clear Procedure

Lockdown ends only when:

- Police give the all-clear, or
- The threat is confirmed resolved by Charlotte or Natasha

Actions:

- Reassure children
- Reopen blinds, lights, and doors

- Contact parents with a factual message: “There was a safety incident in the area. We followed our lockdown procedure and all children remained safe.”
- Avoid unnecessary detail that could cause alarm.

After the Incident

- Record the incident in the Safeguarding File
- Review what went well and what needs improvement
- Report to Unique Support Early Years if required (e.g., police involvement or significant risk)
- Debrief staff and offer emotional support
- Inform parents of any changes to procedure

Training & Drills

Lockdown drills carried out twice per year.

Staff trained in:

- Recognising threats
- Calm communication with children
- Securing the premises
- Drills recorded in the Health & Safety Log

Date of next review: June 2027.