Health, Safety & Hygiene Policy

Academic year 2026/27 | Reviewed at least annually

Statement of Intent

At The Wendy House, the health, safety and wellbeing of children is of paramount importance.

We are committed to providing a safe, secure, clean and healthy environment for children, staff, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors.

All staff share responsibility for maintaining a safe environment and for identifying and responding appropriately to potential hazards.

Lockdown and Critical Incident Policy & Procedure

Statement of Intent

At The Wendy House, the safety and wellbeing of children, staff and visitors is our highest priority.

We recognise that, although serious emergencies are uncommon, situations may arise where normal procedures cannot continue or where children and staff need to remain inside the building, evacuate the premises or take other emergency action.

This policy sets out how The Wendy House will respond to a lockdown, security incident or other critical incident.

Our response will always be proportionate to the circumstances and will prioritise the immediate safety, safeguarding and wellbeing of children.

Aims

We aim to:

- protect children, staff and visitors during an emergency;
- respond quickly and calmly;
- ensure staff understand their responsibilities;
- maintain appropriate supervision of children;
- communicate effectively during an incident;
- work with the River Valley Centre where appropriate;
- follow instructions from the emergency services;
- support children sensitively and minimise unnecessary distress; and
- review incidents so that lessons can be learned.

What Is a Critical Incident?

A critical incident is an unexpected event that significantly affects the safety or normal operation of the setting.

Examples may include:

- a serious incident in or close to the premises;

- an unauthorised or threatening person;
- police activity nearby;
- a security threat;
- a dangerous animal;
- fire or smoke;
- flooding;
- severe weather;
- structural damage;
- loss of essential utilities such as water, electricity or heating;
- a gas leak;
- a hazardous substance or chemical incident;
- a significant public-health incident;
- a serious accident or medical emergency;
- an incident affecting access to or use of the premises; or
- any other event where the Manager considers emergency action necessary.

Every incident is different and staff will respond according to the circumstances.

Emergency Response Options

Depending on the nature of the incident, it may be necessary to:

Evacuate

Move children and adults away from the building or immediate danger.

Our existing fire and emergency evacuation procedures will be followed where appropriate.

Invacuate

Move children and adults from an exposed area to a safer area **inside the building**.

Lockdown

Secure the setting and keep children and adults safely inside because leaving the building may expose them to greater danger.

The Manager or most senior member of staff present will determine the appropriate response unless instructed otherwise by the police, emergency services or another appropriate authority.

Initiating a Lockdown

A lockdown may be initiated where there is a potential threat outside or within the vicinity of the setting and it is considered safer to remain inside.

The Manager or senior member of staff will communicate clearly to staff that lockdown procedures are being implemented.

Staff will follow the setting's agreed lockdown signal or communication procedure.

The exact signal and operational security arrangements will be known to staff but will not be displayed publicly where doing so could compromise security.

Lockdown Procedure

When a lockdown is initiated, staff will act calmly and promptly.

Where safe and appropriate, staff will:

- bring children inside immediately if they are outdoors;
- account for all children, staff and visitors;
- check the attendance register;
- secure external doors;
- close accessible windows;
- close blinds or curtains where appropriate;
- move children away from windows and doors;
- move to the identified safer area of the premises where appropriate;
- switch off or dim lights where appropriate;
- keep children as calm and quiet as reasonably possible;
- maintain appropriate staff supervision;
- ensure essential medication remains accessible;
- keep an appropriate means of communication available;
- contact the emergency services where necessary; and
- follow instructions given by the police or other emergency services.

Staff will not place themselves or children at additional risk in an attempt to complete a particular action.

The response will always depend upon the circumstances of the incident.

Accounting for Children

As soon as it is safe to do so, staff will check that all children are accounted for.

The attendance register and staff/visitor information will be used.

If a child cannot be accounted for, the Manager or senior member of staff will be informed immediately.

Staff will **not leave a secure area to search for a missing person where doing so would place themselves or the children at greater risk**.

The emergency services will be informed immediately.

Keeping Children Calm

We recognise that young children may not understand why normal routines have suddenly changed.

Staff will remain calm and reassuring.

Where circumstances allow, children may be supported with quiet activities such as:

- stories;
- drawing;
- quiet toys;

- simple games;
- songs or rhymes where appropriate;
- comfort items; and
- reassurance from familiar adults.

Staff will use simple, age-appropriate language and will avoid giving children unnecessary or frightening information.

Children's individual communication, SEND, sensory and emotional needs will be considered.

Children With SEND or Additional Needs

Emergency arrangements will take account of children's individual needs.

Where appropriate, consideration will be given to:

- mobility;
- communication;
- sensory needs;
- medical conditions;
- medication;
- emotional regulation;
- hearing or visual needs; and
- any additional adult support required.

Individual risk assessments or emergency arrangements may be developed where necessary.

Communication During an Incident

During a serious incident, unnecessary telephone calls will be avoided so that communication remains available for emergency purposes.

The Manager or nominated member of staff will communicate with:

- emergency services;
- the River Valley Centre where appropriate;
- the Management Committee;
- parents/carers;
- relevant safeguarding agencies; and
- Ofsted where required.

Staff will not post information about an ongoing incident on personal social-media accounts.

Information will only be shared when appropriate and safe to do so.

Contacting Parents and Carers

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as it is safe and appropriate.

Information provided will be factual and will avoid speculation.

Parents/carers may be instructed **not to travel to or enter the premises** while an emergency is ongoing.

Children will not be released during a lockdown unless it has been confirmed that it is safe to do so.

Parents/carers must follow instructions provided by the setting or emergency services.

Ending a Lockdown

A lockdown will only end when the Manager/senior member of staff is satisfied that it is safe to do so or when the emergency services confirm that the danger has passed.

Staff will be clearly informed when the lockdown has ended.

Doors will not simply be opened because somebody outside requests entry where staff have not been able to confirm that it is safe.

Following the all-clear, children will be reassured and normal routines will be restored gradually where appropriate.

Evacuation During a Lockdown

There may be circumstances where remaining inside becomes unsafe.

If evacuation becomes necessary, staff will follow instructions from the emergency services wherever possible.

Children will be moved to the safest available location.

Registers, emergency information, essential medication and appropriate emergency equipment will be taken where this can be done **without delaying evacuation or placing anyone at additional risk**.

Loss of Essential Utilities

The Manager will assess whether the setting can continue to operate safely following the loss of:

- water;
- electricity;
- heating;
- toilet facilities;
- telephone or communication services; or
- another essential service.

Consideration will be given to:

- children's health and wellbeing;
- temperature;
- drinking water;
- hygiene;
- food safety;
- toileting;
- lighting;
- safeguarding;
- communication; and
- the expected duration of the disruption.

Where children's health, safety or welfare cannot be appropriately maintained, the setting may close and parents/carers will be asked to collect their children.

Premises Becoming Unusable

If the premises become unsafe or cannot be used, the Manager will decide whether children need to:

- be collected by parents/carers;
- move temporarily to an appropriate place of safety; or
- follow another arrangement advised by the emergency services or relevant authorities.

Children will remain appropriately supervised throughout.

As The Wendy House operates from shared premises, we will liaise with the **River Valley Centre** regarding building-related emergencies where appropriate.

Emergency Closure

The Wendy House may need to close temporarily where it is not possible to provide safe and appropriate childcare.

Reasons may include:

- severe weather;
- damage to the premises;
- loss of essential utilities;
- insufficient safe staffing;
- significant public-health incidents;
- emergency-service advice;
- security concerns; or
- another serious incident.

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as reasonably possible.

The setting will reopen as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding children remains a priority during any emergency.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL will consider whether the incident creates additional safeguarding concerns.

Where appropriate, children's social care, the LADO, police or other relevant agencies will be contacted.

Children already considered vulnerable will receive particular consideration during prolonged disruption or closure.

Our **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** will continue to apply.

First Aid and Medical Needs

Appropriate first-aid provision will remain available wherever reasonably possible.

Children's essential medication will remain accessible to staff.

Any injury or medical emergency will be managed in accordance with our **First Aid and Accident Procedures**.

Emergency medical assistance will be requested where necessary.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are expected to:

- familiarise themselves with this procedure;
- respond promptly to instructions;
- remain calm;
- maintain supervision of children;
- account for children in their care;
- follow emergency-service instructions;
- avoid sharing unverified information;
- maintain confidentiality; and
- raise any concerns about emergency arrangements with the Manager.

The Manager will ensure staff understand the setting's emergency arrangements.

Practice and Staff Training

Emergency procedures will be discussed during staff induction and revisited periodically.

Staff will be familiar with:

- evacuation arrangements;
- lockdown arrangements;
- safer areas of the premises;
- communication arrangements;
- registers and emergency information; and
- their individual responsibilities.

Because The Wendy House cares for young children, **lockdown exercises will normally be practised or discussed with staff without unnecessarily involving or frightening the children**.

Where children are involved in any emergency practice, it will be age-appropriate, reassuring and carefully planned.

Emergency Information and Equipment

The Wendy House will maintain access to essential emergency information.

Where appropriate, this may include:

- attendance registers;
- emergency contact details;
- staff contact information;
- essential medical information;
- emergency telephone numbers;

- first-aid equipment;
- essential medication;
- a charged means of communication; and
- other items identified through our emergency planning.

Important information will be accessible to staff while remaining appropriately secure and confidential.

Recording a Critical Incident

A significant incident will be recorded as soon as reasonably practicable.

The record may include:

- date and time;
- nature of the incident;
- children and staff present;
- actions taken;
- emergency services contacted;
- advice received;
- communications with parents/carers;
- injuries or medical treatment;
- safeguarding actions;
- notifications made;
- time the incident ended; and
- any follow-up action required.

Records will be stored securely.

Notifications

The Manager will consider whether the incident must be reported to:

- Ofsted;
- the local authority;
- children's social care;
- the LADO;
- the Health and Safety Executive;
- insurers;
- the Management Committee; or
- another relevant organisation.

Required notifications will be made within applicable statutory timescales.

Following an Incident

After a significant incident, the Manager and Management Committee will review what happened.

The review will consider:

- whether procedures were followed;
- whether the response was effective;
- communication;
- staffing;
- supervision;
- premises security;
- children's individual needs;
- lessons learned; and
- whether policies, risk assessments or procedures need to change.

The purpose of the review will be to improve future safety rather than allocate blame.

Supporting Children, Families and Staff

We recognise that a serious incident may be distressing.

Children will be supported sensitively and given reassurance appropriate to their age and understanding.

Parents/carers will be provided with appropriate information.

Staff involved will be offered an opportunity to discuss the incident and access appropriate wellbeing support.

Confidentiality

Information regarding a critical incident will be handled sensitively.

Details will only be shared with people who have an appropriate need to know.

Safeguarding, emergency-service and legal requirements will take priority where information needs to be shared.

Shared Premises

Because The Wendy House operates from shared premises, our emergency arrangements will take account of relevant procedures operated by the **River Valley Centre**.

Where appropriate, emergency planning will be coordinated with those responsible for the premises so that roles and responsibilities are clear.

Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed at least annually and following any lockdown or significant critical incident.

It will also be reviewed where:

- premises arrangements change;
- risk assessments identify a need for change;
- statutory or government guidance changes;
- emergency-service advice changes; or

- the needs of the setting change.

Risk Assessment

We take a risk-based approach to maintaining the safety of our premises, equipment, activities and routines.

Risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly and whenever there is a significant change, new activity, new equipment, identified hazard or other reason to believe an assessment may no longer be appropriate.

Our risk assessment process includes:

- identifying hazards;
- considering who may be affected and how;
- assessing the level of risk;
- identifying measures required to remove or minimise the risk;
- implementing appropriate control measures; and
- reviewing whether those measures remain effective.

As a pack-away preschool, staff carry out safety checks as the setting is prepared for children each day/session and remain alert to hazards throughout the session.

Any significant hazard identified will be addressed promptly and children will be prevented from accessing an unsafe area or item until it has been made safe.

Insurance

The Wendy House maintains appropriate public liability and employers' liability insurance.

The current Employers' Liability Insurance certificate is displayed as required.

Premises and Security

We take reasonable steps to ensure that our premises are safe and secure.

We will:

- maintain appropriate procedures for children's safe arrival and departure;
- ensure children are released only to authorised persons;
- take reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised access to the premises;
- ensure children cannot leave the premises unnoticed;
- maintain appropriate staff deployment and supervision;
- ensure at least two adults are present whenever children are on the premises;
- record the attendance of children, staff, volunteers and visitors as required;
- check indoor and outdoor areas before use; and

- ensure potentially hazardous substances and equipment are stored securely and out of children's reach.

Staff will be appropriately deployed according to the number, ages and needs of the children and the activities taking place.

Buildings and Equipment

Equipment and resources will be checked regularly and unsafe or damaged items removed from use.

We will:

- take precautions to reduce the risk of children trapping their fingers in doors;
- ensure floors and walkways are maintained appropriately and kept clear of avoidable hazards;
- prevent children from having unsupervised access to kitchen areas;
- store cleaning materials and potentially dangerous substances securely;
- check outdoor areas and equipment before use;
- maintain appropriate security of outdoor areas; and
- supervise children appropriately during indoor and outdoor activities.

Electrical, gas and fire-safety equipment will be maintained and checked in accordance with relevant requirements.

Hygiene and Infection Prevention

We promote good hygiene practices and help children develop increasing independence in managing their personal hygiene.

This includes encouraging appropriate handwashing, particularly after using the toilet and before eating.

Good hygiene practices include:

- maintaining clean tables and food preparation areas;
- checking toilet facilities regularly;
- using appropriate protective equipment, such as disposable gloves and aprons, where required;
- providing tissues and appropriate disposal facilities;
- appropriately cleaning equipment and surfaces;
- managing bodily fluids safely;
- ensuring soiled clothing is appropriately contained and returned to parents/carers;
- maintaining suitable spare clothing for children where possible; and

- following appropriate infection prevention and control guidance.

Staff will model good hygiene practices and support children to understand why these are important.

Toileting and Personal Care

Children will be supported with toileting and personal care according to their age, development and individual needs.

Personal care will be carried out sensitively and respectfully, protecting children's privacy and dignity.

Children will be encouraged to develop independence while receiving appropriate assistance when required.

Children will not be excluded or disadvantaged because they are not yet toilet trained.

Outdoor Play and Weather

We believe children benefit from regular access to outdoor play throughout the year.

Parents/carers are encouraged to provide suitable clothing for the weather, including coats and suitable footwear during colder or wet weather and sun hats during warm weather.

Where sun cream is required, parents/carers will normally be asked to apply this before their child attends the setting.

Individual arrangements may be agreed where a child has a particular medical or additional need.

Staff will consider weather conditions and environmental risks when planning outdoor activities.

Food, Drink and Safer Eating

Food and drink provided by The Wendy House will be healthy, balanced and nutritious and provided in accordance with our **Nutrition Policy**.

Fresh drinking water will be available and accessible to children throughout the session.

Information about children's allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements and medical needs will be obtained before admission and kept up to date.

Appropriate arrangements will be in place to prevent children being given food or drink to which they are allergic.

Food will be prepared appropriately to minimise choking risks.

Children will be appropriately seated and supervised while eating.

A member of staff holding a current full Paediatric First Aid certificate will always be in the room while children are eating.

Children will not be permitted to share or swap food.

Staff will be aware that children develop eating skills at different rates and will take account of children's individual needs.

Food Hygiene

Staff involved in preparing or handling food will follow appropriate food hygiene practices.

This includes:

- washing hands before preparing or handling food;
- keeping food preparation areas clean;
- storing food appropriately;
- washing fruit and vegetables where appropriate;
- preventing cross-contamination; and
- maintaining appropriate refrigeration temperatures.

Food will be obtained from reputable suppliers and transported and stored safely.

Allergies

Information about allergies and dietary requirements will be obtained from parents/carers before a child starts and updated when circumstances change.

Relevant information will be made available to staff who need to know in order to keep the child safe.

Where required, an individual healthcare plan or risk assessment will be developed in partnership with parents/carers and relevant professionals.

Staff will be aware of how to recognise and respond to allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.

Oral Health

We promote children's oral health as part of our responsibility to promote good health.

This includes supporting healthy food and drink choices and providing age-appropriate opportunities for children to learn about looking after their teeth.

First Aid

All staff working directly with children at The Wendy House hold a current Paediatric First Aid qualification.

Administrative staff who are not deployed to care for children or included within staff:child ratios are not required by the setting to hold this qualification.

At least one person with a current full Paediatric First Aid certificate will be available on the premises whenever children are present and a suitably qualified person will accompany children on outings.

Paediatric First Aid training will be renewed in accordance with EYFS requirements.

First-aid equipment will:

- be appropriately stocked;
- be regularly checked and replenished;
- be easily accessible to adults; and
- remain inaccessible to children.

Accidents and Injuries

Accidents and injuries will be appropriately responded to and recorded.

Parents/carers will be informed of accidents or injuries involving their child in accordance with our procedures.

Where required, serious accidents, injuries, illnesses or deaths will be notified to Ofsted and/or other relevant authorities within the required timescale.

We will comply with our responsibilities under relevant health and safety and RIDDOR requirements where applicable.

Accident and incident records will be stored securely and reviewed where appropriate to identify patterns or actions required to reduce future risks.

Medication

The Wendy House has procedures for the safe administration of medicines.

Before medication is administered, appropriate written permission will be obtained from the child's parent/carer.

A written record will be made each time medication is administered and parents/carers will be informed in accordance with EYFS requirements.

Prescription medication will only be administered where it has been prescribed for the child by an appropriate qualified healthcare professional.

Medicines containing aspirin will only be administered where prescribed by a doctor.

Medication must be:

- within its expiry date;
- supplied in its original container where appropriate;
- clearly labelled;
- stored safely and according to the manufacturer's instructions; and
- inaccessible to children.

Where administration of medication requires medical or technical knowledge, staff will receive appropriate training.

Where a child requires emergency or life-saving medication, appropriate individual arrangements, documentation and staff training will be put in place.

Asthma and Emergency Medication

Inhalers and other emergency medication will be stored safely while remaining readily accessible to staff when required.

Individual arrangements will be agreed with parents/carers and, where appropriate, relevant healthcare professionals.

Staff responsible for administering specialist medication will receive appropriate information and training.

Illness and Infection

Children who are unwell should not attend the setting where their illness prevents them from comfortably participating in normal activities or where attendance may present an unacceptable risk to others.

Parents/carers must inform The Wendy House if their child will be absent and provide the reason for the absence.

Where a child is unexpectedly absent and the setting has not received an explanation, our attendance and safeguarding procedures will be followed.

If a child becomes unwell during a session, they will be cared for appropriately while their parent/carer or emergency contact is contacted.

Emergency medical assistance will be sought where required.

Appropriate exclusion periods will be followed for infectious illnesses in accordance with current health guidance.

Children and staff experiencing diarrhoea and/or vomiting will normally remain away from the setting for at least **48 hours after the last episode**.

Where a notifiable disease or other significant infectious illness is identified, we will seek and follow advice from the appropriate health protection service and make any required notifications.

Safer Sleep and Rest

Although The Wendy House primarily provides care for preschool-aged children and does not routinely provide scheduled sleep periods, we recognise that an individual child may occasionally need to sleep or rest.

Any child who sleeps while in our care will be provided with an appropriate, safe sleep environment and will be appropriately supervised and checked.

Sleeping arrangements will take account of the child's age and individual needs and will follow the safer-sleep requirements and guidance within the EYFS.

Children will not routinely sleep on sofas or chairs.

Parents/carers should inform us of any individual sleep-related needs or relevant medical information.

Outings and Visits

Parents/carers will provide appropriate consent for outings in accordance with our procedures.

Before an outing, staff will assess potential risks and consider:

- the destination;
- the age and needs of the children;
- appropriate adult:child ratios;
- supervision;
- travel arrangements;
- first-aid requirements;
- emergency arrangements;
- individual medical and dietary needs; and
- procedures in the event that a child becomes lost or separated from the group.

Staff:child ratios on outings will be determined according to the circumstances and risk assessment and may be increased where appropriate.

At least one person holding a current full Paediatric First Aid certificate will accompany children on outings.

A suitable first-aid kit and means of emergency communication will be taken.

Should a child become lost or separated from the group, our **Missing Child Policy/Procedure** will be followed.

Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation

Appropriate fire-safety arrangements are maintained for the premises.

Fire exits and escape routes will be kept clear.

Staff will be familiar with emergency evacuation procedures as part of their induction and ongoing practice.

Emergency evacuation procedures will be practised regularly with children in an appropriate and reassuring manner.

Records will be maintained of fire drills and relevant fire-safety checks and servicing.

Animals

Where children have contact with animals or other living creatures as part of their learning, appropriate hygiene and safety measures will be followed.

Children will be encouraged and supported to wash their hands following contact with animals.

Relevant risks will be assessed before introducing animals or arranging visits involving animals.

Registered childcare will not be provided from premises where a banned dog breed is kept or present, in accordance with current EYFS and registration requirements.

Smoking and Vaping

Smoking and vaping are not permitted within the areas used by The Wendy House.

Children will not be exposed to smoking or vaping while in our care.

Safety of Staff and Other Adults

Staff will receive appropriate information and guidance about safe working practices, including the safe lifting, movement, erection and storage of equipment.

Staff must report hazards, accidents, injuries and health and safety concerns promptly to the Manager.

Records

We maintain records as required by the EYFS and other applicable requirements.

These include, where relevant:

- children's attendance;
- staff, volunteer and visitor attendance;
- emergency contacts;
- persons authorised to collect children;
- children's allergies, dietary and medical needs;
- medication administered;
- accidents and injuries;
- incidents;
- risk assessments;
- fire drills and emergency procedures; and
- relevant health and safety checks.

Records will be stored securely and retained in accordance with applicable requirements and our data protection procedures.

Responsibilities

The Manager has overall responsibility for ensuring appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented within the setting.

All staff have a responsibility to follow agreed procedures, remain vigilant to hazards and take appropriate action to protect children.

Health and safety is a shared responsibility and concerns should be raised promptly.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, identified risks or the needs of the setting change.

Policy Approval & Review

Policy year	2026/2027
Approval status	Awaiting Management Committee approval
Next scheduled review	March 2027