Evacuation & Invacuation Policy (2025–2026)

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At Little Wonders Nurseries, the safety, wellbeing and protection of all children, staff and visitors is of paramount importance. This enhanced policy provides a comprehensive, narrative framework for responding to emergency situations requiring evacuation or invacuation. It reflects early years safeguarding practice and ensures that all responses are calm, coordinated and child-centred.

Evacuation Procedure

Evacuation is initiated where there is a direct internal threat. Staff act immediately, calmly gathering children and moving them to the nearest safe exit. Babies and younger children are transported using appropriate equipment. Registers and emergency kits are taken where safe. At the assembly point, headcounts are completed and children reassured until the all-clear is given.

Invacuation Procedure

Invacuation is used where external threats are present. Children are brought indoors immediately and the building secured. Staff maintain a calm environment, supervise closely and reassure children. Activities are adapted to minimise distress while maintaining safety until the all-clear is given.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures for safe evacuation (moving all persons out of the building) and invacuation (moving all persons into a place of relative safety within the building) of children, staff, visitors and others in the event of an emergency. The policy ensures the safety, welfare and continuity of care for all children within the nursery, aligns with EYFS safeguarding & welfare requirements and meets the expectations of national guidance for early years, childcare and children's social-care settings.

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2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All children attending the nursery (birth to school entry), including those with SEND or other vulnerabilities.
- All staff (permanent, temporary, volunteers), visitors and contractors on the premises.
- The physical premises of the nursery, any associated outdoor areas, and any off-site activities where the nursery is in charge of children's care.
- Emergency scenarios that may require evacuation, invacuation, lockdown or other protective responses (such as fire, flood, gas leak, intruder, environmental hazard, major incident).

3. Definitions

- **Evacuation**: The orderly removal of all children, staff, visitors from the building (or designated area) to a **pre-designated assembly point** outside, in response to an incident inside/on the premises (e.g., fire, gas leak).
- **Invacuation**: The movement of all children, staff and visitors to a safe internal location (e.g., secure room) within the building when external evacuation would put children at greater risk (e.g., chemical incident outside, intruder, severe weather). Guidance for education/childcare settings includes invacuation as a response option.
- **Assembly point**: The external safe location where all persons gather after evacuation, register is taken and further instructions given.
- **Safe-room / secure area**: The internal location to which persons are directed during invacuation, where windows, doors may be locked or secured, and children and staff remain until "all-clear".
- **Grab-kit**: A pre-prepared set of essential items (register, first-aid bag, medication, mobile phone, emergency contacts, children's epipens etc) taken during an evacuation/invacuation.

4. Responsibilities

- **Manager/Designated Lead**: Ensure policy is in place, kept up to date, staff trained, drills scheduled and records maintained.
- **Security/Emergency Lead**: (Could be the same person or a designated member of staff) Oversee emergency planning, liaise with external agencies, manage alerts, review risk assessments.
- **All Staff**: Familiarise themselves with procedures, undertake training & drills, carry out their role during an incident (key person duties, evacuation/invacuation duties, head-count, communication with parents).
- **Parents/Carers**: Understand that the nursery has procedures in place, respond to communications during an incident, ensure their contact details are up to date.
- **Visitors/Contractors**: On arrival, be made aware of the emergency procedures, follow instructions during any drill or actual incident.

5. Risk Assessment & Planning

- A comprehensive **risk assessment** must be carried out and regularly reviewed (at least annually, or whenever there is a change in building layout, staffing, children's physical needs or external threats). This should cover fire, flooding, gas leak, severe weather, intruder, chemical spill, external threat.
- Identification of **evacuation routes**, **exit points**, **assembly point**, **safe rooms** for invacuation, and **alternative routes** in case primary routes are blocked.
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) must be in place for any children or staff with additional needs or disabilities, ensuring equal access to safety.
- A "grab-kit" should be assembled and positioned in an accessible location; staff should know where this is and that it is maintained.
- Communication plan: clear procedures for alerting staff, calling emergency services, notifying parents/carers.
- Consider external threats: the guidance on protective security for education settings refers to the response options (evacuation, invacuation, lockdown) and emphasises tailored plans.

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6. Evacuation Procedure

6.1 When to Evacuate

Evacuation will be initiated when there is a direct threat inside or to the building/premises (for example: fire, structural collapse, gas leak indoors, major flooding within).

6.2 Evacuation Steps

1. On discovering incident (or on alarm), staff should alert the Manager/Lead and sound evacuation alarm (if installed) or verbally instruct all children and staff to evacuate.
2. Each key-person leads their group of children calmly to the nearest safe exit; staff check their rooms for children, visitors and ensure no one is left behind.
3. Staff collect (if safe to do so) the **register/attendance list**, the **grab-kit**, mobile phone/emergency contact list, and any essential medication.
4. Exit using the designated evacuation route, proceed directly to the **assembly point** outside the building.
5. On arrival at the assembly point, all staff perform a head-count of children, compare with register. Manager/Lead confirms all are accounted for; any missing person reported immediately to emergency services. Staff remain with children, keeping them together and calm, until "all clear" given.
6. Parents/carers will be notified as soon as practical (once safe and agreed by Manager/Lead) about the incident and the pick-up arrangements.
7. After the incident, a debrief will take place, the incident logged, and policy/procedure reviewed.

6.3 Drills and Practice

- The nursery will hold **evacuation drills** at least **termly** (or more frequently if required) to ensure children and staff are familiar with procedures.
- A record of each drill will be maintained (date, time, scenario, duration, any issues, staff present, further action required).
- Children with SEND or particular apprehension will have age-appropriate preparation for drills to minimise anxiety.

7. Invacuation Procedure

7.1 When to Invacuate

Invacuation will be initiated when leaving the building may increase risk (for example: chemical release outside, severe weather, armed intruder outside, suspicious external threat) and it is safer to move children/staff to an internal safe area.

7.2 Invacuation Steps

1. On instruction from Manager/Lead (or detection of threat), staff calmly direct children to move immediately to the designated **safe-room/secure area** (doors/windows to be locked/secured if needed).
2. Staff carry the **register/attendance list**, **grab-kit**, mobile phone/emergency contact list and any necessary medication.
3. Close and secure windows and doors, draw blinds/curtains where applicable; remain away from windows/doors if threat is external.
4. Staff take a head count on arrival and monitor children for anxiety or distress.
5. Remain in location until the "all-clear" is given by the Manager/Lead or emergency services.
6. Parents/carers will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so, with clear instructions about collection or continuation of care.
7. After incident, debrief, log, and review policy/procedure.

7.3 Drills and Practice

- Invacuation drills will also be carried out (at minimum annually, and more frequently if required) to familiarise children and staff.
- Children with SEND or specific needs will be supported with tailored preparation and may require additional staff support.

8. Communication with Parents/Carers and External Agencies

- Parents/carers will be informed at enrolment of the nursery's emergency procedures (evacuation/invacuation) and reminded annually.

- Emergency contact details for each child will be maintained, accessible and regularly reviewed.
- In the event of a major incident, standard communication channels will be used (telephone, SMS, email, website/social media) following the guidance from national emergency planning.
- The nursery will cooperate with emergency services, local authority and other relevant agencies, providing them with access to premises, information and registers as needed.
- After any incident or significant drill, parents/carers will be informed of any changes to procedures or lessons learnt.

9. Training, Monitoring & Review

- All staff will receive induction training in this policy, evacuation/invacuation procedures, and emergency roles.
- Training will be refreshed at least annually (or sooner if procedures change or after an incident).
- The Manager/Lead will monitor the effectiveness of procedures via drill records, incident logs, and staff feedback.
- This policy will be **reviewed annually**, or sooner following any incident, change of premises, staffing, or regulatory changes.
- The next review date is [insert date].

10. Practice Log & Records

A log will be maintained of:

- All evacuation and invacuation drills (date, time, scenario, duration, children and staff involved, outcomes, areas for improvement).
- Any actual emergency incidents (children and staff involved, actions taken, outcome, liaison with emergency services, amendments to policy).
- Training records for staff (dates, content, staff present) relating to emergency procedures, PEEP planning, first aid, fire safety.

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Appendix: Visual Flowcharts

Evacuation Flowchart

Incident Inside Building

Raise Alarm / Identify Risk

Gather Children Calmly

Evacuate via Safe Exit

Assembly Point

Headcount & Register Check

Await All-Clear

Invacuation Flowchart

External Threat Identified

Signal Invacuation

Bring Children Inside

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Secure Building

Move to Safe Area

Headcount

Maintain Calm Environment

Await All-Clear