



Lockdown Policy

Policy Statement

Pavilion Pre-School (Aigburth) CIO recognises that, although serious incidents are rare, it is essential to have clear procedures in place to protect children, staff, visitors and volunteers in the event of a situation that may pose an immediate threat to their safety.

This policy provides a clear and consistent response to a lockdown situation, including an intruder, dangerous individual, serious external threat or other emergency where it may be safer to remain inside rather than evacuate.

The safety and wellbeing of the children and adults in our care is our highest priority. Procedures will be implemented calmly and appropriately, taking account of the age, needs and understanding of the children.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children, staff, visitors and volunteers during a serious incident.
- Provide clear instructions for responding to a lockdown situation.
- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities.
- Minimise the risk of harm during an emergency.
- Provide a consistent procedure across the pre-school, Breakfast Club and After School Club.
- Ensure appropriate communication with emergency services and parents/carers.
- Support the safe reunification of children with their parents/carers following an incident.

What is a Lockdown?

A lockdown is a procedure used when it is considered safer for children and adults to remain inside the setting rather than evacuate.

A lockdown may be initiated because of:

- An intruder or unauthorised person on the premises.
- A person posing a serious threat to children or staff.
- A dangerous or violent individual in the immediate vicinity.
- A serious incident occurring nearby.



Lockdown Policy

- A police or emergency services instruction.
- Any other situation where leaving the building may increase the risk to children or staff.

The lockdown procedure will only be used when necessary and proportionate to the circumstances.

Lockdown Signal

In the event of a serious incident requiring lockdown, the word:

“RAINBOWS” will be shouted clearly by the person initiating the lockdown.

Staff hearing “RAINBOWS” must immediately implement the lockdown procedure.

Staff should remain calm and avoid causing unnecessary alarm among the children.

Immediate Lockdown Procedure

When “RAINBOWS” is shouted:

Children and staff inside the building

- Pre-school staff will take children to a room where the door can be locked or barricaded, if it is safe to do so.
- Staff will take their predetermined groups of children to an appropriate room with a lockable door, where possible.
- Staff must use their professional judgement and must not put themselves or children at additional risk by attempting to reach a particular room.
- Once inside a suitable room, staff should lock the door where possible.
- Staff should use available furniture to barricade doors where this can be done safely.
- Windows should be secured where possible.
- Children should be encouraged to remain low and quiet.
- Staff should keep children away from doors and windows where possible.
- Lights should be switched off where appropriate and safe to do so.
- Staff should remain calm and reassure children using simple, age-appropriate language.



Lockdown Policy

Children who are outside

If children are outside when the lockdown is initiated:

- They will be asked to go inside if it is safe to do so.
- Staff must assess the situation before attempting to bring children inside.
- Children and staff must not move towards a potential threat.
- If entering the building is unsafe, staff and children should move to the safest available shelter.

Staff in the garden

If staff and children are in the garden area:

- Staff will attempt to enter the building through the nearest safe entrance, if it is safe to do so.
- If entering the building presents a safety risk, staff and children should shelter in the sensory shed or by the heat pump in the garden, depending on which provides the safest available option.
- Staff should keep children together and encourage them to remain quiet.
- Staff should move away from exposed areas where possible.

Responsibilities of the Manager/Deputy Manager

The Manager or Deputy Manager will, where it is safe to do so:

- Ensure external doors are locked.
- Ensure internal doors are secured where appropriate.
- Have access to telecommunications.
- Have access to Parenta where possible and safe to do so.
- Contact the emergency services by calling 999.
- Provide emergency services with accurate information about the situation, including the location of children and staff where known.
- Follow instructions provided by the police or other emergency services.
- Coordinate communication with staff where possible.
- Ensure parents/carers are contacted once it is safe and appropriate to do so.



Lockdown Policy

If the Manager or Deputy Manager is unable to carry out these responsibilities, another appropriately designated member of staff should take responsibility where possible.

Contacting Emergency Services

The emergency services should be contacted by calling:

999

Staff should provide:

- The name and address of the setting.
- The nature of the emergency, if known.
- The number of children and adults present, where possible.
- The location of children and staff within the building or grounds, if safe to provide.
- Any other information requested by the emergency operator.

Staff should follow the instructions of the police and emergency services at all times.

Staff should not leave a secure location to make a telephone call if doing so would place themselves or children at risk.

During Lockdown

Once children and staff are in a secure location:

- Doors should remain locked.
- Doors should be barricaded with furniture where possible and safe to do so.
- Children should remain low and quiet.
- Staff should keep children away from doors and windows.
- Staff should remain calm and provide reassurance.
- Staff should avoid unnecessary movement between rooms.
- Staff should not open doors to unknown individuals.
- Staff should not attempt to investigate the incident.
- Staff should follow any instructions given by the police or emergency services.



Lockdown Policy

- Staff should remain in their secure location until instructed that it is safe to leave.

Where appropriate, staff should use the setting's available communication systems to maintain contact with the Manager/Deputy Manager.

Lockdown Groups – Breakfast and After School Club

During Breakfast Club and After School Club, children will be grouped with designated staff members wherever practicable.

These groupings are intended to provide a clear starting point during a lockdown but must not prevent staff from using their professional judgement.

If circumstances mean that a different room or grouping is safer, staff should prioritise the immediate safety of the children rather than attempting to maintain the predetermined groups.

Staff must ensure that children are supervised and accounted for as far as reasonably possible during the incident.

Children with Additional Needs

Staff must take account of the individual needs of children, including children who:

- Have SEND.
- Have communication difficulties.
- Have sensory needs.
- May become distressed or anxious during an emergency.
- Require additional adult support.
- Have mobility difficulties.
- Require medication or specialist equipment.

Where appropriate, individual risk assessments and support plans should identify any specific arrangements that may be required during a lockdown.

Staff should use familiar, reassuring language and appropriate communication methods to help children understand what is happening without causing unnecessary distress.



Lockdown Policy

Children Who May Be Distressed

Lockdown situations can be frightening for young children. Staff should:

- Remain calm and reassuring.
- Use simple language appropriate to the child's age.
- Avoid discussing frightening details in front of children.
- Encourage children to remain quiet and settled.
- Provide reassurance that the adults are there to keep them safe.
- Consider individual children's needs and responses.

Staff should not make promises about the outcome of the incident or provide information that has not been confirmed.

Visitors, Volunteers and Contractors

Visitors, volunteers and contractors present at the setting at the time of a lockdown must follow the instructions of staff.

Where safe to do so, they should remain with the group they are supporting and follow the same lockdown arrangements.

The safety of children takes priority.

Leaving the Lockdown Area

Staff and children must remain in their secure location until it is safe to leave.

The building or lockdown area should only be left:

- When directed by the police or emergency services.
- When the Manager/Deputy Manager has received confirmation that it is safe to do so.
- When remaining in the location would present a greater immediate danger.

Staff should not independently decide to end the lockdown unless there is an immediate and significant danger in remaining where they are.

If instructed to leave, staff should take their group to the designated safe location or follow the instructions given by emergency services.



Lockdown Policy

Emergency Evacuation During a Lockdown

If the building itself becomes unsafe, for example because of fire or another immediate hazard, staff should follow the safest available evacuation route.

The normal fire evacuation procedure should be followed where appropriate, but staff must consider the nature of the lockdown threat before moving children.

The priority is always to move children and staff away from immediate danger.

Contacting Parents and Carers

Parents/carers should not attempt to attend the setting during a lockdown unless specifically instructed to do so by the police or setting management.

Once the situation has been resolved and it is safe to do so:

- Parents/carers will be contacted using the setting's usual communication systems.
- Parents/carers will be given appropriate information about collection arrangements.
- Children will only be released to an authorised adult in accordance with the setting's normal collection procedures.
- Staff will maintain appropriate records of children collected following the incident.

Parents/carers should be reminded that arriving at the setting during an ongoing incident could put themselves, their child and others at risk.

Reunification

Following a serious incident, the setting may be directed by emergency services to use an alternative location for the collection of children.

Staff will:

- Maintain a register of children present.
- Record children as they are collected.
- Verify the identity of the collecting adult.
- Follow existing safeguarding and collection procedures.



Lockdown Policy

- Maintain appropriate supervision until every child has been safely collected or alternative arrangements have been agreed with emergency services.

Communication and Confidentiality

Information about a lockdown or serious incident should only be shared with those who need to know.

Staff must not:

- Post information about the incident on social media.
- Share photographs or videos.
- Speculate about the cause of the incident.
- Provide information to members of the public or media.

Any media enquiries should be directed to the appropriate person designated by the setting.

Staff Training and Awareness

All staff working at the pre-school, Breakfast Club and After School Club should be familiar with this policy.

Staff will be made aware of:

- The “RAINBOWS” lockdown signal.
- Their responsibilities during a lockdown.
- The location of suitable secure rooms.
- How doors and windows can be secured.
- The arrangements for children who are outside.
- The designated group arrangements for Breakfast and After School Club.
- Emergency contact procedures.
- The importance of following police and emergency services instructions.

New staff should receive an appropriate induction covering the lockdown procedure.

Lockdown Drills

The setting may undertake appropriate lockdown exercises to ensure that staff understand the procedure and can respond effectively.



Lockdown Policy

Any practice should be:

- Age appropriate.
- Carefully planned.
- Sensitive to the needs of individual children.
- Explained to staff beforehand.
- Reviewed afterwards to identify any improvements required.

Consideration should be given to children who may become particularly anxious or distressed by lockdown drills.

The setting will avoid unnecessary or overly realistic scenarios that could cause distress to young children.

Review Following an Incident or Drill

Following an actual lockdown or significant practice, the Manager will review the effectiveness of the response.

The review should consider:

- How quickly the lockdown was initiated.
- Whether all children and staff were accounted for.
- Whether staff understood their roles.
- Whether communication was effective.
- Whether the chosen secure locations were appropriate.
- Any difficulties encountered.
- Any safeguarding concerns.
- Feedback from staff.
- Feedback from children where appropriate.
- Any recommendations from emergency services.

The policy and associated procedures will be amended where necessary.



Lockdown Policy

Safeguarding

The safety and safeguarding of children remains the setting's highest priority throughout any lockdown.

Staff must continue to follow the setting's safeguarding procedures and report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or appropriate person as soon as it is safe to do so.

This policy was adopted in October 2025.

It will be reviewed annually or as and when required.

Last updated 05.10.26

Signed by Chair of Trustees:

Signed by Operations Manager: