Lock down procedure

At Chalke Valley Play School, the safety of children, staff, and visitors is our utmost priority. This policy provides clear procedures to ensure a swift and effective response to potential threats through a lockdown process.

**Initiating a Lockdown**

There may be times when it is necessary to initiate a lockdown to secure the premises.

1. **Alert Signal**: The designated phrase, **“A swarm of bees is outside,”** will be announced loudly and clearly to initiate the lockdown, without scaremongering children.
2. **Person Responsible**: Any staff member identifying a potential threat must immediately notify the office to initiate the lockdown.

The alert phrase ensures discretion while prompting staff to take immediate action. Regular training and drills reinforce this protocol.

**Lockdown Procedure**

1. **Securing the setting**
   * **Lock Doors and Windows**: Immediately secure all classroom and exterior doors and windows.
   * **Close Blinds and Curtains**: Prevent visibility from outside.
2. **Gathering Children**
   * **Primary Safety Location**: Move all children to the designated safe area, located behind the door nearest the children’s toilets.
   * **Procedure**:
     + Quietly and quickly guide children to the safe space.
     + Position children in a seated position, away from doors and windows.
     + Keep children calm and quiet.
     + Continuing quiet activities e.g. reading to them.
3. **Maintaining Safety**
   * **Quiet Environment**: Encourage children to remain calm and quiet.
   * **Emergency Communication**:
     + A senior staff member will collect the red emergency bag, tablet and use the landline to dial **999** for advice and assistance.
     + Notify parents via the interactive nursery manager with the following message:

*"Due to an incident, we have been advised by emergency services to secure the premises. Please do not attempt to collect your child until it is safe to do so. We will update you as soon as possible. To keep our telephone lines clear, we ask for your cooperation in refraining from calling unless absolutely necessary."*

* + - All instructions from emergency services must be followed.
    - **Do not open the door unless you are certain it is the emergency services.**

1. **Handling Sleeping Children**

* If children are sleeping when the lockdown is announced, **do not attempt to move them to the designated safe room**.
* Instead, **secure the office door** by locking it, close any windows, and take the **walkie-talkie** for communication.
* **Move into the sleep room** with the children, maintaining a calm and quiet atmosphere.
* If children wake up, engage them in quiet activities to keep them calm and occupied.

1. **Handling Additional Emergencies**
   * If the fire alarm sounds during a lockdown, remain in place and dial **999** for advice.
   * Ensure access to emergency supplies, including water, first aid kits, and medications, in the safe space.

**Ending the Lockdown**

1. **All-Clear Signal**: The lockdown will be lifted only when the phrase **“The bees have flown away”** is announced by a senior staff member or emergency services.
2. **Gradual Return**:
   * Calmly guide children and staff back to regular activities.
   * Verify everyone is accounted for and safe.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

* **Senior Member of Staff**:
  + Oversees the lockdown procedure.
  + Communicates with emergency services and gives the all-clear signal.
* **Nursery Practitioners**:
  + Assist in gathering children and securing the facility.
  + Maintain order and support children in staying calm.

**Communication**

1. **Internal Communication**: Staff should communicate quietly during the lockdown.
   * Senior staff must also notify the school of the lockdown.
2. **Parent Communication**:
   * Notify parents via the interactive nursery manager once it is safe to do so.

**Training and Drills**

* **Staff Training**:
  + All staff will be trained on lockdown procedures during orientation and annually.
* **Practice Drills**:
  + Conduct termly drills to ensure familiarity and identify areas for improvement.

**Review and Update**

1. **Incident Review**: After any lockdown or drill, a debriefing session will be held to identify issues or areas for improvement.
2. **Parent Communication in Incidents**:
   * Parents will be discouraged from coming to the setting during an emergency.
   * If necessary, children may need to be checked by medical teams or questioned by the police before release.
   * Parents will be informed that the nursery will always act under the guidance of emergency services.