

## A One Minute Guide for Emergency Situations

The EYFS requires providers to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. This includes having contingency plans for emergencies and ensuring that staff are trained to implement these plans.

*The EYFS 2026 states:*

*Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff, and others on the premises in the case of fire or any other emergency. Providers must have:*

- *An emergency evacuation procedure*
- *Appropriate fire detection and control equipment (for example, fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire blankets and/or fire extinguishers) which is in working order.*
- *Fire exits must be clearly identifiable, and fire doors free of obstruction and easily opened from the inside.*

Martyn's Law, which comes into force in 2027 requires public premises with over 200 people to be prepared for terrorist attacks. Early Years, primary, secondary and further education settings that can be expected to host 200 or more individuals at the same time are considered to be standard duty premises under the Act. If your school or early years setting has fewer than 200 people, it is considered 'out of scope' for Martyn's Law. However, it is still recommended that schools and nurseries out of scope develop security plans, create a strong security culture, train staff on their roles in preventing and responding to incidents, and regularly test these plans to ensure they are effective.

### What is an emergency?

The Civil Contingencies Act, 2004, defines an Emergency is an event or situation which threatens serious damage to:

- Human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom
- The environment of a place in the United Kingdom
- The security of the United Kingdom or of a place in the United Kingdom

A critical incident may be defined as any sudden and unexpected incident or sequence of events which causes trauma within an early year's setting, and which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of that establishment.

### What risks are early years establishments susceptible to?

The image above, created by the Coventry, Solihull, and Warwickshire Resilience team, highlights some of the risks to which early years establishments are susceptible. While this is not an exhaustive list, it provides an illustration of the range of risks that early year's settings need to respond to and develop emergency planning plans for. Some risks to which early years establishments are susceptible may include:



### Being prepared

When developing emergency plans, it's essential that Early Years providers conduct a thorough risk assessment of their site to identify potential emergency situations such as severe weather, public health emergencies, fire, and criminal activities, and assess their likelihood in your setting or local area. The following [Self-Assessment Emergency Incident Planning Checklist](#) may be a helpful tool to support with this assessment.

Additionally, consideration should be given to scenarios where evacuation is safer versus situations where staying inside the building is necessary.

The emergency plans created should be concise and outline the agreed procedures, key actions, and communications you will or will not take and be tailored to meet the needs of the children and staff team within the early years setting.

### Key steps to help early years settings plan and prepare for emergencies may include:

#### Developing Clear Plans:

- Carry out thorough risk assessments to identify risk potential risks and emergencies scenarios such as fires, natural disasters, medical emergencies, and lockdown situations which may occur.
- Create detailed procedures which outline specific actions to take for each type of emergency, including evacuation routes, assembly points, and roles and responsibilities.
- Appoint a lead person for emergencies to share plans with all relevant parties, including staff, parents, and emergency services, and act as a key point of contact during emergencies.

#### Providing Staff Training

- Ensure all staff are familiar with the emergency plans and conduct training sessions to review procedures and ensure everyone knows their roles.
- Schedule regular drills to practice the emergency procedures and identify any areas for improvement.

#### Involving Children

- Teach children basic safety measures, such as how to recognise emergency signals and what to do in different situations.
- Involve children in discussions about emergency plans, signals, and what items should be in an emergency kit.

#### Developing Lockdown Procedures

- Develop clear lockdown procedures, including signals for lockdown and all-clear.
- Create a detailed action plan outlining steps to take during a lockdown, including communication arrangements and roles and an alternative place of safety (e.g., partner school, college, or leisure centre) if evacuation is necessary.

#### Planning Communications

- Set up clear communication channels for use during emergencies, such as intercom systems, mobile phones, or two-way radios.
- Maintain updated contact information for emergency services, key personnel, and parents or guardians.

#### Emergency Kits

- Prepare emergency kits or grab bags with essential items such as first aid supplies, water, non-perishable food, flashlights, and batteries.
- Check and update the contents of the emergency kits regularly to ensure they are complete and in good condition.

### Useful links:

- [Protective security and preparedness for education settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [DFE Guidance Emergency planning and response for education childcare and children's social care settings](#)
- [Emergency Planning and Response Template](#)
- [Guidance to help schools and colleges manage their security effectively so they can meet their obligations](#)

*By following these detailed steps, early years settings can enhance their preparedness for emergencies and ensure the safety and well-being of children and staff*

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