

CCTV and your nursery



Jackie Hyde looks at the role of CCTV in your nursery and how it can help with insurance claims by providing evidence of what actually happened

CCTV is now becoming much, much more than a tool for protecting your business from theft, important as that is. For nurseries like yours, now is the time you should be considering the additional benefits CCTV can bring in terms of protecting the children in your care, your staff and, ultimately, your business.

Siting cameras outside a property is a straightforward precaution, as their presence can help prevent burglaries and acts of vandalism. However, there are many reasons why it's just as important to fit CCTV inside a nursery

Clarifying events

In one incident where a child managed to leave a nursery without the knowledge of the nursery staff, it was CCTV footage that helped to establish that one set of parents, distracted by other matters, did not notice that a child who was not related to them had tagged along. As a group, they managed to pass through a number of security doors including the final exit door and into the car park.

Fortunately, the child was quickly discovered and returned to the

nursery unharmed. The parents of the child in question were shown the footage and, as security changes were undertaken, they were happy for their child to remain with the nursery.

Now, without CCTV, it would have been impossible to understand how this incident could have happened despite the nursery's best efforts. However, the footage also, usefully, prompted a change in policy: now people can only enter the premises individually in order to reduce the possibility of parents chatting and simply not noticing what is going on around them.

Recording accidents

At another nursery, a child was playing with an object in a treasure basket. The child fell injuring their mouth. CCTV showed that, at the time, standard policies and procedures were not being followed – in other words, the child wasn't being suitably supervised.

They immediately introduced changes and staff retrained to prevent similar incidents in the future. Because the nursery was able to explain how the accident had occurred and took immediate action, the parents did not make a claim, despite the child needing a

stay in hospital. Managing such incidents is vitally important, and CCTV is a fantastic aid in these cases.

Injury claims

While it goes without saying that a nursery's key priority is to protect those in its care, at the same time they need to protect their business. One example of this was when a parent claimed their child had dislocated an arm while at nursery. The CCTV clearly showed the child falling, then getting up, apparently unharmed. Similarly, at home time, the child was caught on CCTV bending their arm to put on a coat.

Staff training

CCTV footage is also an invaluable resource when training staff, allowing you to view and analyse real-life incidents. This can be particularly useful when reviewing and updating health and safety procedures, where recorded footage can be used to test the practical effectiveness of written plans and policies.

Finally, while all these examples clearly demonstrate the importance of CCTV, unless owners and managers know how to correctly operate and maintain the system, it is an opportunity wasted. It stands to reason that you must be able to access recordings as and when required. But you must also regularly back up all footage to ensure you always have the necessary supporting evidence to hand should an incident occur or a claim be made against you. ■

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