



Unexpected Closures/Emergency Evacuation

We endeavour to remain open where possible during bad weather conditions

What we aim to do

On occasions the nursery may have to close, sometimes at short notice, due to adverse weather conditions or in the case of an emergency. We know that it is difficult for some parents when we have to make a decision to close on the day, and we are conscious of the problems it causes. When poor weather is forecasted by the media, we ask that parents make early preparations for childcare if they work, in case we have to close.

How we will achieve this

In Case of Snow or Bad Weather

A number of our staff do not live locally, and although they always try to get to nursery sometimes the roads and weather conditions where they live prevent them from doing this. The weather conditions are sometimes considerably worse away from the area. Problems with the road, rail and underground networks sometimes make the situation worse. Other nurseries may remain open as their staff live locally. Since we would only close if absolutely necessary, the decision is often delayed until we have a fuller picture of the number of staff able to travel to nursery. We appreciate that the late timing of a decision may cause inconvenience, but there is a balance between letting parents and carers know early about the position and not pre-emptively making a closure decision.

Our policy is that:

- The safety of children and staff come first in the decision to close the nursery due to adverse weather conditions or in an emergency.
- We keep the nursery open if it is safe to do so and if safe staffing ratios allow.
- Senior staff make enquiries into the current and forecasted weather conditions, using information from the media and the local authority.
- If the snow has settled and is deep enough to cause a concern during a working day, then parents will be informed that we may be closed the following day should a sufficient number of staff not be able to get to work.
- If a heavy snowfall occurs overnight and driving conditions are hazardous, then parents will be notified by text, phone or email as early as practically possible on the day to say that the nursery will be closed or updating them on the current situation. Naturally, that situation could change over the course of time before the nursery opens.
- The most difficult decision to be made is when the weather and driving conditions are poor but the roads are accessible early in the morning, but the weather or travel conditions change either way as time proceeds.

Senior staff review the weather conditions from 6am and staff attempt to make their way to work from this time on. Over the course of time the weather sometimes changes dramatically, and/or traffic conditions worsen and staff find that they cannot complete the whole journey.

- When there is a low ratio of staff to pupils then a decision has to be made to close the nursery. A risk assessment is made in the interests of child and staff safety.

If the weather conditions worsen throughout the day we may need to make the decision to close early in order to ensure that all children and staff are able to get home safely in such poor conditions. If this is the case we will contact parents/carers via telephone as soon as possible to give them time to arrange for early collection of your children.

The nursery phone may not be answered at this time as it is kept at the nursery building.

Other Emergencies

It may be necessary to close the nursery in an emergency. For example, no water, no heating, damage to the building etc.

- The safety of children and staff come first in the decision to close the nursery due to an emergency.
- Parents and carers will be informed as soon as possible about a closure.

Ways of Communicating to Parents/Carers about a Nursery Closure

We will communicate a nursery closure by the following:

- An email
- A Whatsapp message on the group (please ensure that we have your current mobile telephone number)
- A message posted on the nursery gates (if safe to do so)

In Conclusion

- The decision to close is not made lightly, but with consideration for the safety of children, staff and parents.

Please note that there are no refunds for missed days due to the above circumstances. We will not charge for more than 5 closed days in an academic year in line with the LEA guidance.

Date policy was reviewed	March 2024
This policy is due for review before	March 2025