

004 Emergency/temporary closure procedure

Statement of intent

At Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup our priority at all times is to ensure the safety and well-being of all children, parents/carers, visitors and staff working in our setting. Certain situations, such as the failure of essential services (e.g. heating or water systems), building damage, fire, severe weather, or an outbreak of a virus or infection may occasionally make it necessary for our setting to close.

Planning for these situations is essential and it is important that all staff, parents/carers and families are aware of the actions that will be taken should it become necessary to close unexpectedly, either during session times or outside of normal hours.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- 002 Emergency evacuation procedure
- 003 Lockdown procedure

Aim

To ensure that children, parent/carers, families, contractors, visitors and staff members are kept safe at all times, and that we are prepared to respond to emergency situations in a planned and safe way. We will endeavour to give notice of closure but there may be circumstances that will result in an emergency closure.

Procedure

Preparedness

- Parents will be sent a copy of this procedure in the parent pack and a copy is on our website.
- No child should be left in our care without the parent/carer providing the following information so that they can be contacted in the event of an emergency.
 - Mobile telephone number
 - Names and telephone numbers of adults who are authorised by the parents/carers to collect their child
- The Supervisor will ensure that the pre-school contacts list is regularly updated with contact details for parents/carers and staff.
- The Supervisor will have access to contact information for parents and staff.
- All staff and volunteers should be familiar with the procedure.
- If adverse weather is forecast staff should assess the safest route/method for reaching the pre-school. We expect our staff to make every effort to get to work (whilst not putting their personal health and safety, or that of others, at risk) and we are always grateful for their efforts to do so.
 - If this is by vehicle, ensure that they and their vehicles are best prepared for adverse weather (including equipment and possibly by pre-placing their vehicles on major road.
 - If this is by public transport, ensure that they stay informed about any reduced or changed services.
 - Staff should plan for working from home by taking relevant paperwork home or discussing possible training opportunities which could be completed.

Decision for closure

The decision to remain open or to close will take into account the safety of the children, parents/carers, visitors and staff working in our setting. If the closure is due to adverse weather we will consider the current weather conditions, the forecast for the period of the session and the plans of the local primary schools.

The decision is made by the Supervisor together with the Chair of the management committee. If required, the Supervisor will contact committee members within the village to assess the pavilion status (including car park, paths and steps).

The pre-school will close and be unable to receive children for the day, if any of the following conditions occur:

- Adverse weather conditions such as flooding, snow or severe storms
- Inability to meet staff:child ratios
- Failure in supply of services – water, lighting, heating, sewerage
- Accidental damage or vandalism to the setting resulting in it being unfit for use

The Supervisor will liaise with the pavilion management committee for updates on services or repairs to damage to the building. Parents/carers and staff will be kept informed about re-opening of the pre-school.

Closure during session hours

During a session if the Supervisor assesses the situation merits an early closure..

- The Supervisor will contact parents to collect their children early.
- A message will be sent out using Grindleford Primary School mobile text service.
- If a parent is unable to collect their child they must nominate an emergency contact.
- Once parents start to arrive any employee facing particular difficulties getting home should be allowed to leave.

Closure outside session hours

In the event of an emergency closure the following steps will be taken:

- Information regarding the closure will be:
 - Sent to parents using Grindleford Primary School mobile text service.
 - Posted on the playgroup Facebook page.
 - Any parent who has not signed up to the text service will be contacted by telephone (this may also apply to families who have recently started whose details have not yet been added to the system).
 - All staff will be informed of the decision.
- In some circumstances we may operate reduced hours or limit the spaces available. Our Employment policy lays out our response to unexpected staff absence.
- Staff should make every effort to have relevant work to complete at home. (If the pre-school is open but a member of staff cannot attend, payment for work at home is not automatic but is assessed on a case by case basis. In this instance, staff should provide proof that they have completed said relevant work).
- If the decision has been made to close, staff will be paid for the session, subject to funding not being withdrawn.

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Refunds of fees or offers of alternative sessions

When the closure is the result of an emergency or unexpected event then fees will not be refunded.

Alternative sessions will be offered at the discretion of the Supervisor.

If the closure is the result of a planned event such as the current national lockdowns put in place by the government, fees will not be due and any payments made will be refunded.

Reporting requirements

Supervisor to record in the pre-school diary:

- Reason for decision e.g. unable to meet adult:child ratio
- Who made the decision and at what time
- Whether Grindleford Primary School was closed
- How and when the parents were notified
- Any other relevant information (e.g. comments from parents, any house-keeping issues e.g. clearance of snow from the Pavilion, equipment damaged by flooding)

We will inform the local authority by emailing cs.enquiries.groupcare@derbyshire.gov.uk

Our provider agreement with Derbyshire County Council states:

“Providers must notify the Early Years Sufficiency Team of any closures in excess of two days per academic year and the reason for the closure. Providers should offer alternative sessions to funded children during the same term. If alternative sessions are unavailable, the local authority will inform the Provider if funding will be reclaimed for the closure.”

This procedure was adopted at a meeting of Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup.

Held on:

Date to be reviewed:

Signed on behalf of the committee:

Name of signatory:

Role of signatory:

All staff, volunteers and committee members will sign to indicate they have read, understood and agreed with the above policy.