



Snow and Adverse Weather Policy (Parents)

Parents must ensure emergency contact telephone numbers are up to date and to provide additional emergency contact details where necessary.

Intent

This policy is intended to share with parents the response to snow and adverse weather which may impact on the smooth running of the nursery, and/or may prompt a partial or full closure. It ensures our nursery is prepared for all weather conditions that might affect the running of the nursery, such as floods, snow and heatwaves. There is a separate procedure for staff. The aim is to outline procedures for parents to follow in the event of adverse weather conditions that may cause disruption. This policy is a guide and cannot cover all situations that may arise. Decisions will need to be made by directors, on the day based on the best information available at the time and in the interests of the health and safety of staff, parents and children.

Note: Where branches are based on school sites, the policy is usually that if the base school is closed, as the site is unsafe then Pathways will have to close and there will be no provision when school is closed.

The health and safety policy ensures that managers keep the sites safe, and are risk assessed daily. Other issues relating to weather conditions e.g. burst pipes, power cuts etc are managed by a director and the policy will be similar.

Implementation

Snow or other severe weather - If it is safe to travel by road, staff will endeavour to come into work as usual, unless otherwise advised by a director. Some staff may be asked to walk to work if safe and appropriate, and if living locally. Directors and staff make every effort to avoid closure, or partial closure, and to inform parents as promptly as practicable, as weather can change at the last minute.

Directors will observe weather warnings and in the event of high snowfall, or another severe weather conditions such as dense fog, being threatened during a nursery day then a director will take the decision as to whether it is essential to close the nursery at any point. Any decision will **prioritise the safety** of the children, their parents, the staff team and the public.

In the event of a **planned early closure during the nursery day**, due to deteriorating weather conditions, we will contact all parents by phone, to arrange for collection of their child.

In the event of **staff shortages** due to snow or other severe weather, we will contact all available off duty staff and/or agency staff and group the children differently until they are able to arrive. If we are unable to maintain statutory ratio requirements after all the avenues are explored, we will contact Ofsted to inform them of this issue, recording all details in our incident file.

If we feel the safety, health or welfare of the children is compromised then we will take the decision to **fully close** the nursery, our staff will not be asked and are not expected to disregard official weather and travel advice.

Parents are advised to make contingency childcare arrangements in the event of any emergency closure, particularly if they are working parents.

We will take local authority advice in the process of decision-making.

Where any branches are on a school site, and **the school site is closed, the branch will normally automatically close**, and staff/children may be redeployed/redirected to another branch, providing it is safe and if there is capacity to do so.

Ongoing announcements and updates for parents will be on our **Facebook** page and our **website**. Parents will also be e-mailed, in the event of a decision to make an emergency closure.

Where a parent cannot get through quickly due to adverse weather, to collect their child/ren a minimum of TWO staff remain on the premises, until all children have been collected, at least one of these will be Level 3 and first aid qualified. Children will mix age groups and rooms if necessary.

Control measures will be in place to keep children safe until parents can collect them. The risk of accident will be controlled through the routine branch risk assessment.

Employees will be aware of their contractual obligations and duty of care to support the employer and children by working safely until such time as the children leave the premises.

Parents must take care when walking as surfaces may be slippery.

Flood - In the case of a flood, we will follow our critical incident procedure to enable all children and staff to be safe and continuity of care to be planned for.

Heatwave - Staff will make day-to-day decisions about the length of time spent outside depending on the strength of the sun; children will not be allowed in the direct sunlight between 11.00am – 3.00pm on exceptionally hot days. Shaded areas are provided to ensure children are able to still go out in hot weather, cool down or escape the sun should they wish or need to. For further details please refer to our sun care policy.

Procedures

- **Parents must ensure emergency contact telephone numbers are up to date and to provide additional emergency contact details where necessary.**
- Parents who are working, are advised to make contingency arrangement, in order that children can be collected by an authorised collector, with a password, in a timely manner.
- If anyone not listed on our records, will be collecting your child during adverse weather please notify the nursery by phone.
- In winter months parents are advised to ensure children have coats, gloves and appropriate footwear so children can be protected from cold conditions.
- Directors keep themselves informed of weather and forecasts in a ten-mile radius of each branch.
- Directors to keep in touch with local authority health and safety/ early years advisors and headteachers of base schools.
- Directors instruct managers to release children/staff early wherever possible and as necessary on days when weather is seen or forecast to deteriorate.
- Managers to identify hazards and take control measures to reduce the level of risk
- Managers to risk assess premises and ensure any remaining children are kept safe in the event of early closure, shortage of staff
- Directors to put announcement relating to any emergency closure on Facebook and website and email parents the night as soon as a reasonable decision can be made, usually the night before but definitely by 7.00 a.m. on the day in question. (www.facebook.com/pathwaysnursery).
- Where there is a partial closure due to staff shortages, priority is given to critical workers but there is no guarantee of space

- There is no refund for emergency closures due to the nature of our fixed costs.

Impact

All parents are aware of response to snow, and other adverse weather and are able to ensure their child is collected in the event of partial or full emergency closure. Parents will co-operate with directions and prioritise the safety of their children and our staff in the event of adverse weather conditions, which could potentially affect life or limb. Staff and children will be kept as safe as reasonably practicable.

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