



Crossways
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Play • Learn • Grow

Emergency Closure Policy

First Step Pre-school Ltd main priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of all children, parents/carers, visitors, contractors and staff. Certain situations, such as the failure of essential services (e.g. heating or water systems), building damage, fire outbreak, severe weather conditions, or an illness epidemic may occasionally make it necessary for the pre-school to close to ensure the safety of all.

Planning for these situations is a central part of our policy on Health and Safety and Risk Management, 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.

In a real emergency, it may be necessary for the person in charge to respond as they see fit and we recognise that this will be the case when dealing with real life situations. However, this procedure gives a common approach which should make coping with an emergency easier. We will endeavour to be open as stated in our Admissions Policy without disruption. Where disruption is unavoidable, all involved in the Pre-school are kept informed and we will re-open at the earliest possible opportunity.

All staff and committee members should have a copy of the emergency procedure, be familiar with its contents and keep a copy at home. In an emergency, there may not be access to the Pre-school room, so key details (child name/contact numbers/sessions attended) can be accessed, off-site, by the Manager. As CW is on school grounds, we may be affected by any school closure and we will follow the advice of the school in responding to an emergency or initiating Pre-school closure based on an emergency, the Manager/Deputy will inform the school of any closure. We prepare for emergencies by having an up to date fire and emergency evacuation procedure, through regular fire drills and by keeping records and contact lists up to date.

Procedure

An emergency closure is implemented in the following circumstances:

- When the building is unusable through accidental or malicious damage.

- When the building is unusable due to unforeseen circumstances such as gas leak, frozen pipes, etc...
- When the building is unusable due to required maintenance work. Where possible we will endeavour to negotiate scheduled work to be carried out during times of closure.
- When an outbreak of illness within the Pre-school requires closure in line with Public Health England and Ofsted guidelines.
- When illness levels within the staff body mean it is impossible to maintain the correct ratios of suitable adults to children.
- When severe weather conditions prevent staff from reaching the Pre-school safely and it is impossible to maintain the correct ratios of suitable adults to children.
- When staff bereavement means it is impossible to maintain the correct ratios of suitable adults to children.

In the event of any of the above incidents occurring which requires the Pre-school to not open on a given morning, the staff will make contact with the families affected by the closure in advance, where practical. The Manager/Deputy is responsible for informing the relevant authorities of the unexpected closure. Parties who may need to be informed are Ofsted, Public Health England, Local Authority, Health and Safety Executive and RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations), depending on the circumstances of the closure. Parents will be informed about how they can find out when the Pre-school will re-open and other information according to the circumstances of the closure.

Emergency closure after a session has started

In the event of an emergency closure after the session has started parents will be informed by telephone that they are required to collect their child as soon as possible.

If the closure is due to an emergency which requires the building to be evacuated, the children will be safely evacuated according to the current appropriate emergency procedure. Contact information for all the children is taken out of the building, along with a mobile phone which will be used to contact parents/carers of the children present and informed of where to collect their children. Once the building is evacuated, the Manager/Deputy ensures the relevant authorities/emergency services are called. All staff will remain with the children during this time, until they can be collected.

Lock down

There may be occasions when it is safer for everyone to remain inside due to a threat outside, for example if there is a violent or armed person, a dangerous animal, or if there are dangerous fumes outside etc. First Step Pre-school Ltd will follow a 'lock down' procedure where the building is sealed off and people are not allowed to enter (and are discouraged from leaving) until the situation is resolved. Pre-school staff have no legal authority to prevent people who wish to from leaving the building; they can only make people aware of the dangers and encourage them to stay inside and wait for the danger to pass.

In the event of a significant danger being present outside, the following procedure should be followed:

- Alert all staff, 3 short blows of the whistle.
- Immediately lock external doors.
- If the danger relates to a violent / armed / threatening stranger outside, call Police immediately. Staff inside rooms should lower blinds
- Do NOT leave the building to challenge the person. Give the Police as much information as you can about the person. Description, Name if known, Behaviour, whether armed
- If the danger relates to a situation that is being managed by emergency services outside, (e.g. gas leak, fire) staff should check websites for further information and await an all-clear from emergency services before unlocking doors.

Charging

If we are forced to close because of an emergency, fees will not be refunded for closures of up to a week (5 Pre-school days). After this period the committee will meet to review the situation and to assess how long the closure might continue. This does not imply that fees will be refunded for closures longer than a week.

Should the Pre-school lose Grant Funding because of a closure and the staff are available to work, they may be paid at the Committee's discretion, if funds allow, if the Pre-school's insurance does not cover this closure.

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|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | | name of setting |
| Held on | <u>23/03/2023</u> | (date) |
| Date to be reviewed | <u></u> | (date) |
| Signed on behalf of the management committee | <u></u> | |
| Name of signatory | <u>A signed copy is available to view at Pre-school</u> | |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) | <u></u> | |