



Emergency Closure Policy

Playhouse Pre-school

Statement of intent

An emergency is an event which threatens to disrupt the normal running of Playhouse Pre-School or the safety and wellbeing of children, staff or other people on the premises.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- fire;
- serious accident or incident;
- loss of power, heating, water or other essential services;
- flooding;
- severe weather;
- structural or environmental hazards;
- burglary or other security incident;
- infectious disease outbreaks;
- an emergency affecting Longmeadow Primary School or the wider site; or
- any other situation that makes it unsafe or impractical for Playhouse Pre-School to remain open.

Emergencies may occur during or outside normal opening hours. Good planning, communication and preparedness are essential to ensure that children remain safe and are cared for appropriately.

In a real emergency, the Manager or the most senior member of staff present may need to make immediate decisions based on the circumstances. The safety and welfare of children and staff will always be the priority.

Our arrangements with Longmeadow Primary School

Playhouse Pre-School operates within the grounds of Longmeadow Primary School and rents its premises from the school.

Where an emergency affects the wider school site, Playhouse Pre-School will work closely with the Headteacher and school staff and will follow the school's emergency and evacuation procedures where these apply.

However, Playhouse Pre-School remains responsible for the children in its care and Playhouse staff must be prepared to take immediate action, including contacting the emergency services, evacuating the children and contacting parents/carers where necessary.

If Playhouse Pre-School needs to close because of an emergency, the Manager or person in charge will inform the Headteacher as soon as reasonably practicable.

Preparation

Playhouse Pre-School prepares for emergencies by:

- maintaining appropriate fire and emergency evacuation procedures;
- carrying out regular fire drills and other emergency practices where appropriate;
- keeping children's emergency contact information up to date;
- ensuring staff know their roles and responsibilities during an emergency;
- keeping staff contact details up to date;

- ensuring first-aid equipment and emergency supplies are available;
- maintaining appropriate risk assessments;
- ensuring staff know how to contact emergency services;
- maintaining arrangements for communicating with parents/carers; and
- reviewing emergency arrangements following any significant incident.

Action in an emergency

The priorities in any emergency are:

1. the safety and welfare of children;
2. the safety of staff and other adults;
3. contacting the emergency services where necessary;
4. following appropriate evacuation, shelter or lockdown procedures;
5. contacting parents/carers where children need to be collected;
6. minimising damage to buildings and property where this can be done safely; and
7. returning to normal operation as soon as it is safe and reasonably practicable to do so.

Staff must not put themselves or children at additional risk in an attempt to protect property.

Emergency services

Staff must call 999 immediately where emergency assistance is required.

Staff should not delay contacting the emergency services while waiting for the Headteacher, Manager or another member of staff to make the call.

Where an emergency occurs within the school premises, Playhouse staff will follow the school's arrangements for raising the alarm and evacuation while also ensuring that the children in their care are accounted for and supervised.

Evacuation or relocation

If the Playhouse building needs to be evacuated, staff will follow the setting's Emergency Evacuation and Fire Procedures.

Children will be supervised and accounted for at all times.

Depending on the circumstances, children may need to be moved to another safe area of the school site or another suitable location.

Staff will take the appropriate registers, emergency contact information and essential medication or emergency equipment where this can be done safely.

If children need to remain away from the normal premises for an extended period, the Manager will liaise with the Headteacher and relevant authorities as appropriate.

Emergency closure before the start of the session

Where an emergency means that Playhouse Pre-School cannot safely open, the Manager or person responsible for the setting will make the decision to close, in consultation with the Headteacher where the emergency affects the school site.

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable using the setting's usual communication methods.

The setting website, email, telephone, text message or other appropriate communication methods may be used.

Staff will also be informed as soon as reasonably practicable.

Emergency closure during a session

If it becomes necessary to close Playhouse Pre-School while children are attending, children will remain safely supervised by staff until they are collected by a parent/carer or another authorised person.

The Manager or delegated member of staff will organise contact with parents/carers.

The staff member responsible for each call will be agreed according to the circumstances and the availability of staff.

Where the Manager is unavailable, responsibility will pass to the designated deputy or the most senior member of staff present.

The setting will maintain a clear record of parents/carers who have been contacted and children who have been collected.

Children will only be released to a parent/carer or authorised person in accordance with the setting's normal collection procedures.

If a child cannot be collected and there are concerns about their welfare, the Uncollected Child Policy and safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Loss of essential services

If the setting loses electricity, heating, water or another essential service, the Manager will assess whether it remains safe and appropriate to continue operating.

The decision will take account of:

- the age and needs of the children;
- indoor temperature and ventilation;
- access to drinking water and suitable toilet facilities;
- lighting;
- food and milk storage;
- access to emergency equipment;
- the length of the disruption; and
- advice from the school, utility provider or relevant authorities.

If the setting cannot safely meet children's needs, the setting will close and parents/carers will be contacted.

Severe weather and site conditions

Playhouse Pre-School may need to close or alter its arrangements because of severe weather or unsafe access to the setting.

This may include:

- snow or ice;
- flooding;

- extreme heat;
- high winds;
- storms; or
- other conditions that create a risk to children, staff or visitors.

The Manager will consider information and advice from relevant authorities and the school and will make a proportionate decision based on the safety of children and staff.

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable if the setting needs to close or change its arrangements.

Infectious diseases and outbreaks

Playhouse Pre-School will follow current UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance on infection prevention, exclusion periods and the management of infectious diseases and outbreaks.

The current UKHSA guidance provides exclusion periods for individual infections and advice on when settings should contact their local Health Protection Team.

Parents/carers should inform Playhouse Pre-School if their child has been diagnosed with an infectious disease.

Children who are unwell will be managed in accordance with the setting's illness and infection-control procedures.

Where there is an outbreak or suspected outbreak, the setting will follow current UKHSA advice and seek advice from the local Health Protection Team where appropriate.

If an infectious disease or outbreak means that the setting cannot safely operate, the Manager will consider closure in consultation with the Headteacher and relevant health authorities where appropriate.

The setting will communicate with parents/carers about any necessary changes to attendance or closure.

Communication with parents/carers

The setting will use the most appropriate available method to communicate with parents/carers during an emergency.

This may include:

- telephone;
- email;
- text message;
- the setting's website;
- the setting's official social media channels; or
- another agreed communication method.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their contact details and emergency contact information are kept up to date.

Staff will use setting-approved communication methods and will not share confidential information through personal social media accounts.

Emergency contact arrangements

The Manager will ensure that appropriate staff know who is responsible for contacting parents/carers in an emergency.

Contact arrangements will be reviewed when:

- children join or leave the setting;
- children change their booked sessions;
- staff leave or join the setting; or
- there are significant changes to emergency arrangements.

Safeguarding and vulnerable children

The setting will consider the needs of children who may be particularly vulnerable during an emergency, including babies and younger children, children with additional needs or disabilities, and children with medical conditions.

Relevant individual healthcare plans, risk assessments and emergency arrangements will be followed.

If an emergency closure or disruption creates a safeguarding concern for a child, the setting's Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

Reporting and recording incidents

Significant emergencies and incidents will be recorded appropriately.

Where an incident is required to be notified to Ofsted or another relevant authority, the setting will follow the current reporting requirements.

Ofsted's current guidance requires providers to report relevant significant events as soon as possible and within the specified reporting period. The current EYFS also contains updated safeguarding notification requirements.

Funding and attendance

Where an emergency closure affects a funded place, Playhouse Pre-School will follow the relevant current funding requirements and liaise with the appropriate local authority team where necessary.

Charging and fees

If Playhouse Pre-School is forced to close because of an emergency, fees will be dealt with in accordance with the setting's current Fees and Terms and Conditions.

Parents/carers will be informed of any arrangements relating to fees or refunds following an emergency closure.

This policy was agreed by the staff of Playhouse Pre-School Broadwater.
Adopted on 23rd April 2015 and will be reviewed annually.
Reviewed on 23rd September 2026 by Z. Munford