



Emergency Closure Policy (including Lockdown Procedure)

Policy statement

It is the policy of Barnett Wood Pre-School to open as usual, unless circumstances beyond its control make it unsafe for children and/or staff. Reasons for emergency closure include (but are not limited to) the following:

- fire damage
- flooding
- snow/ice
- heatwave
- high level of sickness amongst staff/children
- pandemic
- no heating, power or water in the building

Procedures

Emergency closure

Should circumstances arise which mean that the Pre-School cannot open for a session (or sessions), the following procedure would be followed:

- Pre-School Manager will make a decision if the Pre-School will be closed based on the safety of children and staff travelling to/from the setting and whilst at the setting.
- In the case of bad weather, information sourced from local school websites and weather reports will be used to inform the decision.
- The Pre-School will only open if staffing ratios can be maintained.
- If a decision is made not to open the Pre-School then the Manager and Deputy Manager(s) will inform staff by telephone or text/WhatsApp message.
- Parents/Carers will be informed of the decision not to open via e-mail and a notice will be posted on the Pre-School's website and Facebook page. It is therefore essential that up to date contact details are kept for staff and parents. To ensure this parents/carers are requested to complete a contact form when their child starts at Pre-School.
- The e-mail system can be accessed off-site and therefore parents/carers can be contacted by e-mail even if there is no access to the building.
- Some members of staff will undertake different responsibilities during an emergency closure. Those members of staff will be made aware of their responsibilities by the Manager.
- Emergency Closures are not specified in staff employment contracts. It is at the discretion of the Directors whether or not staff will be paid in the event of an emergency closure. However, as a general rule, staff will be paid for any static hours they are contracted for. Any additional / bank staff hours will be paid if less than 24 hours' notice of cancellation can be given. Where possible, staff will be expected to come in and undertake work during emergency closures.
- It will be the responsibility of the manager to contact the relevant services (e.g. fire, gas, water etc) should this be necessary.
- It will be the responsibility of the manager to inform other relevant bodies of the emergency closure, should this be necessary.
- The emergency closure will be recorded in the register.
- The building has numerous emergency exits and has a group assembly point in the playground of the main school. Staff and children practice emergency exits on a half-termly basis (see Emergency Evacuation Policy).
- In the event of an emergency evacuation/closure, staff would remain with the children to ensure that ratios are maintained, and parents/carers would be contacted as soon as possible. Parents/carers of children who are deemed to be more vulnerable would be contacted as a priority.

Reopening after an emergency closure

- The Pre-School website and Facebook page will be regularly updated regarding how long the Pre-School will be closed for.
- Staff would be informed by telephone by the Manager or Deputy Manager(s) once a decision has been made to reopen the setting.
- An email and a message on the setting's website and Facebook page will be used to inform parents/carers that the setting will be reopening, along with any precautions that they may need to take.
- As these closures are beyond our control, under no circumstances are parents/carers entitled to a refund of fees if the Pre-School is unable to open.
- A log of events will be kept in the office.

Pandemics

In the event of a pandemic, the Pre-School will endeavor to remain open whilst it is safe to do so. However, it should be noted that children are highly efficient spreaders of respiratory infection. Depending upon the nature of the pandemic, the Government may advise schools & settings to close.

The Pre-School will also liaise with Barnett Wood Infant School and take into consideration any decision they may make to close.

Reasons for closure may include:-

- Too many staff off ill
- A large number of children off sick
- Government advice
- Barnett Wood School closure

Should a pandemic be imminent the Pre-School will review the cleaning schedule to ensure that high risk areas are cleaned more regularly. Extra care will be given to cleaning areas such as door handles, light switches, phones and toilet areas. We will endeavor to keep well stocked with items such as antibacterial soaps, disinfectants, toilet rolls and paper towels.

The Manager and Deputy will review the use of high-risk activities such as sand and playdough which can spread bugs easily. It may be that we limit their use or remove them until the pandemic has passed.

Posters will be displayed where available, to remind everyone of how best to manage the risks.

The Pre-School will be extra vigilant if they believe the pandemic is present in the local vicinity. In the event of a child/children becoming ill at Pre-School and showing symptoms in line with the nature of the pandemic, advice will be sort from the Health Security Agency as to whether the child/children need isolating. If required the following steps will be followed:-

- The sick child/children will be separated from the other children. Because of the layout of the setting, this may involve moving all of the remaining children into one room.
- One member of staff will stay with the sick child/children, until their parents/carers arrive to collect them. Protective gloves/apron will be worn by the member of staff if necessary.
- Parents/Carers of the children in attendance may be contacted, if appropriate, by phone/email message, to advise them of the suspected illness and to give them the opportunity to collect their child if they wish.
- If a child is suffering from a notifiable disease, it will be the responsibility of the Manager to inform the Health Security Agency.
- Once cases are confirmed parents/carers will be notified.

Whilst the setting remains open staff will ensure:-

- They wash their hands frequently using antibacterial hand wash. Alcohol hand gel will also be made available for parents/carers/staff where appropriate.
- Children wash their hands at regular intervals and specifically after using the toilet & before eating.
- All tissues are disposed of in a lined bin with a lid. Should there be a suspected case in the Pre-School we will follow advice from the government about waste disposal.
- That if they experience virus like symptoms, whilst at the setting, they advise the manager and get advice.
- Regular wiping of surfaces with appropriate detergents.
- Parents are reminded to keep unwell children at home and to notify the Pre-School of any illness or diagnosis.

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- We keep track of attendance rates, with specific information as to why the child/staff member was not attending the setting.

If the setting were to close, we would:

- follow the specific advice given to us by the Health Security Agency. It may be that they advise that the setting close to have a thorough deep clean. The Pre-School will do its best to ensure that it could reopen as quickly as is practically possible without compromising the health of the children or the staff.
- Monitor the Health Security Agency's advice and Local Authority websites for up to date information and advice on the pandemic. This task will be allocated to a specific staff member. Any updates will be forwarded to all parents at their given email address.

The Pre-School website will also be kept up to date with information regarding closures, advice and updates.

Lockdown Procedure

In the event where there is a credible threat to the safety of children or staff at the pre-School we will immediately put into action our lockdown procedure. A lockdown is implemented when there are serious security risks for the premises due to, for example, near-by chemical spillage, proximity of dangerous dogs, serious weather conditions or attempted access by unauthorized persons' intent in causing harm/damage.

There are two types of lockdown: partial lockdown and full lockdown.

Partial Lockdown

In a partial lockdown staff and children should return to the preschool building and all doors leading outside should be locked along with windows shut. No one should be allowed to enter or leave the building without prior permission from the manager. The children will continue to access the indoor facilities as normal.

In the event of an air pollution or chemical, biological or radiological contaminants issue, air vents, fans, heating and air conditioning systems should be closed or turned off. Use anything to hand to seal up all the cracks around doors and any vents into the room – the aim is to minimise possible ingress of pollutants. Staff should await further instructions

Partial Lockdown drills take place at least once a year to ensure everyone knows exactly what to do in such a situation.

Full lockdown

This signifies an immediate threat to the preschool and may be an escalation of a partial lockdown. The aim of a full lockdown is for the preschool to appear empty.

Immediate action

- All Doors and windows will be closed if they are not already. If it is practical the doors will be locked with the 5-point locking mechanism and an additional key. Any blinds will be closed. The children will be moved into the office and the door will be locked and blinds closed.
- Pupils/staff sit quietly out of sight as to not draw attention, where possible.
- A register will be taken of all children/staff.
- Staff will (as best they can) keep a calm atmosphere in the office, the children engaged in a silent activity or read a story and keep alert to the emotional needs of the children.

The office has access to phonelines and internet. If required a member of staff will alert the main school, call for help or call 999. They can also have email access to alert parents if needed. No adult or child will leave the office for any reason whilst in full lock down. Advice will be given as to when it is safe to return into the pre-school rooms. Depending on the type and severity of the incident, parents may be asked not to collect their children from preschool as it may put them and their child at risk. Children will not be released to parents during a full lock down. Parents will be asked not to call preschool as this may tie up emergency lines.

An email to parents will be sent home on the nearest possible day following any serious incident to inform parents of the context of the lockdown and to encourage parents to reinforce with their children the importance of following procedures in these very rare circumstances.

Policy written July 2023