

## Emergency Closure Policy

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## ***Intention***

This policy outlines the procedures to be followed in the event of an unexpected nursery closure due to unforeseen circumstances that may compromise the safety and wellbeing of children and staff.

## ***Legislative context***

### Legal guidelines and frameworks

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, 2025 (EYFS)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025 (KCSiE)
- The Equality Act, 2010

### Legal duties

The nursery has a legal duty to maintain clear procedures for ensuring the safety of children and staff — including guidance on when an emergency closure may be necessary, the reasons it could be required, and the steps to protect everyone’s welfare.

## ***Definition of terms used in this policy***

### Full Emergency Closure

The nursery must completely shut down, and no children or staff can attend due to circumstances that pose a significant risk to health, safety, or operations.

### Local Resilience Forums (LRFs)

Multi-agency forums that coordinate responses to major emergencies that could cause serious harm to people, property, or the environment — including severe weather, public health emergencies, and utility/infrastructure failures.

### Partial Emergency Closure

The nursery remains open but limits access — such as closing specific rooms or reducing capacity — due to issues affecting part of the setting or staffing levels.

## ***Guiding principles***

Emergency closures are implemented in line with safeguarding and welfare requirements, with the safety and wellbeing of children as the primary consideration. Decisions reflect a commitment to inclusivity and equity, taking into account the differing needs of families, and are supported by clear, timely, and accessible communication.

## ***Roles and responsibilities***

Role	Responsibilities
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### ***Updates to this policy***

This policy may be unilaterally updated at any time with immediate effect to ensure clarity, reflect the nursery's current operational practices, and maintain compliance with the latest government legislation and guidance. Please refer to the 'More Information' section on the website.

### ***Circumstances which may initiate an emergency closure***

Emergency closures will only be implemented when it is unsafe or impractical to remain open. The following are examples of circumstances that may require closure — this list is not exhaustive; other unforeseen situations may also require closure based on professional judgement or external recommendations.

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Health and safety risk	Fire, structural damage, unsafe building conditions
Severe weather	Flooding, snow/ice, storms affecting travel or safety
Utility failure	No heating, water, electricity, or gas
Public health concerns	Infectious disease outbreak, environmental contaminations
Security threats	Bomb threat, violent incident, intruder on site
Staffing issues	Insufficient staff to meet legal ratios safely
External emergency advice	Closure directed by emergency services or local authority

### ***Communication channels during an emergency closure***

Clear and timely communication will be prioritised to ensure all relevant parties are informed, supported, and able to respond appropriately.

#### Notifying families of an emergency closure

Families will be informed promptly via the Famly app. In urgent situations, direct telephone contact will also be attempted. If contact is unsuccessful, a message will be left requesting confirmation of receipt via the Famly app or email. If parents/carers cannot be reached, emergency contacts listed on the child's enrolment form will be contacted.

All communications will include:

- The reason for the closure
- The expected duration, where known

- Any required actions (e.g. immediate collection of children)
- Reassurance and guidance where appropriate

#### Notifying staff of an emergency closure

All staff will be informed of an emergency closure as quickly as possible using the nursery's internal communication channels.

- If on-site, staff will be informed immediately via the room's communication tools with clear real-time instructions
- If not on-site, staff will be contacted via telephone or the designated work WhatsApp groups

Staff will be provided with clear instructions regarding:

- Immediate actions required (e.g. evacuation, securing the setting, child collection procedures)
- Reporting arrangements and expected availability
- Any updates regarding reopening or ongoing arrangements

Staff are responsible for acknowledging messages and remaining contactable during emergency situations unless otherwise directed.

#### Notifying the nursery insurance provider of an emergency closure

The nursery manager is responsible for contacting the insurance provider as soon as reasonably practicable once a full or partial emergency closure is confirmed or likely.

This notification will:

- Ensure timely processing of any potential claims
- Support compliance with policy requirements
- Obtain guidance on required documentation, evidence, and procedures

All relevant information relating to the incident will be recorded and retained to support any insurance or regulatory requirements.

#### The role of Local Resilience Forums (LRF) in emergency closures

The nursery monitors information, alerts, and guidance issued by the LRF<sup>1</sup> to ensure closure decisions are based on accurate, up-to-date intelligence aligned with wider community response arrangements. Where appropriate, the nursery will liaise with the LRF during significant incidents to access advice, resources, and support — particularly regarding safeguarding vulnerable children and coordinating a safe reopening.

#### ***Partial closures and phased reopenings***

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the [Further Reading](#) section of this policy for LRF contact information.

Where a partial closure or phased return is implemented, priority will be given to children with specific needs, such as those on child protection plans, those with additional learning needs, or those for whom continued attendance is deemed essential for their welfare. This will be decided in consultation with parents/carers, relevant safeguarding partners, and external professionals where appropriate.

### ***Supporting vulnerable children during closures***

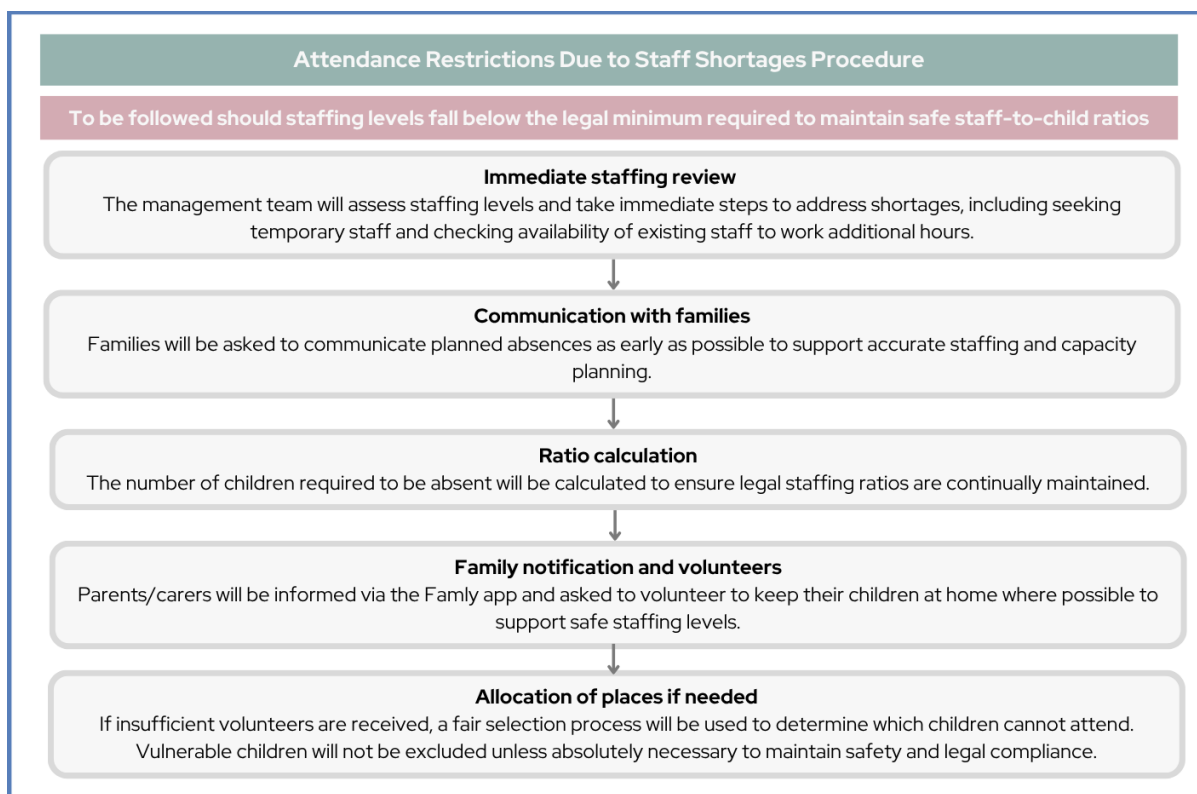
Special consideration will be given to vulnerable children to ensure their needs are met during any closure. This includes direct contact with parents/carers to discuss concerns and agree a tailored support plan. Where appropriate, the nursery may also offer:

- Home visits by staff to check on the child's well-being and offer support (subject to prior risk assessment and approval from the Senior Management)
- Regular virtual check-ins or online activities led by a familiar staff member to maintain connection and routine
- Priority for early return to the nursery once it is safe to reopen, potentially as part of a phased reopening to ensure a smooth transition

The nursery will also work closely with relevant external agencies, such as social services, to coordinate any necessary support and safeguard the welfare of each vulnerable child.

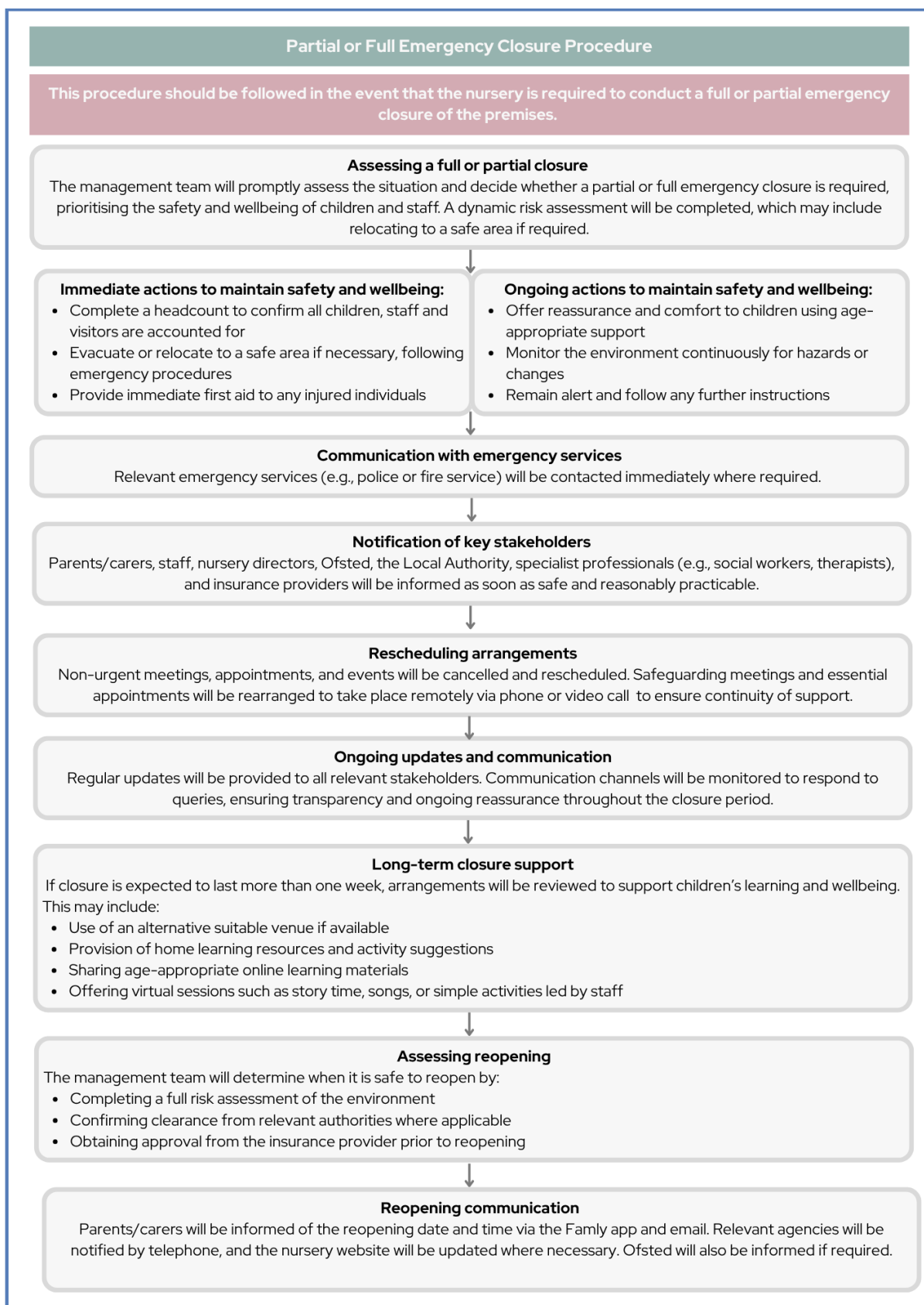
### ***Attendance restrictions due to staff shortages***

Where unexpected staff shortages affect the ability to maintain the required legal staff-to-child ratios, attendance may need to be temporarily restricted to ensure the safety and appropriate supervision of all children. The following procedure will be followed to manage staffing shortages fairly, safely, and in line with statutory requirements.



***Basic procedure to follow if the nursery needs to be partially or fully closed***

The following procedure to be taken during a partial or full emergency closure. Throughout this, staff are advised to use their professional judgment, respond calmly, and adapt appropriately based on the specific circumstances to ensure the safety and well-being of all children.



### ***Reviewing incidents leading to emergency closures***

Following any full or partial closure, a structured post-incident review will be completed using the Emergency Closure JotForm. This will include:

- Full documentation of the incident, including actions taken and all communications with relevant stakeholders
- Gathering feedback from staff, parents/carers, children (where appropriate), and other relevant professionals
- Reviewing circumstances and contributing factors to evaluate the effectiveness of the response
- Updating relevant policies, procedures, and risk assessments to reflect lessons learned
- Holding a staff debrief and reflective discussion to identify improvements and allow staff to raise concerns
- Confirming that updates to documentation have been read, understood, and implemented by all relevant staff

All post-incident reviews will be conducted in a reflective and supportive manner, with a focus on learning and strengthening practice rather than assigning blame.

***Essential knowledge for staff from this policy***

Key learning	Level
Explain some of the situations where the nursery may need to issue a full or partial closure	L1
Explain what communication channels are used to issue updates during an emergency closure	L1
Explain what measures may be taken to support vulnerable children during an emergency closure	L1
Explain what information needs to be passed on at the onset, during and following an emergency closure	L2
Explain what actions may be taken should the nursery experience an unexpected staff shortage	L2
Explain the role of the LRF and when should they be contacted during an emergency closure	L2
Explain when the nursery's insurance provider be contacted and who should do this during an emergency closure	L2
Explain the nursery procedure for issuing a full or partial closure	L2
Explain the nurseries fee policy for when a parent/carer chooses to keep their child at home when this has not been requested	L2
Explain how emergency closures should be reviewed	L2

### ***Training requirements***

There are no additional training requirements to accompany this policy.

### ***Monitoring and review***

<b>Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review emergency closure records and ensure all outcome actions have been actioned accordingly</li></ul>
<b>Confirm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Confirm that all staff members have an up-to-date contact number linked to their Family profile to be used in the event of an emergency closure</li></ul>

### ***Further reading***

<b>Name</b>	<b>Summary of content</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Link</b>
Local resilience forums: contact details	Contact details for local resilience forums in the UK, and information about what they do.	GOV.UK	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>