



25. Adverse Weather Policy

Policy Statement:

At St Vincent's Nursery we have an adverse weather policy in place to ensure our nursery is prepared for all weather conditions that might affect the running of the nursery such as floods, snow and heat waves. If any of these incidents impact on the ability of the nursery to open or operate, we will contact parents via phone / email and will also post regular updates on our website and Facebook page.

We will not take children outdoors where we judge that weather conditions make it unsafe to do so.

Aims and Objectives:

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety and welfare of all the children and staff within the nursery. The objective of this policy is to outline how every effort will always be made to keep the nursery open, but how in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to close at short notice.

At St Vincent's Nursery we recognise that adverse weather conditions can prevent employees from reaching their normal place of employment. All employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to attend for work, but without compromising their health and safety.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and outline the responsibilities for employees and managers for attendance at work in the event of adverse weather conditions and/or major disruptions to public transport.

General Principles:

We are aware that many parents rely on the nursery being open to allow them to fulfil their work and other commitments. The decision to close the nursery either before or during the usual opening hours will be made by the Nursery Manager, Ivana Butterworth, and the Registered Person, Anita Harrop.

The nursery will only be closed if, following a risk assessment, the safety of the children and staff is at risk when one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Failure of the heating system
- Flooding or other damage due to burst pipes
- Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the nursery running safely within the ratios
- Conditions on site are dangerous or health and safety cannot be maintained
- Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to later become too hazardous for travel



As soon as reasonably possible, the nursery will communicate this information, using the following means of communication:

- Display information on the Newsfeed on our online platform Family
- Inform parents by email / telephone where necessary, in cases where the closure happens after the children may have already been dropped off

Any decisions to close the nursery will be based on the circumstances pertaining to the nursery and will not necessarily reflect decisions made in respect of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, where other factors may need to be considered. For example, in the event of adverse weather, focus could be placed on clearing the car park and paths to the nursery, in order to make it accessible. However, where it has been determined by the senior leadership team that the adverse weather has made the overall grounds unsafe for children, staff and parents, a decision will be made to close all settings across the site, including the nursery.

Ultimately during periods of severe weather it is for parents to decide whether it is practical and wise for their children to attend nursery on any given day and we fully support parents who decide to keep children at home in these circumstances. We ask parents to be extra vigilant in supervising children when on site during icy and snowy weather.

It is appreciated that there may be operational and service delivery considerations in working during periods of adverse weather. The Nursery Manager is expected to ensure that employees are treated in an equitable and consistent manner and that the safety of employees is not compromised in any way.

The Nursery Manager also needs to consider individual requests from people with a disability and/or caring responsibilities that may present additional barriers to attendance at work in bad weather conditions.

We will use the same means of contact as above to inform parents that the nursery will re-open.

Weather Conditions:

Flood:

In the case of a flood we will follow our Critical Incident Policy to enable all children and staff to be safe and continuity of care to be planned for.

Snow or other severe weather:

If high snowfall, or another severe weather condition such as dense fog, is threatened during a nursery day then the Nursery Manager and the Registered Person will take the decision as to whether to close the nursery. This decision will take into account the safety of the children, their parents and the staff team. In the event of a closure during the nursery day, we will contact all parents to arrange for collection of their child (please see below for more details).



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 options have been explored and if we feel the safety, health or welfare of the children is compromised then we will take the decision to close the nursery.

Heat wave:

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 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 Suncare Policy.

Weather Deterioration During the Day:

In the event of the nursery having to close during the day due to unforeseen worsening weather or similar unforeseen circumstances, parents will be contacted by phone either at home or work and asked to collect their child. Such an early release will only be contemplated in extreme circumstances.

On-site Safety:

In the event of snow the pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, children, staff and visitors should be aware that pathways, even where cleared, may remain dangerous. In icy conditions the caretaker of St Vincent's Catholic Primary School will salt / grit pathways that are on the grounds of the school, including the car parks. It is a responsibility of the nursery staff to ensure that they salt / grit pathways from the gate outside the nursery to the main entrance and side entrances to the nursery.

Where necessary, pathways will be maintained as clear as possible throughout the day. On days where the St Vincent's Catholic Primary School is closed to pupils, the pathways will still be maintained during snow and icy weather on a daily basis by the caretaker, so as to keep the pathways clear and prevent build-up of ice and snow.

Staff Responsibilities:

All staff are responsible for ensuring that they report they are unable to attend for work as early as possible, and no later than 15 minutes before the time they would be expected to start work.

The Nursery Manager will consider the following options and agree with the employee on one of those. All options are subject to the Nursery Manager's approval and are solely at the Nursery Manager's discretion.



- Working from home – in certain circumstances the Nursery Manager may agree that an employee can work from home. This would be on the understanding that the employee can perform duties that are relevant to their normal workload and grade. This must be the subject of prior agreement (either general or specific) with the Nursery Manager. The work to be undertaken at home must be agreed with the Nursery Manager and be the subject of normal managerial procedures on return to work
- To take the day/s as annual leave
- To take the day/s as lieu time
- To work the appropriate extra hours unpaid
- To take unpaid leave
- A combination of the above

Arriving late:

Where the Nursery Manager is satisfied that an employee has genuinely been prevented from attending work by their normal starting time, as a result of adverse weather, any lateness of up to 1 hour will not be penalised in term of sanctions under any of the nursery's policies. Any loss of time will be managed by giving consideration to use one of the appropriate options detailed above.

Leaving early:

The Nursery Manager is responsible for deciding whether any request to leave early as a result of adverse weather is warranted, bearing in mind all available information including the infrastructure, home address and mode of transport of the employee concerned.

In circumstances where the Nursery Manager is satisfied that early release is justified, the loss of time will be managed by giving consideration to use one of the appropriate options detailed above.