

Health and safety

3.9 Emergency/temporary closure policy

Policy statement for St Joseph's Pre-school

St Joseph's Pre-school is usually open during published term time dates with the exception of pre-planned "INSET" days. We will endeavour to open for its usual session times without disruption. Where disruption is unavoidable (planned or unplanned), all involved at St Joseph's Pre-school will be kept informed and the Pre-school will reopen at the earliest opportunity.

In the event that the Pre-school has to close at times other than scheduled in the normal opening hours and dates, this policy will be applied to ensure that all involved in St Joseph's Pre-school has a clear understanding of the procedures which will take place.

St Joseph's Pre-school aims to give parents planned notice of closure but there may be circumstances which result in emergency/temporary closure. Such a closure will occur, when to remain open would result in a breach of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) safeguarding and welfare requirements and/or Ofsted registration. We will aim to rectify the cause of closure as soon as possible and keep all parents and carers informed of the situation.

In order to operate we must meet the following criteria:

- the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements;
- appropriate numbers of qualified staff;
- appropriate child to staff ratios;
- the conditions of our insurance policy;
- the physical environment subject to appropriate risk assessments;
- our ability to safeguard the children in our care in the event of a major incident resulting in a number of children needing to remain on site for a prolonged period, we will refer to the Critical Incident¹ policy;
- our duty of care for everyone travelling to and from our setting.

The Lead Practitioner in conjunction with the Chair, Treasurer and Treasury Administrator will liaise to confirm the appropriate course of action. The Pre-school's Business Continuity Plan will be referred to and acted upon when deemed necessary.

Procedures

An emergency/temporary closure will be implemented in the following circumstances:

- when the building is unusable through accidental or malicious work, and there are no facilities available at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to use as an alternative;
- when the building is unusable due to required maintenance work, and there are no facilities available at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to use as an alternative;
- the breakdown of the heating system or lighting failure, and there are no facilities available at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to use as an alternative;
- when an outbreak of illness within the Pre-school community requires closure in line with UK Health Security Agency² and Ofsted guidelines;

¹ 1.12.4 Critical Incident

² www.gov.uk/ukhsa telephone no: 0300 303 8162

- failure in supply of services (ie. water, sewerage, electricity, gas);
- when an emergency occurs during the Pre-school session which requires the Pre-school to close early;
- when adverse weather conditions³ make attendance impossible or dangerous, as advised by either the Head Teacher of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School or via the [Met office](#)⁴;
- in times of unprecedented hot temperatures if the decision is to keep operating, then the Lead/Deputy Practitioner will refer to 1.23 SunSmart Sun Protection policy to assess which actions to implement to ensure the safety of both staff and children, as much as is possible;
- when illness levels within the staff body mean it is impossible to maintain the correct ratios of suitable adults to children;
- when a closure resulting from insufficient staff being able to work and makes it impossible to maintain the correct ratios of suitable adults to children. Where possible the staff and the Committee will endeavour to arrange for alternative or temporary staff to attend to avoid the closure;
- forced closure due to a major incident in the local area;
- forced closure instigated by the Government during a time of "crisis" or due to an incident occurring in close proximity to the setting⁵.

In the event of any of the above incidents occurring which requires the Pre-school to not open on a given day, the Lead Practitioner will make contact with the families of the Pre-school affected for that session in advance of the day, where practical, and also inform other staff due to work that day. Where possible a notice will also be placed on St Joseph's Pre-school's Facebook page 'St Joseph's Pre-school'.

St Joseph's Pre-school's Committee's Chair and/or Deputy Chair will be responsible for informing the relevant authorities of the unexpected closure, except in the case of adverse weather conditions which will be undertaken by St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

- Initially this will be Gloucestershire County Council;
- Other parties who may need to be informed are Ofsted, Public Health England, Local health authority, Health and Safety Executive and RIDDOR, depending on the circumstances of the closure;
- Parents will be informed, via their contact email address, about how they can find out when the Pre-school will reopen and other pertinent information according to the circumstances of the closure.

If St Joseph's Pre-school remains open during adverse weather, we will aim to operate as normal for as long as possible. A risk assessment will be conducted immediately and updated periodically during the day⁶. This will depend on the criteria set out under the Policy Statement.

Emergency closure after a session has started

- In the event of an emergency closure after the session has started, parents/carers will be informed by telephone that they are required to collect their child/children as soon as possible
- If the closure is due to sickness, the children and all staff who are unaffected will remain on the premises until all children can be collected. If too few staff are well enough to stay

³ Such as snow, flood, storm or extreme heat

⁴ ie. red or amber warnings

⁵ Notification received via the Government's Emergency Alerts on setting mobile phone (www.gov.uk/alerts)

⁶ The setting will use PATA's Risk Assessment form "heatwave"

on the premises, members of the Committee will be contacted and asked to stay on until the other children have been collected;

- If the closure is due to an emergency which requires the building to be evacuated, the children will be safely evacuated according to the fire safety and emergency evacuation policy and procedure. Contact information for all the children will be taken out of the building alongside the daily register. Once the building is evacuated, the Lead/Deputy Practitioner(s) will inform St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and together they will ensure that the relevant action is taken. The children will then be taken to a place of safety until such time as they can be all collected by parents/carers. The Lead/Deputy Practitioner(s) will contact the parents/carers of the children present. All staff will remain with the children during this time

Refunds and Payments

If St Joseph's Pre-school is forced to close because of an emergency, fees for paid sessions (excluding government funded sessions) will not be refunded for closures of up to a week (5 pre-school days) unless specifically requested in writing. The Committee will meet to review the situation and to assess how long the closure might continue. This does not imply that fees will automatically be refunded for closures that are longer than a week but that parents will be notified accordingly depending on the situation.

Staff will continue to be paid for contractual hours missed due to the emergency/temporary closure of up to a week. The situation will then be reviewed and staff will be notified accordingly of the situation.

Staff will need to be flexible in working arrangements following an emergency/temporary closure. For example, they will be expected to use their time for updating records, folders, planning, continuous professional development activities and attending emergency meetings etc.

Report

Whenever a session is closed a report will be completed confirming the circumstances and any actions taken. This will be available for parents/Ofsted to view at any time.

Legal Framework

- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)

Further guidance

- DfE: Statutory Framework for the [Early Years Foundation Stage](#) (EYFS) (latest version). Section 3 – The safeguarding and welfare requirements.
- UK Health Security Agency: "[Health protection in children and young people settings, including education](#)" (latest version)
- Met Office – [warnings & advice](#)

Associated Policies & Procedures

- 1.12.4 Critical Incident
- 1.23 SunSmart Sun Protection
- 4.10 Payment of Fees

Version Number	Author	Purpose of change	Date
1.0	K Coupe	New policy: required to confirm procedures in an event of an emergency/temporary closure	Sept 2014

Version Number	Author	Purpose of change	Date
2.0	K Coupe	Reviewed, version controlled and updated	27 Feb 2019 Committee Meeting
3.0	K Coupe	Updated with regards to forced closure by the Government in response to a crisis	06 Aug 2020 Committee Meeting
4.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and updated: • Inclusion of link to www.gov.uk/alerts - the Government's new Emergency Alert system due to be launched in 2023; • insertion of "Associated Policies & Procedures" section as per EY Safeguarding audit 175/157 2023	08 Feb 23 Committee Member (S Webb)
5.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and update • "Further Guidance" section update and hyperlinks included	26 Mar 2025 Committee Member (S Long)
6.0	K Coupe	Updated using PATA's sample policy and • including reference to adverse weather conditions such as heat; • addition of hyperlinks; • updating "Associate Policies and Procedures" section	13 July 2025 Committee Member (L Finn-Powers)
7.0	K Coupe	Updated as follows: • Inclusion of reference to the Pre-school's Business Continuity Plan; • updated reference to UK Health Security Agency.	13 Nov 2025 Committee Member (H Heaven)