

Southwater Village Hall Pre-School Policies and Procedures



Emergency Closure Policy

Policy Statement

It is our aim to ensure that Southwater Village Hall stays open whenever possible ensuring the safety and well-being of all children, parents/carers, visitors and staff.

However, in the event of exceptional circumstances which cause breach of either The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Safeguarding and Welfare requirements and/or Our Ofsted registration, Southwater Village Hall Pre-School will not open.

In order to operate we must meet the following criteria:

- The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the EYFS
- The requirements of our insurance
- The number of qualified staff
- Appropriate staff: child ratios
- The risk assessment of the physical environment of our pre-school
- Our ability to safeguard the children in our care in the event of a critical incident

An exceptional circumstance is defined as something which has happened beyond our normal level of control such as:

- Lack or failure of heating which would cause the pre-school to be unable to maintain a reasonable temperature in the building
- Accidental damage or vandalism to the pre-school making it unfit for purpose.
- Failure in supply of services (water, sewerage, electricity, gas).
- Inadequate staff: child ratios due to staff illness
- Extreme weather conditions such as snow, flood or storm. (Please note that our opening will usually run in conjunction with the local schools; if they close due to bad weather then we will do the same)
- Where there is a risk of an epidemic or pandemic in the community, we will at all times follow the official government health guidelines, including the closure of the pre-school if necessary, to stop the spread of infection. If the decision is taken to close the pre-school it will be taken by the pre-school manager in conjunction with the appropriate health authorities such as Public Health England.

Procedures

The Executive Committee and or The Pre-School Manager of Southwater Village Hall Pre-school may close the pre-school without notice if Health and Safety of children, parents or staff are put at risk.

- All staff and committee should have a copy of the emergency closure policy, and be familiar with its contents. The Health and Safety officer is responsible for making sure all registers and children's contact details are kept up-to-date.

- We prepare for emergencies by having an up-to-date fire and emergency evacuation procedure, through regular fire drills and by keeping records and contact lists up-to-date.

Unexpected closure before a session

The pre-school contingency plan is as follows: The priorities are

- the safety of children
- the safety of staff and other adults
- minimise damage to buildings
- getting back to normal as soon as possible

On discovering that a scheduled session is not able to run, the following procedure will be implemented:

- The first person to arrive (if not the pre-school manager) will inform the manager and the chair person of the committee.
- The pre-school manager/deputy (who-ever is on duty) and a group leader will contact parents by phone, immediately of session closure and reason. If possible, an email will also be sent out.
- Staff will be notified at the earliest opportunity but not until all parents have been informed.
- An unexpected closure poster will be displayed on main door and if possible a banner placed on the home page of the website and the pre-school facebook page.
- As soon as possible we will notify Ofsted (if closure is due to notifiable disease).
- If the pre-school is forced to close because of an emergency during the week in which headcount (to determine Free Entitlement) is carried out, the manager will contact Early Years Free Entitlement at West Sussex County Council to discuss alternative arrangements.

Unavoidable closure during session

- If necessary, children will be evacuated onto the far side of the green opposite the pre-school.
- Parents will be contacted to collect their children as soon as possible.
- In the event that we are unable to contact a parent, two members of staff will stay with the child until contact is made with the parent and the child collected. (We may contact Social Services for advice if we are unable to make contact with a parent or carer).

Fees

- If the pre-school is forced to close because of an emergency such as burst water pipes, no heating, damage to building, illness, weather conditions or any other circumstances beyond our control fees will not be refunded **for closures up to 10 days**. Any fees not paid to date at time of closure still need to be paid.
- If any of the above unforeseen circumstances, forces closure, pre-school does not schedule any make up days.
- Refunds are not an option because our expenses continue despite such unforeseen circumstances.

Re-opening of the Pre-School

- The decision to re-open the pre-school will be taken by the pre-school manager and or the chairperson of the committee in conjunction with emergency services if necessary.
- Staff will be contacted by the deputy manager to advise them the pre-school has re-opened where necessary. The manager will initiate this process.
- The reasons for closing the pre-school will be recorded in the Incident Book by the Health and Safety Officer.
- Where possible, the pre-school website and facebook page will be updated to advise parents/carers that the pre-school has re-opened.

Policy Implementation

- All parents and carers are made aware of this policy for emergency closure and receive emailed copy when signing terms and conditions.
- Regular fire drills and practice evacuations are carried out with the Health and Safety Officer reviewing to ensure its effectiveness.
- All staff are made aware of this policy as part of their inductions, supervision's and training.

This policy was adopted at a zoom meeting of the Pre-School committee held in: 23rd June 2020

Signed on behalf of the pre-school: Heather Clarke

Position: Manager

Review Date: June 2021