

Oaks Nursery

Severe weather policy

Introduction

This policy outlines the procedures, communications and practices for parents and staff in the event of severe weather conditions. Our primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of staff and children either travelling to and from the nursery, or whilst on the premises. Prior to the interruption of services the Nursery Manager and Director of Operations at Kent Union will undertake a risk assessment that will support any decisions to changes of service.

Severe weather definitions

Severe weather conditions are defined below. One or more may prompt consideration of emergency closure;

- Prolonged and/or excessively high temperatures
- Prolonged and/ or excessively low temperatures
- Prolonged snowfall and/or icy conditions
- Prolonged rainfall and/ or flooding

Communication methods

The Nursery has good communication links with our parents and staff using text messaging, email and telephone. It is essential that parents and staff ensure that the nursery has the most current mobile numbers and email addresses at any one time. If adverse weather is forecast nursery may monitor the situation, or take appropriate action on the day prior to any expected conditions. It is understood that parents using our services will need to make alternative childcare arrangements, or adapt their normal schedules so we would endeavour to give as much notice as possible to any interruptions in our service.

Procedures for contacting parents

- For advanced notice of changes to service or closures parent's will receive information face to face from staff, with an email and text message by the end of that day
- Information will be posted on the following websites;

www.oaksnurserykent.co.uk

www.kentunion.co.uk

- Changes at short notice will be sent by text messaging, parents who have not registered a mobile number will receive a personal telephone call on the numbers registered on file
- An information message will be recorded on the nursery voice mailbox and can be accessed calling **01227 827676**

- Service information and updates will be broadcast on the following radio stations;

BBC Radio Kent 96.7 and 104.2 FM

Invicta Radio 102.8 and 103.1 FM

- Regular updates will be sent via email and posted on the websites listed above
- If an emergency weather situation occurs while the nursery is open parents will be texted to collect children immediately. A minimum of 2 staff will remain on site until all the children have been collected. If parents are unable to collect children in a reasonable timeframe then nursery must be informed of a nominated person over the age of 16 who can collect in their absence, following the password system for adults not known to staff

Procedures for contacting staff

- Staff who are on site will be told face to face of the impending situation. Those staff not at work will be sent an email and text message about forthcoming changes to work routines
- If the decision to close or reduce opening times is made at short notice, or in an emergency situation, staff will be contacted by 8am via text messaging on the day they are due to work. It is therefore vital that mobile phones are charged, switched on and accessed prior to this time
- In cases of immediate closure staff will be sent home as soon as it is safe to do so without child ratios being compromised, giving priority to those individuals who have the most difficult journey home.(at the discretion of senior management on duty)

Service expectations

The location of our nursery necessitates vehicles to travel up steep hills from all directions to access the University campus. Whilst some staff may be able to travel to work on foot, the majority however travel to work by car or public transport. This has implications on the number of staff able to attend work, and indeed to travel home safely at the end of the shift.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Welfare Requirements (2012) state the minimal number of staff to care for children at any one time as;

- 0-2 yrs 1 adult – 3 children
- 2-3 yrs 1 adult - 4 children
- 3-5 yrs 1 adult -8 children

In an event of adverse weather the nursery may implement a restricted service, based on the number of staff in the nursery at any one time. This may include one or all of the following strategies;

- Reduced service hours to morning or afternoon sessions
- Open later and close earlier
- Reduce the number of rooms used for childcare after assessing the impact on the number of children on the premises at any given time
- Wherever possible we will try to keep the baby room open with minimum staff

- We reserve the right to limit places based on the number of staff available
- Should it be necessary offer reduced places, in accordance with the Early Years Education Grant (Kent code of Practice) we will prioritise attendance for children in receipt of the Early Years Education Grant first

Health and Safety

In preparation of, or during adverse weather conditions parents and staff are requested to independently access safety information for travelling to work or nursery, and moving around campus.

During icy conditions the nursery will endeavour to grit and clear entrance pathways within the nursery grounds to minimise the risk of accidents. Whilst the University of Kent independently maintain campus grounds we will monitor approaches to nursery and maintain clear communication with the estates department to make pathways safe.

Kent Union staff take responsibility for their own personal safety in conjunction guidelines for employees on *adverse weather conditions* contained within the following document; **Absence Policy, section 10**, which can be found following the link below. Paper copies can be obtained from the Nursery Administrator .

www.kentunion.co.uk/pageassets/staff/documents/Absence-Policy.docx

Adopted on (date): 16th November 2012

Signed on behalf of The Oaks Nursery:

Name: Chris Comper

Job title: Nursery Manager