**EMERGENCY CLOSURE POLICY**

There may be occasions when, due to circumstances out of our control, Amberley may be forced to close for a limited time. We expect these to be rare.

**In all emergency situations, our priority will be to the safety of children, families and staff.** We understand that us being forced to close will likely have significant impacts for families, and will take all steps possible to prevent closures. However, we recognise that there may be situations where it would be inappropriate for us to open, or we may be forced to offer a reduced service.

Possible reasons for closure are (but not limited to):

* Weather – for example, heavy snow or flooding, resulting in staff and families not being able to get to nursery safely, and/or the access to our premises being unsafe.
* Outbreak of illness/contagious disease, leading to staffing levels being too low to maintain our legally required ratios and/or keep children safe. In this instance, the nursery may be required to close to prevent cross-contamination and/or carry out a deep clean.
* Structural problem with the nursery and/or surrounding area.
* Gas, electric or water cut.
* Fire.
* We are advised to close by an appropriate government body, eg the Health Protection Agency, or OFSTED.

**If an emergency closure occurs before the nursery day begins:**  we will update social media without delay. We will endeavour to contact all families via either phone call, text or email; however, depending on the nature of the emergency, we may not be able to access all contact information, or have an appropriate length of time to contact all families before the start of the day. We will ensure there is a sign up at the nursery to explain why the closure has occurred. If possible, a staff member will be present to speak to families who do arrive.

**If an emergency closure needs occurs during a session:** We will update social media without delay, asking parents to collect their children. We will contact parents, or the child’s emergency contacts, asking them to collect without delay. We will do our utmost to keep children and staff warm, safe and comfortable until parents/carers arrive. *We have an emergency agreement with Birkdale Nursery, that in the event of a fire or similar emergency, we may temporarily use a room there until children are collected.* **See also Emergency Evacuation Policy.**

**Should we be able to offer a reduced length day:** We will update our social media, display signs at the nursery entrance and speak to the person dropping off the child.

**Should we be able to offer a reduced number of places:** Sessions will be cancelled in the following order:

* Children who attend fully-funded spaces will have their session cancelled
* Parents will be asked if they are voluntarily able to keep children home that day. (In this instance, we will do our utmost to offer replacement hours to families; however, due to the fullness of the nursery, this may not always be possible).
* We will allocate remaining spaces depending upon the staff/rooms available for use, aiming to ensure that children who are admitted to the nursery have familiar adults and environments whenever possible.

To ensure the sustainability of Amberley. If we close due to circumstances beyond our control, all fees will remain due (in full) for any sessions, whether these were able to be attended by the child or not.

Policy revised September 2021 Lisa Gray