



Emergency Closure Policy

Statement of Intent

Toddington Childcare and Forest School is committed to providing consistent, high-quality childcare and education with minimal disruption to children and families. We will endeavour to remain open during our published operating hours and term dates wherever it is safe and practical to do so.

In circumstances where closure is unavoidable, we will communicate promptly with families, staff, and relevant authorities, ensuring that the setting reopens at the earliest safe opportunity.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, staff, and visitors during emergency situations.
- Provide clear procedures for emergency closure before or during a session.
- Ensure effective communication with families and relevant agencies.
- Minimise disruption to childcare provision wherever possible.
- Meet statutory safeguarding, health and safety, and regulatory requirements.

Circumstances Requiring Emergency Closure

An emergency closure may be necessary where the safe operation of the setting cannot be maintained, including but not limited to:

- Significant accidental, structural, or malicious damage to the premises.
- Loss of essential services such as electricity, heating, water, or sanitation.
- Emergency maintenance or repairs that make the premises unsafe or unusable.
- Severe weather conditions, flooding, snow, ice, storms, or other environmental events that pose a risk to children, staff, or visitors.
- Insufficient staffing levels due to illness or unforeseen circumstances, resulting in an inability to meet statutory adult-to-child ratios or ensure safe supervision.
- An outbreak of infectious disease where closure is advised by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Public Health authorities, Ofsted, or the local authority.

- Any incident that poses a significant risk to the health, safety, or welfare of children, staff, or visitors.

Closure Before the Start of a Session

Where possible, parents and carers will be informed as early as practicable of any decision to close.

Communication may be made through:

- Telephone calls
- Email
- Website and/or social media updates where appropriate

Where advance notice is not possible, designated members of staff will remain available until reasonable efforts have been made to contact all affected families.

The Setting Manager or another designated person will be responsible for notifying relevant agencies where required, including:

- Ofsted
- Local Authority Early Years Team
- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Any other relevant authority depending on the nature of the incident

Families will be provided with information regarding:

- The reason for closure (where appropriate)
- Expected duration of closure if known
- How updates will be communicated
- Arrangements for reopening

Emergency Closure During a Session

Should an emergency arise after children have arrived at the setting, parents and carers will be contacted and asked to collect their child as soon as possible.

Children will remain under the supervision of suitably qualified staff at all times until collected.

Closure Due to Illness or Infection

Where closure is required because of illness or infection, children who are well enough to remain at the setting will continue to be supervised safely until collected.

Appropriate infection control measures will be followed in line with public health guidance.

Closure Requiring Evacuation

If the emergency requires evacuation of the premises:

- Staff will follow the setting's Emergency Evacuation and/or Emergency Fire Evacuation Procedures.
- The daily registers, emergency contact details, medication records, and any essential medical information will be taken from the premises where safe to do so.
- Children and staff will move to the Fire Assembly Point or Designated Evacuation Point for safety.
- Emergency services will be contacted where necessary.
- Parents and carers will be informed as soon as practicable of collection arrangements.
- Staff will remain with the children until all have been collected by an authorised adult.

Safeguarding Considerations

The safeguarding and welfare of children remain paramount during any emergency closure.

Staff will:

- Follow the setting's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Ensure children are only released to authorised adults.
- Maintain appropriate supervision ratios until collection.
- Record any incidents, concerns, or unusual events arising during the closure.

Staff Responsibilities

The Setting Manager and Parent Management Committee will:

- Assess risks and determine whether closure is necessary.
- Liaise with relevant authorities and emergency services.
- Coordinate communications with families and staff.
- Maintain records of incidents and decisions.
- Ensure appropriate risk assessments are completed before reopening.

All staff are responsible for:

- Following emergency procedures.
- Maintaining children's safety and wellbeing.
- Supporting communication and collection arrangements as directed by the Setting Manager.

Reopening Following Closure

Toddington Childcare and Forest School will only reopen when:

- The setting has been assessed as safe.
- Required repairs or remedial actions have been completed.
- Adequate staffing levels are available.
- Any recommendations from relevant authorities have been addressed.

Parents and carers will be informed as soon as a reopening date is confirmed.

Fees and Funding

Where an emergency closure results in missed sessions, Toddington Childcare and Forest School will ensure that parents and carers are not charged for sessions that cannot be provided.

Where possible, children in receipt of funded childcare hours will be offered additional sessions or alternative arrangements to make up any lost funded entitlement.

Any fee adjustments, credits, or reimbursement arrangements will be communicated to families as soon as practicable.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Fire Safety Management Policy
 - Emergency Lockdown and Evacuation Policy
-

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if Legislation, guidance or operational requirements change.

Signed on behalf of Toddington Childcare and Forest School: May 2026

Sarah Malcolm

Chair of Toddington Childcare and Forest School Parent Management Committee