

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Staff: Child ratios

Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety.

5.2 Pre-school Closure in Unexpected Circumstances

Policy Statement

At Enstone Pre-School we aim to provide care and education throughout the school year, according to the dates and times published by Oxfordshire County Council / Enstone Primary School, and in our Prospectus (10.1) and newsletters. Parents/Carers should assume, unless contacted to the contrary, that we will be open on those advised term dates. However, at times, due to unforeseen circumstances such as staff sickness, infectious diseases, snow or failure of public utilities, we may be forced to close early or not open at all.

We aim to keep parents and carers informed to the best of our abilities and ensure the safety of staff, parents/carers and children at all times whilst on pre-school premises. However, it will be the responsibility of parents/carers to make their own decisions with regard to their own risk and personal safety whilst travelling to and from the pre-school.

Parents/Carers should assume that unless contacted to the contrary WE WILL BE OPEN and all reasonable attempts will be made to contact parents/carers as soon as possible if we have to close for any reason. Parents should ensure we have up to date contact numbers and advise us if their child will not be attending any of their booked sessions.

Procedures

Ratios

- To meet this aim we use the following ratios of adult to children
 - Children under two years of age: 1 adult: 3 children.
 - Children aged two years of age: 1 adult: 4 children.
 - Children aged three to seven years of age: 1 adult: 8 children.
- A minimum of two staff/adults are on duty at any one time.
- At least one member of staff should hold a relevant level 3 childcare qualification.
- At least one qualified first aider is in attendance at all times.
- At least one member of staff should have been DBS checked and cleared.
- The pre-school Manager is responsible for deploying staff and volunteers effectively to ensure the safety, welfare and development of children. In her absence, the pre-school deputy manager/room leader will take overall charge and responsibility.

- Parents/Carers should advise pre-school as soon as possible if their child will not be attending any of their booked sessions.

Managing staff absences and contingency plans for emergencies

- In the event of a reasonable snowfall prior to the start of a session, with possibly the threat of further heavy snowfall to follow, staff may decide that they are unable to work their scheduled hours, due to travelling difficulties or children to care for at home. In these instances, staff should follow the standard contingency plan as detailed below.
- The Manager, or senior member of staff on duty, should check ratios, taking into account any cancelled bookings.
- If there is an emergency which threatens adult: child ratios the supervisor will endeavour to find replacement cover by drawing on a pool of suitable staff / committee chair / committee members or by arranging additional parent support to ensure ratios are maintained.
- If the manager feels that it is unsafe for staff and children to attend, or if we are unable to meet appropriate ratios/first aid/safeguarding requirements etc., then the manager will contact the Chairperson to discuss the situation and parents/carers contacted by telephone as soon as possible afterwards if it is agreed that the session has to be cancelled.
- It is the responsibility of the Pre-school parents/carers to ensure their own safety and make their own decisions with regard to their own risk and personal safety whilst travelling to and from the pre-school premises.
- The Manager and Deputy will hold a copy of family home telephone numbers and parental mobile phone numbers at all times. They will try and speak personally to a parent or carer, but if unavailable will leave a message on an answer machine whenever possible.
- Our contingency plans to cover staff absences are as follows:

Manager absent – Check adult: child ratios	Contact Pre-school Deputy Manager/room leader Inform Committee Chair Organise additional staff cover and/or Organise committee / parent cover Phone parents / carers
Staff absent	Contact Manager/deputy manager/room leader Organise additional staff / committee and/or parent cover

- Staff are all issued with a staff / committee contact list and should try and telephone their contact as soon as possible. Staff should ensure that they speak directly with another staff member and should not email or leave a message on an answer machine as these are not always checked in time.
- In the event of utilities being unavailable and creating uncomfortable, unsafe or unhygienic conditions then the Manager, Staff and Chair will discuss the matter. If the decision is taken not to open then the staff will contact all parents by telephone. Advance notice of any closures due to planned utility cuts will always be given where possible; by a note to parents, written notice as well as a verbal reminder.
- Should we have to close due to an infectious disease families will be contacted and advised as per instructions received from Public Health England and/or OfSted. (see policy 6.2)
- Should we have to close due to an outbreak of food poisoning families will be contacted and advised as per instructions received from Environmental Health Department and OfSted. (see policy 6.6)
- In the event of a forced closure after a session has started the staff will contact all parents/carers and request that they pick up their children as soon as possible. Staff will stay with the children until every child has been picked up by parents or a child's nominated emergency carer.
- If the pre-school is rendered unsafe (due to flood or fire etc.) the manager will request permission from the school to house the children safely in the school hall or in a class room until they can be picked up. Parents/Carers will be contacted by telephone and advised of the location of their children and asked to collect them as soon as possible. A note of the children's location will also be displayed in the Pre-school's notice board.
- Enstone Primary School usually broadcast their closures on local radio, local radio websites and on their own school website. School closure may impact pre-school as staff with school aged children may not be able to work and pre-school children with older siblings at the school may not come into pre-school if the primary school is closed. However we will make every effort to remain open if we can and so even if Enstone Primary School is shut this does not necessarily mean that the pre-school will be shut. If unsure, parents/carers should try telephoning pre-school prior to setting out. If we are closed then we will notify parents/carers by newsletter and/or by telephone.
- All reasonable attempts will be made to ensure parents/carers are issued with the correct information, but it is recognised that in some instances some parents/carers may not receive the correct information and may not receive the information in a timely manner. This policy will therefore be reviewed regularly and procedures amended accordingly.

OfSted must be notified of any significant event which is likely to affect the Pre-school's ability to provide childcare.

Staff Remuneration for Unforeseeable Pre-school Closure

When the pre-school is closed to children without notice due to unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. weather or loss of utilities) the employee should still attend work as per their contracted hours. If this is not possible, they should contact the Pre-school Manager and/or Committee Chair as per above procedures and will have to take the hours lost due to closure / non attendance as unpaid leave.

There is the additional option of working from home or of working additional hours over the following term in order to recoup the hours lost due to closure. This agreement should be confirmed prior to any work being completed, and will be at the discretion of the Pre-school Manager and/or Committee Chair

Legal framework

- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999

This policy was adopted by	Enstone Pre-school	<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	_____	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	_____	<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider	_____	
Name of signatory	_____	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	_____	