



Emergency Closure Policy:

There are certain circumstances which could result in Ducklings Childcare Ltd having to be closed; we aim to rectify the closure as soon as possible and keep all parents/carers informed of the situation.

In cases of extremely bad weather, usually snow, we will follow the decision of the nursery manager with regard to whether the nursery will open or not. The circumstances in which the nursery will be closed will have to be exceptional. It should be assumed that the nursery will be open unless it is impossible to reach, even by staff that can travel on foot and wherever possible, families will be contacted via telephone and should check our website, Facebook or announcements on the Radio.

If only a handful of staff are able to get to the nursery, we will merge the nursery rooms and endeavour to meet the needs of the children in our care. It will be at the discretion of the manager to decide if, at that point, the nursery has to be closed, for example, if there is any deterioration in weather conditions, which may impede staff in their journey home and the collection of children.

In the event of an early closure, parents should make arrangements to pick their child/children up early. If a child is to be released to a carer not listed on the emergency contact list, a phone call to the office will be necessary first and a password agreed.

Please make certain you leave work/home early so you arrive on time to collect your child. Late pickup charges will still apply.

Each child's safety is of the utmost importance and the final decision to have your child attend the nursery in bad weather is ultimately yours.

Heating breakdown/power cut

Should the heating system, which is electronically operated, break down at the nursery, the manager will make a decision if the nursery is to open or close. Should it be too cold, parents/carers will be contacted to collect their children. Appropriate numbers of staff will stay with the children until all of them have been collected.

As both of the above situations are beyond our control and of **force majeure** nature, refunds for "closed" or "partial" sessions will not be given.



Snow

If high snow fall is threatened during a nursery day then the duty manager will take the decision as to whether to close the nursery. This decision will take into account the safety of the children, their parents and the staff team. In the event of a planned closure during the nursery day we will contact all parents to arrange for collection of their child.

In the event of staff shortages due to snow we will contact all available off-duty staff and/or agency staff and group the children differently until they are able to arrive. If we are unable to maintain statutory ratio requirements after all avenues are explored we will contact our inspectorate to inform them of this issue, recording all details in our incident file. If we feel the safety, health or welfare of the children is compromised then we will take the decision to close the nursery.

Any other need for emergency closure

Should there be any other need for the nursery to close; the following procedure will be followed:

If we need to close during a session, the manager and staff will contact the parents/carers of children present.

If we need to make a decision to close before the session has begun, the manager will endeavour to contact the parents/carers of all children due to attend on that day. If they are unable to make contact with all the parents/carers they will arrange for a notice to be displayed outside the premises or arrange for a representative to be at the premises to inform parents/carers.

Crèche

As an Ofsted Registered Childcare on Domestic premises it is vital that we keep up to date with the latest requirements laid out by Ofsted/Dfes.

In order to do this we need to attend training organised by the local authority. Sometimes the training is during the working day and rather than inconvenience you by asking to take half days off we can put your child in the crèche.

We will only put children in a crèche if we have their parents signed permission.

We will always remain in the same building as the crèche and be available in the event of any emergency.



We will ensure that the children are given time to settle into their new surroundings before leaving them.

We will ensure that the Crèche staffs are fully informed of the individual needs of the children (including allergies etc) and have relevant qualifications.

We will only use a crèche that is organised by the Local Authority and only to allow us to undertake professional development training.

Critical Incident

Here at Ducklings Childcare Ltd we understand we need a plan for all eventualities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all the children we care for. With this in mind we have a critical incident policy in place to ensure our nursery is able to operate effectively in the case of a critical incident. This policy includes:

- Flood
- Burglary
- Abduction or threatened abduction of a child
- Terrorist attack/ national emergency

If these incidents impact on the ability for the nursery to operate, we will contact parents via phone/email/text message at the earliest opportunity.

Flood

There is always a danger of flooding from adverse weather conditions or through the water/central heating systems. We cannot anticipate adverse weather; however we can ensure that we take care of all our water and heating systems through regular maintenance and checks to reduce the potential for flooding in this way. Our central heating systems are checked and serviced annually by a registered gas engineer and they conform to all appropriate guidelines and legislation.

If flooding occurs during the nursery day, the nursery manager will make a decision based on the severity and location of this flooding, and it may be deemed necessary to follow the fire evacuation procedure. In this instance children will be kept safe and parents will be notified in the same way as the fire procedure.

Should the nursery be assessed as unsafe through flooding, fire or any other incident we will provide care in another location/parents with alternative arrangements in sister nurseries/options for childcare facilities in the local area.

Burglary



The management of the nursery follow a lock up procedure which ensures all doors and windows are closed and locked before vacating the premises. Alarm systems are used and in operation during all hours the nursery is closed.

The manager will always check the premises as they arrive in the morning. Should they discover that the nursery has been broken into they will follow the procedure below:

- Dial 999 with as many details as possible, i.e. name and location, details of what you have found and emphasise that this is a nursery and children will be arriving soon.
- Contain the area to ensure no-one enters until the police arrive. The staff will direct the parents and children to a separate area as they arrive. If all areas have been disturbed staff will follow police advice, including following the relocation procedure wherever necessary to ensure the safety of children.
- The manager on duty will help the police with the enquiries, e.g. by identifying items missing, areas of entry etc.
- A member of management will be available at all times during this time to speak to parents, reassure children and direct enquiries.
- Management will assess the situation following a theft and ensure parents are kept up to date with developments relating to the operation of the nursery.

Abduction or threatened abduction of a child

Here at Ducklings Childcare Ltd we take the safety and welfare of the children in our care extremely seriously. We have secure safety procedures in place to ensure children are safe whilst within our care; this includes safety from abduction.

Staff must be vigilant at all times and report any persons lingering on the premises immediately. All doors and gates to the nursery are locked and unable to be accessed unless staff members allow individuals in. Parents are reminded on a regular basis not to allow anyone into the building whether they are known to them or not. Visitors and general security are covered in more detail in the visitors policy.

Children will only be released into the care of a designated adult, see the arrivals and departures policy for more details. Parents are requested to inform the nursery of any potential custody battles or family concerns as



soon as they arise so the nursery is able to support the child. The nursery will not take sides in relation to any custody battle and will remain neutral for the child. If an absent parent arrives to collect their child, the nursery will not restrict access unless a court order is in place. Parents are requested to issue the nursery with a copy of these documents should they be in place. We will consult our solicitors with regards to any concerns over custody and relay any information back to the parties involved.

If a member of staff witnesses an actual or potential abduction from nursery the following procedure will be followed:

- The police must be called immediately;
- The staff member will notify management immediately and the manager will take control;
- The parent(s) will be contacted;
- All other children will be kept safe and secure and calmed down where necessary;
- The police will be given as many details as possible including details of the child, description of the abductor, car registration number (if used), time and direction of travel (if seen) and any family situations that may impact on this abduction.

Terrorist Attack or National Emergency

If a suspicious package/device has been found or in the opinion of the Police Incident Officer, safety is at risk, the final decision to evacuate will rest with the local Constabulary.

Evacuation should not take place as a matter of course, as unnecessary evacuations will result distress and disturbance to members of staff, children and wasteful deployment of the emergency services and the encouragement of further threats.

If Ducklings Childcare Ltd receives a terrorist threat by any means, please inform the security team immediately. To assist in verifying a telephone threat record as many details as possible and telephone through to the security team immediately.

If you find a suspicious object or item of mail:

Although unlikely, it is possible that an incendiary or explosive device could be found on the premises without any prior warning or threat being received. Any suspicious letter or package received at the nursery, or



bag, parcel, holdall or object left unattended for some time in the nursery, must be reported immediately to security. Ensure that no one approaches it and that it is strictly left alone. If you discover a suspicious object or item of mail it should be reported immediately. Staff, children and the general public should not touch the object.

Staff should:

- Be vigilant for suspicious objects left in secretive places such as rubbish bins, toilets, empty units, car parks etc.
- Make sure that you report any suspicious person.
- Do not be complacent regarding matters of security, as complacency creates a threat to you, your colleagues and the children's safety.
- Challenge strangers and make sure any visitors display identification and sign in the visitors book.
- Keep windows and doors locked and do not allow access to people you do not know.
- If you spot a suspicious vehicle, do not ignore it but report it to management who will decide whether to report it to the police.

Letter Bombs

Postal bombs are likely to be flat letters, weighing up to 4oz or in a packet the size of a book.

Suspicious letters should be handled as little as possible and placed in a clear plastic folder, so that fingerprints and other forensic evidence is left for the police to examine.

Look out for packages which;

- Smell of marzipan or almonds;
- Rattles, feel springy or stuffed with cardboard, which may indicate a trap;
- Have stains or holes in the envelope;
- Have a foreign postmark or foreign writing style.

What happens when a threat has been received?

Once the Security team/Police are aware there is a threat, they will notify Ducklings Childcare Ltd via word of mouth from security officers or they will phone immediately. You are to search the premises as quickly as



possible. In the event of finding something suspicious, do not touch it and alert the security team/police immediately.

Terrorist threat evacuation

Do not evacuate the building unless being told to do so. In the case of a terrorist threat, procedures may have to change to accommodate circumstances, for instance; if there were a suspected bomb around the main entrance to the building you would have to evacuate the building via an alternative exit.

Post Evacuation

Once a return to the building is authorised, you are to carry out a complete search of the nursery and contact the buildings team to state 'all clear'.