Adverse Weather & Unplanned Closure Policy

Policy Aim

- The setting is usually open during published term dates with the exception of pre-planned 'inset' days. There may be exceptional circumstances where an unplanned closure may be necessary, and this policy sets out the circumstances and procedures in this case.
- The safety of our children, staff and the families who use our settings is of the utmost importance. We will endeavour to remain open where possible, but the following criteria must always be met:
  - the EYFS welfare requirements
  - our insurance policy requirements
  - the number of appropriately qualified staff as child ratios must be maintained
  - the physical environment of our setting (reviewed using risk assessments)
  - our ability to safeguard the children in our care in the event of a critical incident
  - our duty of care for everyone travelling to and from our setting
- An exceptional circumstance is defined as **something which has happened beyond our normal level of control** such as:
  - problems with the building (e.g. heating or lighting failure)
  - accidental damage or vandalism to the setting making it unfit for purpose
  - failure in the supply of services (water, sewerage, electricity, gas)
  - being unable to staff a session with sufficient staff to meet the statutory adult:child ratios
  - serious outbreak of infectious disease
  - major incident in the local area
  - extreme / adverse weather conditions such as snow, flood, storm or extreme heat.

Procedures

- If we are predicted adverse weather or know in advance of an exceptional circumstance which will make closure necessary, we may make the decision to close the setting for the following day. Parents will be notified via email, telephone, text message or WhatsApp message, and a notice will be put on the setting's Facebook page.
- If closure is determined to be necessary on the morning of a session, parents will be notified as soon as is possible. This will be done via email, telephone, text message or WhatsApp message, and a notice will be put on the setting's Facebook page.
- If the setting remains open during adverse weather, we will aim to operate as normal for as long as possible. This will depend on the criteria set out under the policy aim.

- **Although in exceptional cases, where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, changes to the ratios may be made.** The manager and Committee may make the decision it is difficult remain open unless the minimum correct adult : child ratio can be met (as per the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework). Therefore, if the setting opens and not all staff due in are able to attend, the children that we are able to accept on that day will be on a first come, first served basis.
- If staff are unable to attend the setting due to the adverse conditions, they follow the normal reporting procedures.
- We will do all that we can to have sufficient staff but cannot exceed the ratio numbers. In this event we will try to call families due in that day and explain the situation. If the setting is open but you do not intend to bring your child(ren) please contact the setting as soon as possible to notify them.
- If the setting remains open as normal and we have adverse weather or other exceptional circumstances during the day, the setting Manager and Committee will decide if the setting should remain open and for how long. We will seek and follow advice from the local authority where appropriate, but closures will not necessarily be the same as local schools. If the setting needs to close during normal session times, phone calls will be made to parents or emergency contacts to inform them of the decision.
- Charging for sessions affected by exceptional circumstances will be in line with our terms and conditions set out in the Session Fees Payment Policy. This states that:
    - *"If we close the setting due to unforeseen circumstances additional sessions will be offered, where possible, to compensate for sessions lost."*