

## FIRST STEPS (BATH)

### Procedure for exceptional circumstances

**Advice for parents:** (included within the parent/carer handbook)

#### What happens in exceptional circumstances?

Very occasionally unexpected events may mean that First Steps must reduce or even close services for a short time. This might be necessary if:

- There is severe bad weather (e.g. snow) and staff are unable to get to work.
- One of our centres is affected by fire or flood.
- Large numbers of our staff are ill at the same time.
- We are told or advised to shut our services because a disease or serious health problem could spread if children and families are together.
- There is a power failure or other problem with the building that makes it impossible to provide services safely.

In these situations, we will do our best to keep you informed and let you know of any service reductions or closures as quickly as possible.

If we must shut one or more of our nurseries or stop a service, we will put a notice on our parent app and make contact accordingly to need.

We will give priority to providing a day care service for vulnerable children and then in the following order

If we do have to ask for children to be collected from either of our community nurseries because we are unable to provide sufficient staff and/or a safe service, we will do so in the following order:

1. Non working parents of children aged 0-2 years.
2. Non working parents of children aged 2-3 years.
3. Non working parents of children aged 3-5 years.
4. Working parents of children aged 0-2 years.
5. Working parents of children aged 2-3 years.
6. Working parents of children aged 3-5 years.
7. The specialist early years' service, BOP will reduce services on a case-by-case basis.

Parents will be charged (both regular and any extra hours) if First Steps has had to close due to events beyond our control, e.g., snow. This is because our staff will still need to be paid.

## Appendix 1: Additional Information for staff:

**In the event of snow staff are advised only to travel to work if safe to do so.**

Decisions to shut, suspend or reduce services can only be taken by SMT or Trustees.

Decisions to send staff home early because of exceptional circumstances can only be taken by SMT or Trustees

If an issue is building or weather related, all unsafe areas must be coned /cordoned off. In the extreme event of one or more centres not opening staff will be telephoned by their line manager. Staff whose normal place of work is closed should report for work to an alternative site where possible. All staff must make sure that their manager has their up-to-date contact details .

If parents arrive with children and the centre is outside its ratio but expecting further staff to arrive, parents should be asked if they wish to wait, rather than being sent away.

### Checklist for managers in the event of snow

Opening late / closing early

- When severe weather warnings are posted send policy to parents/carers.
- If there is a possibility of having to close early to make the decision by 2.00 p.m. whenever possible
- Put up notices, indoors and on gates.
- Send an Alert on the Parent App
- Ensure all staff know plans (including those not working on the previous day)
- Ask staff living locally to come in early to man phones or set up rooms.
- Arrange temporary local staff as additional key holders if necessary.

Prioritising children of working families and vulnerable children

- Manager to list messages to be given to parents who phone in (so any new member of staff taking over knows what must be said)  
e.g. opening 9.00 – 4.00; giving working parents priority; parents who are not working asked to phone back just before child's starting time when we know how many other children and staff have come in; bring warm clothes to play in the snow.
- Update NMS and make a manual adjustment when parents phone in – make parents aware that if we are open but they decide not to come in **they will be charged.**
- List children where deductions will need to be made if they have been asked to come later or finish earlier than their booked hours, or they have not had a booked meal. **Ensure that this information is passed to Finance to adjust invoices where necessary.** If plans are made the day before, ensure telephone message and First Steps website and Nursery software have relevant messages (N.B. Telephone message can be amended remotely)

Meals

- Record children coming in and adjust lunch numbers accordingly.
- Change to the emergency menu and display a notice if necessary.

Outside areas

- Assess risks of opening the car park and display notices if necessary
- Assess risks to children if they play outside.

## Staff absences

- Ensure staff absences are noted, to be subsequently authorised as annual leave, TOIL, or unpaid leave.
- If services close early as agreed by SMT, staff will be deemed to have worked a normal day.
- If staff request to leave early but the service is still open, a deduction of the hours the service is still open will be made or up to the staff members normal working hours if earlier.
- If staff phone in sick, hours will be recorded for the time the service is open.
- Bank staff will be paid for the hours they are booked to come in only if they attend the service. If SMT decide to not open the service, they will still be paid for the hours previously booked. If they request to leave early the policy applies in line with permanent staff.
- Carer's leave will not be permitted for school closures as this does not meet the criteria.
- If the decision is made to close a service staff will not have hours deducted.
- Staff can work at home if they are authorised to do so, Managers must assess the number of hours worked at home on an individual basis and ensure a balance of working hours is accounted for as above.

## Other

- Move mats to prevent entrances from becoming wet and slippery.
- Phone cleaner if closing early and inform him/her.
- Buy salt early – October / November
- Update telephone system, if necessary, see [2f Appendix 1 Cloud Telephone System Webex.docx](#)

Procedure drafted by Helena Thompson May 2009

Last updated by Ann Thurgood, Feb 2013

Update approved by the Board of Trustees on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2013

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Cloud Telephone System Webex.com log in

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