

Blackhall Nursery

Policy for Severe Weather, Travel Disruption and Exceptional Circumstances

The purpose of this policy is twofold:

A: to provide guidance and outline the responsibilities for employees, managers and the Board for attendance at work in the event of adverse weather conditions, major disruptions to public transport and other exceptional circumstances such as multiple staff absence due to illness. It is applicable to all employees and volunteers.

B: to outline the procedures and communications in the event of having to close the Nursery at short notice.

Severe Weather and Travel Disruption

A. Staff context

In applying the policy, Blackhall Nursery recognises the need to safely maintain services during adverse weather conditions, whilst properly discharging its duty of care to employees. The Nursery recognises that adverse weather conditions / other disruptions can prevent employees from reaching the Nursery.

All employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to attend work, but without compromising their health and safety. If you are in doubt about getting to work because of travel disruption (e.g. severe weather conditions, strike action or other disruption) you should speak to the Nursery Manager as soon as a problem is identified. Where the Nursery Manager is affected, they should speak to the Chair of the Board or Designated Board Member (DBM).

Aims

A decision made about staff absence due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. severe weather) will seek to take account of any advice issued by or sought from the police, weather forecasters, the City of Edinburgh Council, public transport providers and motoring organisations in relation to prevailing conditions and the advisability of travel.

Principles

It is appreciated that there may be operational and service delivery considerations in working during periods of adverse weather. The Nursery Manager and Chair of the board (or DBM) should ensure that employees are treated in an equitable and consistent manner and that the safety of employees is not compromised.

When travel disruptions occur, there is no legal right for staff to be paid by an employer for travel delays. It is the responsibility of the employee to get to work. However, Blackhall Nursery will try to be flexible when considering disruptions to normal working patterns.

Responsibilities

Employees should contact the Nursery Manager by phone call or WhatsApp message (who should contact the Chair of the Board or DBM) **as early as possible, but before 7.15am**, during periods of severe weather / travel disruption, **and report if they are unable to attend work or expect to be delayed. It is not acceptable to leave a message on an answering machine or email.**

If an employee cannot get to work because of a dependent's school closure / disruption to normal childcare arrangements, they should follow the arrangements for Dependent's Absence in the Attendance Policy. Time off in these circumstances is normally unpaid and should last only for as long as necessary to deal with the immediate situation. If a closure is likely to last for several days, the employer might reasonably expect the employee to make some alternative arrangements within that time to permit a return to work. Employees must tell the Nursery Manager as soon as reasonably practicable why they are absent and how long they expect the absence to last.

The Nursery Manager should consider what options are feasible and agree with the employee whether working from home or taking unpaid leave are appropriate solutions. Working from home requires the Nursery Manager to agree that the employee can perform duties that are relevant to their normal duties. This must be the subject of prior agreement with the Nursery Manager and the work to be undertaken must be evidenced on the employee's return to work.

Arriving late

Where the Nursery Manager is satisfied that an employee has genuinely been prevented from attending work by the normal starting time as a result of adverse weather / travel disruption, any lateness will not be penalised. However, loss of time should be managed by giving consideration to alternative arrangements e.g. making up time or working at home.

Leaving early

The Nursery Manager will be responsible for deciding whether any request to leave early as a result of adverse weather is warranted, taking into account available information regarding the weather conditions, home address and mode of transport of the employee concerned.

In circumstances where the Nursery Manager is satisfied that early release is justified, the loss of time will be managed by considering the use of appropriate options to make up the lost time.

Nursery Closure and Other Exceptional Circumstances

B. Communicating a closure

Parents/carers should be reminded of the nursery closure procedures on a regular basis. They should be made aware that a text may be sent at any time during the course of the Nursery day.

Any decision to close the Nursery will normally be taken by the Nursery Manager (or designated Person-in-Charge) in consultation with the Chair of the Board (or DBM).

If the City of Edinburgh Council issues a blanket closure for all primary schools and nurseries in Edinburgh, Blackhall Nursery will most likely follow suit. Where individual schools and nurseries are closed, the Nursery Manager, in consultation with the Chair of the Board (or DBM) will decide

whether Blackhall Nursery should close. Any such decision will take account of staffing and health and safety issues.

- If a decision is taken *before the start of the session* to close Blackhall Nursery, the Nursery Manager will send a text alert to all parents/carers advising them of the closure and this will be followed up by an email to parents/carers (and childminders). A message will also be posted on Class Dojo App. The Nursery Manager will also notify the Care Inspectorate of the closure.

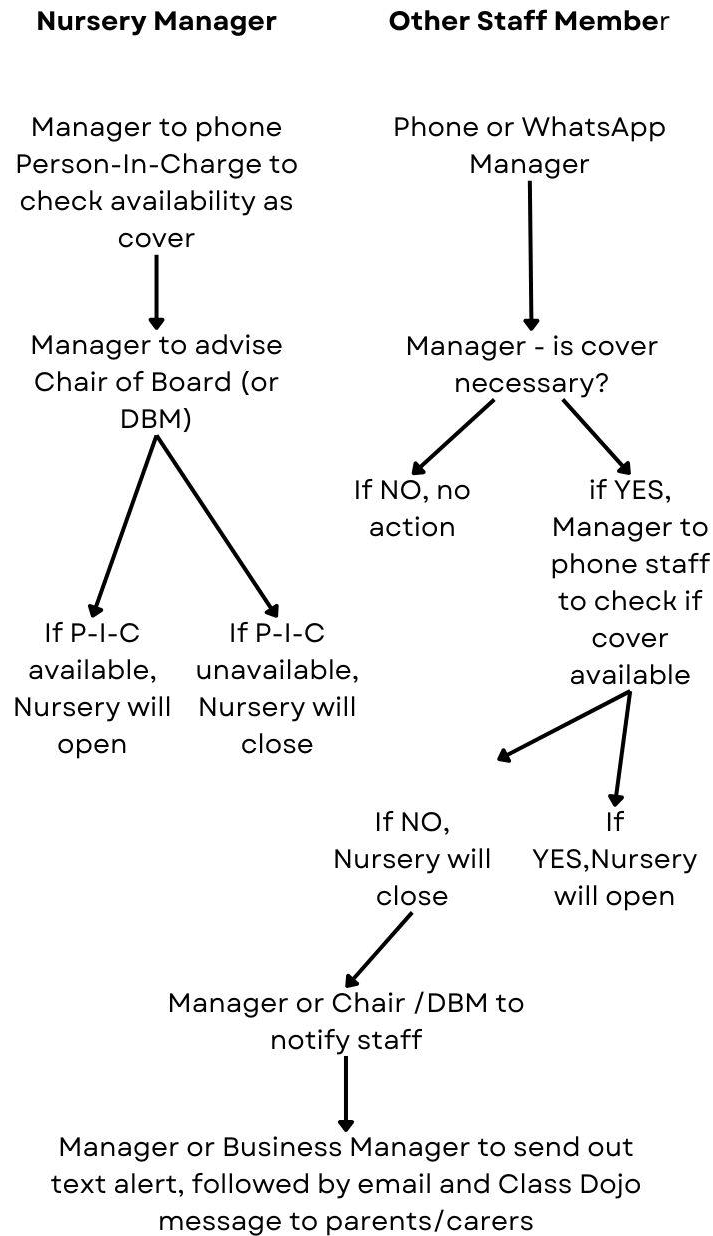
- If a decision is taken to close the Nursery *during a session*:
 - staff will send a text alert, followed by an email, to the parents/carers or emergency contacts as appropriate to request that children are collected as soon as possible
 - the staff will check the diary and cancel any scheduled visitors including volunteers
 - the Nursery Manager (or Person-in-Charge) or the Business Manager will inform the cleaner of the closure and its likely duration
 - The Nursery Manager will notify the Care Inspectorate of the closure.

Where there is an absence issue which may impact on the ability of the Nursery to open, the following flow chart should be used:

Blackhall Nursery

Absence Flow Chart

Who is going to be absent?



Abbreviations:

DBM - Designated Board Member

P-I-C - Person In Charge

In the event of a Nursery closure, staff should continue to carry out appropriate duties wherever possible.

Where the decision to open/close is to be decided on health and safety issues relating to the building, the Nursery Manager (or P-I-C), in consultation with the Chair of the Board (or DBM) will undertake a risk assessment considering the following points:

- Is there adequate heat?
- Is there running water?
- Is there hot water?
- Is the building and surrounding area safe?
- Is the roof safe?
- Are the access points safe?
- Can the children's entrance door be safely opened?
- Is the path clear?
- Can the gate be safely opened?

Reference to this policy should be made on the Nursery website.

This policy links to:
Curricular area(s): HWB
Quality Indicators(s): 1.4 (HGIOELC)
Care Standard(s): 4.22 (2017 Standards)
UNCRC Article(s): 3

Adopted on: 22/01/2025