3.8 Adverse Weather and Unplanned Closures

Policy statement

- St Christopher's Playgroup is usually open during published term dates with the exception of pre-planned "inset" days which are communicated to parents at the beginning of the academic year. However, 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 families of St Christopher's Playgroup is our biggest priority. 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 (eg 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 any exceptional circumstance which will make closure necessary, we may make the decision to close the setting the following day. Parents and carers will be notified usually by text message or in some cases email and a notice will be put on social media pages.
- If closure is deemed to be necessary on the morning of a session, parents and carers will be notified as soon as possible. This will be done via text message or phone call where necessary. We may also contact via email.
- If we remain open during adverse weather, we will aim to operate as normal for as long as possible. This will depend on the criteria on our policy aim
- Although in exceptional circumstances, where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, changes to ratios can be made the Manager and Committee may make the decision it is difficult to remain open unless the minimum correct adult:child ratio can be met (as per the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework). In some cases we may be able to open to a smaller amount of children if some parents and carers agree to find some alternative arrangements.
- If staff are unable to attend the setting due to adverse conditions, they follow the normal reporting procedure for absences by informing the Manager or Deputy as soon as possible so any arrangements/decisions can be made.
- We will do what we can to have sufficient staff but can not exceed the ratio numbers. In this event we will try to contact the families due in that day and explain the situation. If the setting is open but parents and carers do not intend to bring their child in they should contact us as soon as possible to notify us.
- If we remain open as normal and we have adverse weather or other exceptional circumstances during the day, the Manager, Deputy or Committee will decide if the setting should remain open and for how long. A risk assessment should be conducted immediately and updated regularly during the session. 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 and carers or emergency contacts to inform them of the decision.
- In the event that a child isn't able to be collected the Manager or Deputy should contact the Committee to discuss next steps.
- We will inform St Christopher's Church if a closure is due to anything building related such as no water, heating or electricity in case this is something they can deal with to be resolved
- We will not charge parents and carers for any closure due to adverse weather or unplanned closures as we are unable to offer a service during this time. If invoices have

already been paid then we will give the option of an alternative session where possible or a refund in fees. Those children in receipt of funding will be offered an alternative session if this is possible.

- Staff should also be notified preferably by phone of any unplanned closures. This should be done as soon as possible.
- If we do make the decision to close due to an exceptional circumstance then we will also inform the following:
    - Ofsted (if longer than one full day)
    - Insurance company, if necessary (building issue etc)
    - UKHSA (if the closure is due to infectious disease) on 0300 3038162
    - Gloucestershire Funding Team (if a closure is longer than 2 weeks)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	St Christopher's Playgroup	name of setting
Held on	June 2026	(date)
Date to be reviewed	June 2027	(date)
Signed on behalf of the management committee	KJCookes	
Name of signatory	Karen Cookes	
Role of signatory (chair)	Playgroup Manager	