



35. Exceptional Closure Policy

Policy Statement

Links Childcare is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of children and staff attending our crèche at all times. This policy addresses the situation where employees are unable to work, or the service (or part of the service) has to close due to circumstances outside of our control. At all times safety considerations will be paramount.

Measures to be taken to ensure the safety and welfare of children:

- We will adhere to government advice and any weather warnings.
- We will adhere to HSE and Public Health advice in relation to health risks arising from the spread of infectious diseases. This may result in the mandatory closure of the service (or a POD within the Service). Example: Covid-19 Regulations. A Risk Assessment will be done in consultation with the HSE advisory team.
- In relation to non HSE guided closure we will undertake a detailed risk assessment to identify whether there are any hazards for children in relation to travel, building, and compliance with Regulations.
- Depending on the outcome of our Risk Assessment we will consider whether it is necessary to close the crèche.
- We will implement a Communications Plan to ensure that all staff and parents are kept informed as events unfold and to ensure there is no unnecessary travel or risks taken.
- We have a procedure in place to contact parents at short notice.

Communication to Parents

Once a decision has been taken to close the crèche (or part thereof) parents will be informed as soon as possible so they can make alternative arrangements. Parents and staff will be kept informed as events unfold to ensure there is no unnecessary travel when possible. Parents will be informed through the communication forum ECCE SOFT and by follow-up phone call as deemed appropriate.

Review and Evaluation - After each event:

The Management and staff of the centre will review and evaluate each event after it has taken place to ensure that all safety measures and procedures were conducted and contributed to the safety, health and welfare of the children, staff and parents attending. Outcomes of these reviews will be recorded and policies and procedures will be updated as appropriate.

Billing policy for exceptional closure

The Crèche will close if it is deemed for any reason unsafe / impossible to open, i.e. adverse weather or extreme staff shortages – full fees will be payable.

Billing policy for exceptional closure - Covid-19

When Management is told by the HSE to close the Crèche or a POD therein, this will be done immediately as directed, and parents will be informed, as outlined above. Company insurance covered some of the costs of a closure up to 1 March 2021 and a Government subsidy (withdrawn on 28 March) helped also to defray the costs of a Covid-19 closure. Management was therefore able to waive fees for parents in the



LINKS CHILDCARE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

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event of a forced closure. Regretfully, in light of there being no ongoing support Links Childcare will have to charge fees in the event of a Covid-19 Pod or Service Closure, from 19 April 2021 to ensure the viability of care provision into the future. Should there be any change in the Government decision to provide support to early childhood care providers, Links Childcare will review this decision

Emergency closure after a session has started

1. In the event of an emergency closure after the session has started, parents and carers will be informed by telephone that they are required to collect their child as soon as possible.
2. If the closure is due to sickness, the children and all staff who are unaffected will remain on the premises until all children can be collected.
3. If the closure is Covid-19 related, the Covid- 19 Response Plan will be followed.
4. If the closure is due to an emergency which requires the building to be evacuated, the children will be safely evacuated according to the current Fire Drill procedures. Contact information for all the children will be taken out of the building alongside the daily register.
5. The children will then be taken to a place of safety until such time as they can all be collected by parents/designated person. Parents will be contacted by the Manager. All staff will remain with the children during this time.

Review

Management, in consultation with staff, monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy yearly, or after each event or as required.

Review Dates:	2019	January 2020	October 2020
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