

Managing Extreme Weather Policy

The Orchard Day Nursery Kingston recognises that extreme and adverse weather conditions can affect the health, safety and wellbeing of children, families and staff and may affect the safe operation of the nursery.

This policy sets out the arrangements we will follow during periods of extreme weather, including flooding, snow, ice, severe storms, high winds, extreme heat and heatwaves.

The nursery will take a proportionate, risk-based approach to adverse weather. The safety, health and welfare of children and staff will remain our priority at all times.

We will monitor relevant weather forecasts, including Met Office forecasts and UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Heat-Health Alerts, and will take appropriate action based on the conditions and the needs of the children attending. UKHSA and the Met Office's Heat-Health Alert system uses yellow, amber and red alerts to indicate increasing levels of health risk.

Where extreme weather affects the nursery's ability to open or operate safely, parents/carers will be contacted by [phone/email/Famly app] as appropriate.

The nursery will not take children outdoors where weather conditions, including excessive heat, high winds, lightning, flooding, snow or ice, are judged to make outdoor activity unsafe.

General Extreme Weather Arrangements

The manager or designated senior member of staff will assess weather conditions and consider:

- the current and forecast weather conditions;
- Met Office warnings and, where relevant, UKHSA Heat-Health Alerts;
- the safety of the nursery premises, garden, access routes and surrounding area;
- indoor temperatures and ventilation;
- the age, health and individual needs of children attending;
- the availability of suitable staff and whether statutory ratios can be maintained;
- the ability to provide safe drinking water, appropriate shade, cooling and first aid;
- whether outdoor activities can safely continue or need to be modified;
- whether parents/carers need to be contacted; and
- whether the nursery needs to restrict activities, alter arrangements or close temporarily.

Risk assessments will be reviewed when weather conditions change significantly.

Any decision to close or significantly alter the nursery's operation will be made by the manager or designated person and recorded.

Flooding

In the event of flooding or a significant risk of flooding, the nursery will follow its Critical Incident Policy.

The manager will assess whether the nursery premises, access routes and evacuation arrangements remain safe.

Children will not be allowed to access areas affected by flooding or standing water where there is a risk to their health or safety.

If the nursery cannot safely remain open, parents/carers will be contacted and arrangements will be made for children to be collected.

Where required, the nursery will contact the relevant emergency services, local authority or other appropriate agencies.

Any significant incident will be recorded in accordance with the nursery's incident and emergency procedures.

Snow, Ice and Other Severe Weather

If heavy snowfall, ice, high winds, severe storms, dense fog or another significant weather event is forecast or occurs during the nursery day, the manager will assess whether the nursery can continue to operate safely.

The decision to remain open, restrict activities or close the nursery will take into account:

- the safety of children, parents/carers and staff travelling to and from the nursery;
- the condition of the nursery premises and outdoor areas;
- access and evacuation routes;
- staff availability;
- the ability to maintain statutory staff-to-child ratios; and
- any relevant weather warnings

Where staff shortages occur because of severe weather, the nursery will consider all reasonable options, including contacting available off-duty staff and/or suitable agency staff. Children will only be grouped differently where this can be done safely and in accordance with the EYFS requirements.

The nursery will not compromise children's safety or statutory requirements in order to remain open.

If statutory staffing requirements cannot be met, the manager will take appropriate action, including contacting Ofsted where required and recording the circumstances and actions taken.

Extreme Heat and Heatwaves

Young children, particularly children under five, can be more vulnerable to the effects of hot weather. Heat-related illness can include dehydration, heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Children with certain medical conditions or taking particular medication may be at increased risk.

The nursery will therefore take additional precautions during periods of hot weather and will adapt activities and routines according to the conditions.

The nursery will monitor UKHSA/Met Office Heat-Health Alerts and weather forecasts and will take appropriate action at yellow, amber and red alert levels.

A heat-health alert does not automatically mean that the nursery will close. The manager will assess whether the nursery can continue operating safely and will make appropriate adjustments to protect children and staff. Current government guidance encourages education and early years settings to remain open where hot weather can be managed safely through practical measures.

Keeping Children Cool

During hot weather:

- Children will have access to cool drinking water throughout the day and will be encouraged to drink more frequently than usual.
- Water will be readily accessible both indoors and outdoors where appropriate.
- Staff will monitor children for signs of dehydration, heat stress, heat exhaustion or heatstroke.
- Children will be encouraged to take part in quieter activities and vigorous physical activity will be avoided during very hot conditions.
- Outdoor activities will be adapted, shortened or moved indoors where necessary.
- Children will be encouraged to remain in shaded areas when outdoors.
- The nursery will provide suitable shaded areas in the outdoor environment.
- Sun-facing windows will be shaded using blinds, curtains or other appropriate measures where available.
- Windows will be opened when this helps to cool the building and is safe and appropriate. Where the outside temperature is hotter than indoors, windows may be closed during the hottest part of the day while maintaining appropriate ventilation and air quality.
- Rooms that are cooler and less exposed to direct sunlight will be used where possible.
- Unnecessary electrical equipment will be switched off as it can generate additional heat.
- Fans may be used to increase air movement where appropriate and where temperatures are below 35°C, as recommended by UKHSA guidance. Fans will be positioned safely and will not create a hazard for children.
- Staff will regularly monitor the comfort and wellbeing of children, particularly those who may be more vulnerable to heat.
- Children will never be left in enclosed, poorly ventilated or excessively hot areas.

The nursery does not use a single fixed temperature as an automatic trigger for closure. Decisions will be based on the overall risk, including indoor conditions, the ability to keep rooms cool, the outdoor conditions, the Heat-Health Alert level and the individual needs of children.

Sun and UV Protection

The nursery recognises that children require protection from ultraviolet (UV) radiation as well as from excessive heat.

Sun protection measures will be used whenever UV levels and weather conditions make them necessary, including on days that may not feel particularly hot.

We will:

- Encourage children to spend time in shaded areas when outdoors.
- Avoid unnecessary exposure to strong direct sunlight.
- Provide suitable shaded areas in the garden.
- Avoid strenuous or vigorous physical activity during periods of extreme heat.
- Encourage children to wear suitable, loose-fitting, lightweight clothing.
- Encourage children to wear a wide-brimmed or legionnaire-style sun hat that protects the face, ears and neck.
- Encourage parents/carers to provide appropriate sun-protective clothing and a labelled sun hat.
- Apply children's individual sunscreen where written parental consent has been provided and in accordance with the nursery's medication/sun cream procedures.
- Use a high-protection sunscreen of SPF50 with high UVA protection (4 stars or above).
- Sunscreen will be applied generously to exposed areas and reapplied in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, normally every two hours and after activities such as swimming, water play or towelling where applicable.
- Staff will ensure sunscreen is suitable for the individual child and will follow any parental instructions regarding allergies, sensitivities or medical needs.
- Sunscreen will be checked for its expiry date and stored appropriately.
- Sunscreen containing nut-based ingredients will not be used by the nursery.
- Parents/carers will be asked to provide appropriate clothing, hats and individual sunscreen where required.

Children will not be routinely excluded from outdoor play simply because the weather is sunny. Instead, staff will balance the benefits of outdoor play with the need to protect children from excessive heat and UV exposure.

The nursery will use current weather and UV information to determine appropriate outdoor arrangements rather than relying solely on a fixed time period such as 11am–3pm.

Individual Needs and Vulnerable Children

Staff will consider that some children may be particularly vulnerable to hot weather, including:

- babies and young children;
- children under five;
- children with complex health conditions or clinical vulnerabilities;
- children taking medication that may affect their response to heat;
- children with particular sensory or communication needs who may not be able to communicate discomfort easily.

Where a child has a complex health condition or clinical vulnerability, advice from the child's healthcare professional will be followed where appropriate and shared with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis.

The child's individual risk assessment, care plan or medical information will be followed where one is in place.

Recognising Heat-Related Illness

All staff will be familiar with the signs of heat-related illness.

Heat stress may include:

- discomfort or irritability;
- unusual tiredness;
- increased thirst;
- dark urine or fewer wet nappies;
- excessive sweating; and
- other changes in behaviour or wellbeing.

Heat exhaustion may include:

- tiredness;
- dizziness;
- headache;
- nausea or vomiting;
- excessive sweating;
- pale, clammy skin; and
- weakness.

If a child shows signs of heat exhaustion, staff will:

1. Move the child to a cool area.
2. Remove unnecessary clothing.
3. Encourage the child to drink cool water if they are able to do so.
4. Begin cooling the child, for example with cool water, cool wet cloths or other appropriate measures.
5. Closely monitor the child.
6. Seek medical advice if symptoms are concerning or do not improve.

Heatstroke

Heatstroke is a medical emergency.

Possible signs include:

- confusion or lack of coordination;
- seizure;
- loss of consciousness;
- very high body temperature;
- hot, red skin;
- rapid heartbeat; or
- fast, shallow breathing.

If heatstroke is suspected, staff will **call 999 immediately** and begin cooling the child while awaiting emergency medical assistance. Staff will follow the nursery's emergency first aid procedures.

Parents/carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable in accordance with the nursery's emergency procedures.

Food, Drink and Hydration

Children will continue to receive their normal meals and snacks during hot weather.

Fresh drinking water will be available throughout the day and children will be encouraged to drink regularly rather than waiting until they are thirsty.

Staff will pay particular attention to babies and younger children, including monitoring wet nappies and other signs that may indicate dehydration.

Any child with specific dietary, medical or hydration requirements will continue to be supported in accordance with their individual care plan.

Outdoor Play During Extreme Weather

The nursery recognises the importance of outdoor play and will continue to provide opportunities for children to access the outdoors wherever it is safe to do so.

However, outdoor activities may be:

- shortened;
- moved to cooler times of the day;
- moved into shaded areas;
- adapted to quieter activities;
- moved indoors; or
- temporarily suspended.

Children will not participate in vigorous physical activity during very hot conditions.

The decision to restrict or suspend outdoor play will be based on the actual weather conditions, UV levels, heat-health advice, availability of shade, children's individual needs and the nursery's risk assessment.

Communication with Parents and Carers

Parents/carers will be provided with information about the nursery's arrangements for extreme weather.

During periods of significant heat or other severe weather, the nursery may communicate additional guidance to parents/carers through [Family/email/telephone], including requests for:

- suitable clothing;
- sun hats;
- labelled sunscreen;
- additional drinks where appropriate; and
- information about any changes to the child's medical or individual needs.

Where the nursery needs to close or substantially change its operating arrangements, parents/carers will be contacted as soon as reasonably practicable.

Parents/carers will be encouraged to inform the nursery of any medical condition, medication or individual circumstance that may increase their child's vulnerability during extreme weather.

Staff Responsibilities and Training

All staff are responsible for following this policy and reporting concerns to the manager or designated person.

Staff will receive appropriate information and guidance on:

- sun and UV protection;
- heat-related illness;
- dehydration;
- recognising heat exhaustion and heatstroke;
- appropriate hydration;
- safe outdoor play during hot weather;
- the nursery's emergency procedures; and
- the individual needs of children who may be particularly vulnerable.

The manager will ensure that appropriate risk assessments, emergency arrangements and resources are in place before and during periods of extreme weather.

Premises and Equipment

The nursery will take reasonable steps to ensure that its premises remain suitable and safe during adverse weather.

This includes checking, where appropriate:

- windows and ventilation;
- blinds, curtains and other methods of reducing solar gain;
- fans and cooling equipment;
- shaded outdoor areas;
- drinking water supplies;
- outdoor play equipment;
- access and evacuation routes;
- electrical equipment;
- heating/cooling systems; and
- any areas that may become unsafe because of weather conditions.

Any defects or concerns will be reported to the manager and addressed as soon as reasonably practicable.

Closure and Ofsted Notification

The nursery will only remain open where it can provide safe care and meet the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework.

Where extreme weather causes circumstances that affect the nursery's ability to meet statutory requirements, including staffing, premises or children's health and safety, the manager will take immediate action to protect children.

Where required by the EYFS or Ofsted notification requirements, the nursery will notify Ofsted and/or other relevant authorities.

All decisions, incidents, actions taken and communications with parents/carers will be appropriately recorded.

Vitamin D

The nursery recognises that vitamin D is important for children's health and development.

Parents/carers will be encouraged to follow current NHS advice regarding vitamin D supplementation for young children. Sun exposure should **not** be used as a substitute for appropriate vitamin D supplementation, and children should not be exposed to excessive sunlight for the purpose of obtaining vitamin D.

The nursery will promote safe outdoor play while ensuring that children are appropriately protected from excessive UV exposure and heat.

During periods of hot weather, all children will be risk assessed and monitored regularly throughout the day.

Staff will consider each child's:

- age and individual needs;
- health and medical requirements;
- hydration;
- behaviour and mood;
- skin and clothing;
- exposure to heat and UV;
- activity level; and
- any signs of heat stress, dehydration, heat exhaustion or other changes in wellbeing.

Children who are particularly vulnerable to heat will be monitored more closely and their individual risk assessments or care plans will be followed.

Risk assessments will be reviewed:

- at the beginning of each hot-weather day;
- whenever weather conditions or temperatures change significantly;
- following outdoor activities;
- whenever a child shows signs of discomfort or heat-related illness; and
- at regular intervals throughout the day.

Staff will record significant concerns and actions taken in accordance with the nursery's existing risk assessment and safeguarding procedures.

The manager or designated senior member of staff will ensure that the nursery's overall heat risk assessment remains appropriate throughout the day.

Hydration – Water Every 30 Minutes

During periods of hot weather, fresh drinking water will be actively offered to all children at least every 30 minutes.

Children will not be expected to wait until they ask for a drink.

Staff will:

- offer children cool drinking water at least every 30 minutes;
- ensure water is readily accessible to children throughout the day where age and developmentally appropriate;
- provide additional drinks before, during and after outdoor activity;
- encourage children to drink little and often;

- pay particular attention to babies, younger children and children who may not reliably communicate thirst;
- monitor for signs of dehydration, including increased thirst, dry mouth, tiredness, reduced urination or darker urine; and
- increase the frequency of drinks offered where weather conditions or individual circumstances require this.

Water will be available both indoors and outdoors where safe and appropriate.

Children will be encouraged to drink additional water following physical activity or time spent outdoors.

Outdoor Play and Peak UV

The nursery recognises that UV exposure can cause harm even when temperatures are not particularly high.

The nursery will monitor daily UV levels as part of its weather and outdoor-play risk assessment.

Children will not routinely participate in outdoor activities during periods identified by the nursery as peak UV.

The nursery will use current UV information, together with the weather conditions and the availability of shade, when determining the daily outdoor timetable.

Outdoor activities will, wherever possible, be planned for lower-UV periods of the day, such as earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon.

During periods of high or very high UV:

- children will remain in shaded areas when outdoors;
- direct exposure to strong sunlight will be minimised;
- vigorous physical activity will be avoided during extreme heat;
- outdoor activities may be shortened or moved indoors;
- water play may be used where appropriate as a cooling activity, subject to the nursery's water-play risk assessment;
- children will wear appropriate sun-protective clothing and sun hats;
- sunscreen will be applied in accordance with parental consent and the nursery's sun protection procedures; and
- staff will continuously supervise children and monitor them for signs of heat stress or discomfort.

The decision to allow outdoor play will always be based on the **current risk assessment**, rather than temperature alone.

If conditions become unsafe, outdoor play will be stopped immediately and children will be moved to a cooler, shaded or indoor environment.

Manager's Daily Heat Check

During periods of hot weather, the manager or designated person will complete a daily heat and UV assessment before outdoor activities begin.

This assessment will consider:

1. Current temperature and forecast temperature.
2. Current UV level and forecast UV level.
3. UKHSA/Met Office Heat-Health Alert level.
4. Indoor temperatures and availability of cooler areas.
5. Availability and suitability of outdoor shade.
6. Children's individual health and vulnerability.
7. Staff ability to provide appropriate supervision.
8. Availability of drinking water.
9. Whether sunscreen and appropriate clothing are available.
10. Whether outdoor activities can be safely undertaken.

The assessment will be reviewed throughout the day and whenever conditions change.

Where the risk cannot be adequately controlled, outdoor activities will not take place.

The manager will ensure that staff are aware of any changes to the day's arrangements.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- annually;
- following significant changes to government, UKHSA, Met Office, NHS, EYFS or Ofsted guidance;
- following a significant extreme-weather incident; or
- where monitoring identifies that changes are required.

The manager will ensure that staff are informed of any significant changes to the policy.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>10/08/2026</i>	F.Joyce	<i>December 2026</i>