

Emergency Early Years Education (EYE) provider closures

Procedure and online reporting system

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1. Emergency EYE provider closures - procedure

1.1 EYE providers should follow the process and actions below in the event of an emergency closure

- In the event of an **emergency closure** being necessary **during the normal opening hours of the setting**, the first action of a provider must be to ensure the safety of all those on the site by enacting the EYE providers' evacuation procedures.
- For emergency closures both **during and outside of normal opening hours**, the setting should alert as many parents/carers as possible to **prevent families arriving at the setting** or to ensure that they are quickly and safely removed from the premises.
- If families do arrive at the setting, they must be safely accommodated if they are unable to return home immediately, assuming the nature of the emergency makes this possible. Appropriate arrangements should be made for their return home.
- The provider should then report the emergency closure to Hampshire County Council and local radio stations by completing the online form (<http://www.hants.gov.uk/schoolclosures>). Completion of the form will:
 - automatically update the list of school, college, children's centre and EYE provider closures on Hantsweb;
 - notify your local radio stations of the closure; and
 - notify relevant staff in Hampshire County Council of the closure (including your Childcare Development and Business Officer (CDBO)).

A new form needs to be completed for each day of the emergency closure. You are able to enter the details from 3pm on the working day prior to the closure.

Please always use the online form to report a closure, unless you are unable to access the Internet. For instructions, please refer to the system guidance notes on page 6.

If you have any difficulties reporting the closure online, please contact the IT Service Desk on 01962 847000 (7.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday)

- If you are unable to access the Internet, please telephone Services for Young Children on 01962 847070 to report your closure.
- It is also advisable to contact the following:
 - any arranged transport/taxis;
 - EYE provider meals service

1.2 Emergency plan

- EYE providers are required to have an emergency plan in place to deal with incidents where the health and safety of children, families and staff is at risk.
- Such incidents include:
 - adverse weather;
 - fire;
 - flood;

- terrorist alert;
- gas leaks and failure of fundamental services, such as electricity, water and heating.
- An emergency is an unforeseen event, the effects of which could not reasonably have been anticipated.

If an unusual and specific event should occur this is not covered by these guidelines. EYE providers are advised to contact Services for Young Children on 01962 847070 and seek guidance, or alternatively contact their Childcare Development and Business Officer (CDBO) -

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/childcare/providers/sfyc-offices>

This procedure does not concern possible closures relating to building work, staff training or other, non-emergency, situations.

- Hampshire County Council cannot support additional setting closures except in response to an emergency.

1.3 Guidance for childcare provision – frequently asked questions

- **If a setting has to close unexpectedly will the early years education grant have to be refunded?**

Not generally, but a setting must make every effort to re-open as soon as possible or put contingency plans in place. If it is an event that prevents the setting from opening on a temporary basis, for example, heavy snow or breakdown of heating, Services for Young Children would not seek a refund of the grant funding. However, settings should re-consider the five days they have nominated through the school year when they are proposing to be closed, or know they will not be claiming grant funding. The school year is 195 days long but the entitlement (and therefore grant funding) is only for 190 days (38 weeks). Ideally the setting will readjust their nominated days, to ensure all children can have their full entitlement.

Under the agreement between settings and Hampshire County Council, settings are required to inform Services for Young Children of closures. Please email childcare@hants.gov.uk quoting the name of the setting, its address, Ofsted unique reference number (URN) and DfE EYE URN plus a brief description of the problem, how it is being overcome, how parents are being kept informed and the likely date of reopening.

A copy to Ofsted at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk will cover their requirements. If the closure is likely to be for more than a few days, for example, premises are unsafe, or if you need support you should also call your local Childcare Development and Business Officer (CDBO) or the Services for Young Children helpline on 01962 847070.

- **How should I keep parents informed?**

The key is to have planned the procedures in advance. Your setting should have a variety of communication routes that are known by everyone - staff and parents – that can be put in place quickly and reliably, and are regularly tested.

Communication routes might include, for example:

- having block texting to the mobile phones of parents,
- sending block emails to parents,
- having a dedicated telephone number with the latest news on the answer machine,
- putting updates on your website,
- having a news cascade - so that key members of staff, management committee, or chains of parents have the contact details of a small number of others and have the responsibility to pass on information to them. If each has five onward contacts, it will take only four calls to reach 125 families and five calls to reach 625 families.

It is best not to rely on just one method but to have a combination, for example, not everyone has access to the Internet.

- **What about using the local radio station?**

Direct communication from setting to parent is best as not everyone listens to the radio. However, this is a possibility, especially if you are linked to a children's centre that is also affected by the emergency closure.

- **Refunding fees to parents?**

This is your business decision and one that should be covered in your published fee policy. Include this in the information you provide for parents and any contract they have signed with you. If a child is with you just for the early years education entitlement, then parents are not paying fees anyway and the funding doesn't belong to them.

For those parents paying fees, if your policy on refunds during emergency closures is not clear, then parents may well expect a reimbursement of some kind. You could, for example, carry forward a credit to the next week, month or term.

Whatever your policy, it needs to be clear and understood before the arrangements are used. Your fee policy and parent contracts must be regularly updated and your administration staff need to understand your policy in order to provide parents with consistent and accurate information.

- **What about our expenses?**

Think about planning how to minimise these in an emergency situation. If the premises let you down, will the setting receive payment for costs incurred by the tenant; for example, staff wages and a commitment for the restoration to working order without delay? This should all be set out in the contract between the setting and the landlord, if not you should seek to re-negotiate

the contract so that it is. It is common for the landlord to have insurance cover for these sorts of events.

The biggest potential cost you have is staff wages. You might like to review your staff contracts, for example, it may be that staff can be asked to have annual leave at very short notice up to a maximum of two days a year or to be able to annualise their hours over a year as part of flexible working. For some staff, this might help if there is a widespread local problem because they will have to deal with it too, for example, their children may have to stay home from school because of the weather or infectious disease.

The setting should also have contingency funds (or reserves) for maternity leave or staff redundancies. You could use this reserve as a short term solution and then revise your business plan so that the reserves are replenished.

Your local Services for Young Children Childcare Development and Business Officer (CDBO) can help with contingency planning.

Insurance is available - you will need to consider whether the premium is worth the risk and likely to cover the event.

2. Emergency school, college, children’s centre and EYE provider closures – online reporting system

2.1 Introduction

The emergency closures system enables schools, colleges, children’s centres and EYE providers to quickly and easily inform Hampshire County Council, families and local radio stations of unforeseen, emergency closures on a day-by-day basis. The system replaces the previous process which required establishments to email or telephone Hampshire County Council and a number of local radio stations.

2.2 Public view

The public will access <http://www.hants.gov.uk/schoolclosures> and see the following page:

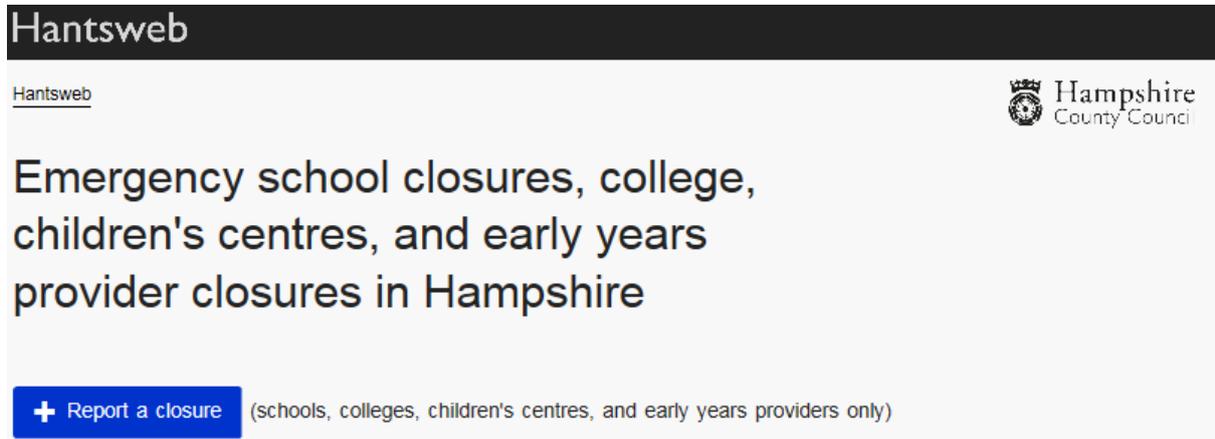
The screenshot shows the public view of the school closure reporting system. At the top, it says "Emergency school closures, college, children's centres, and early years provider closures in Hampshire". Below this is a blue button with a plus sign and the text "Report a closure" followed by "(schools, colleges, children's centres, and early years providers only)". A notice states: "Emergency closures are displayed on this page as we are notified. Please visit the establishment website for the most up-to-date information." Below the notice, it says "See also closures within [Southampton](#), [Portsmouth](#) and the [Isle of Wight](#)." A paragraph explains that the decision to close a school is for local management, based on conditions at the school and the health and safety of staff and pupils. Below this, it says "Today (Thursday 15 March 2018)". A message states "There is 1 school closed." There are two buttons: "Establishments alphabetically" and "By district". Below these, it says "Show only: [schools](#), [colleges](#) or [children's centres](#)". There is a link for "Today (Thursday 15 March 2018)". A "Quick filter:" section has an empty search box. At the bottom, there is a table with the following columns: "Establishment name", "Type", "Reason", "More information", "Information for parents", and "Last updated".

Establishment name	Type	Reason	More information	Information for parents	Last updated
Warblington School Southleigh Road, Havant, Hampshire,	Partial	Water failure	Year 11 Drama students have their GCSE Examination today which will continue as normal. All staff will	Please check the school website / school Facebook page for further	15 Mar 2018 @ 08:00

2.3 Adding your school / college / children's centre/EYE setting

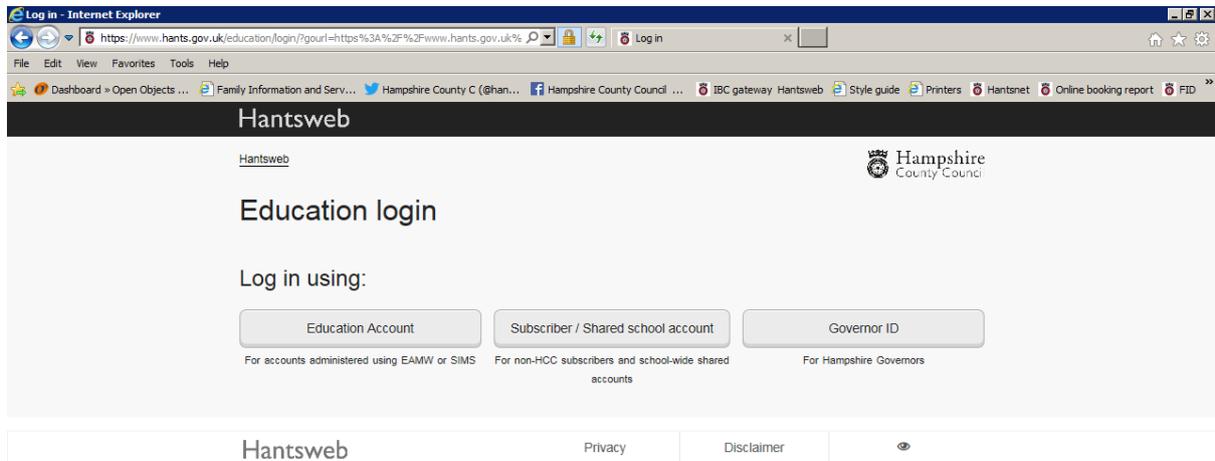
To add your establishment to the list of closures for today use the 'Report a closure' button at the top of the Hantsweb page:

<http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/schoolclosures>



The screenshot shows the Hantsweb homepage. At the top left is the 'Hantsweb' logo. At the top right is the Hampshire County Council logo. The main heading reads 'Emergency school closures, college, children's centres, and early years provider closures in Hampshire'. Below this heading is a blue button with a white plus sign and the text 'Report a closure (schools, colleges, children's centres, and early years providers only)'.

You will be asked to log in using the 'Subscriber / Shared school account' tile.



The screenshot shows the 'Education login' page in a browser window. The browser title is 'Log in - Internet Explorer' and the address bar shows 'https://www.hants.gov.uk/education/login/?gourl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.hants.gov.uk%'. The page content includes the Hantsweb logo and Hampshire County Council logo. The main heading is 'Education login'. Below this is the text 'Log in using:' followed by three login options: 'Education Account' (For accounts administered using EAMW or SIMS), 'Subscriber / Shared school account' (For non-HCC subscribers and school-wide shared accounts), and 'Governor ID' (For Hampshire Governors). At the bottom of the page are links for 'Hantsweb', 'Privacy', 'Disclaimer', and a help icon.



You will then be presented with a simple form.

1. The first section identifies your establishment using your DfE number (EYE provider URN). Ignore the school drop down option. You will also need to provide your password which would have been given at the time of EYE approval. (see Frequently Asked Questions). Once you enter your DfE number (EYE provider URN) the 'Establishment details' section will automatically be filled in and you will be informed if you (or a nominated person) has already reported your establishment as closed.

Log in - Internet Explorer
https://www.hants.gov.uk/education/login/index.php?edde&gourl=https://www.hants.gov.uk/education/login

Hantsweb

Hantsweb

Education login

[Choose a different login method](#)

DfE number / User name

or choose school

Password

Log in

There are three levels of access for schools:

1. Headteacher (full access, including school performance data)
2. Admin Office (access to fill in school data returns, but no access to school performance data)
3. Other school staff (general access, including all subscription materials)

Forgotten password

- Hampshire County Council schools can [request a password reminder](#)
- Hampshire colleges and Early Years Providers please contact the IT Services Helpdesk on 01962 847007.

Hantsweb Privacy Disclaimer

Start | Internet Explorer | Word | Outlook | Firefox | Chrome | Edge | VLC | 10:45 15/03/2018

- The second section collects details about you that will only be used if we need to contact you about your closure. These will not be displayed on Hantsweb and will only be held in the system for the period of closure.



- In the final section, please provide details of why your establishment is closed, as well as any special instructions for students or parents.

(Please enter a number we can contact you on during the period of closure.)

Closure details

Date of closure:
Thu 15 March 2018 if you submit this form before 3pm, or Fri 16 March 2018 if you submit it after 3pm.

Reason for closure *

Choose one...

Type of closure *

Full
 Partial

Additional information regarding closure

Useful information for parents / students

Submit [Cancel and return to emergency closures page](#)

Important

- If you submit the form before 3pm on a weekday your closure will be recorded against today's date.
- If you submit your form after 3pm on a weekday your closure will be recorded against the next weekday.
- If you submit the form at the weekend, at any time of day, your closure will be recorded against the following Monday.

When you click the 'Submit' button your form will be checked and you will be told if you have forgotten to fill in anything important.

If everything is OK the following things will happen automatically:

1. your closure detail will be added to the public page on the website
2. you will receive an email confirmation that we have received your closure details
3. an email will be sent to the radio stations that cover your area asking them to inform families about the closure of your establishment
4. an email will be sent to relevant officers within the County Council.

Once the number of establishments closed across the county exceeds 20 in any one day, radio stations will receive a final email advising them to check the website for further closures. This will prevent their email inboxes being flooded with automatic emails in the case of heavy snow etc.

Your closure details will automatically be deleted at the end of the day. You will need to complete a new form for each day of an emergency closure.

Frequently Asked Questions

Which password should I use?

- **Schools:** Use the same password that you use to access School Communications.
- **EYE providers:** Use the password that you were given especially for this closures system when becoming EYE approved.

My password was not accepted, what should I do?

Check that you are using the right password:

- **Schools:** If you have forgotten your password and you are the admin officer or headteacher, you can have a reminder sent to your school email address by using the form at <http://www.education.hants.gov.uk/forgottenpassword.php>
- **EYE providers:** If you have forgotten your password we will need to verify your identity before revealing it to you, which may take time and delay your closure from being published in time. To request a new password, the EYE daycare manager/pre-school supervisor must telephone the Hampshire County Council IT Service Desk on 01962 847007.

How do I enter a closure spanning several days?

This system is designed for reporting unforeseen and emergency closures rather than planned closures. You will need to fill in the form on the day of each closure.

I made a mistake, how do I change my establishment's entry?

Just enter the details again. The system will warn you that an entry already exists for today, but if you continue the new details will replace the old ones.

Do I have to go back into the system to delete my closure details?

No. The details of your closure will automatically be deleted at the end of the day. You will need to complete a new form for each day of an emergency closure.