# 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](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 847007 (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;
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) - http://www.hants.gov.uk/useful-contacts/eecu-localoffices.htm

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

This information is available and updated through the Hampshire County Council Services for Young Children website - www.hants.gov.uk/childcare. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Services for Young Children on 01962 847070 or email childcare@hants.gov.uk.

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:

Emergency school closures, college, children's centres, and early years provider closures in Hampshire

Emergency closures are displayed on this page as we are notified. Please visit the establishment website for the most up-to-date information.

See also closures within Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight.

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. If a school has to close, information will also be made available to parents/carers through the school’s normal communications channels (including the school website) and radio stations. Please ensure that your child’s school has your most up-to-date contact details.

Today (Thursday 15 March 2018)

There is 1 school closed.

Establishments alphabetically

Show only: schools, colleges or children's centres

- Today (Thursday 15 March 2018)

Quick filter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>More information</th>
<th>Information for parents</th>
<th>Last updated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warblington School</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>Water failure</td>
<td>Year 11 Drama students have their GCSE Examination today which will continue as normal. All staff will</td>
<td>Please check the school website / school Facebook page for further update</td>
<td>15 Mar 2018 @ 08:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

You will be asked to log in using the ‘Subscriber / Shared school account’ tile.
You will then be presented with a simple form.

1. The first section identifies your establishment using your DfE number (EYE provider URN). You will also need to provide your password (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.
2. 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.

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

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](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 email [childrens.services.communications@hants.gov.uk](mailto:childrens.services.communications@hants.gov.uk) from their named email address.
**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.