



Extreme Weather Policy

At Little Dragon's Day Nursery, we have an extreme weather policy in place to ensure our nursery is prepared for all weather conditions that might affect the running of the nursery such as floods, snow and heat waves.

If any of these impact on the ability of the nursery to open or operate, we will contact parents via FAMILY.

We will not take children outdoors where we judge that weather conditions make it unsafe to do so.

Flood

In the case of a flood, we will follow our Critical Incident Policy to enable all children and staff to be safe and plan for continuity of care.

Snow or other severe weather

If high snowfall, or another severe weather condition such as dense fog, is threatened during a nursery day then the manager will decide whether to close the nursery. This decision will take into account the safety of the children, their parents and the staff team. In the event of a planned closure during the nursery day, we will contact all parents to arrange for collection of their child.

In the event of staff shortages due to snow or other severe weather, we will contact all available off duty staff and/or agency staff and group the children differently until they are able to arrive. If we are unable to maintain statutory ratio requirements after all options have been explored, we will contact Ofsted to inform them of this issue, recording all details in our incident file. If we feel the safety, health or welfare of the children is compromised then we will take the decision to close the nursery.

Heat wave

We are committed to ensuring that all children are fully protected from the dangers of too much sun and UV rays as severe sunburn in childhood can lead to the development of malignant melanoma (the most dangerous type of skin cancer) in later life.

Staff will make day-to-day decisions about the length of time spent outside depending on the strength of the sun and find the right balance to protect children from sunburn by following the NHS guidance.

We follow guidance from the weather and UV level reports and use the following procedures to keep children safe and healthy in the sun:

- Staff will make day-to-day decisions about the length of time spent outside depending on the temperature and strength of the sun (UV levels).
- Children will not be allowed in direct sunlight between 11.00am – 3.00pm on hot days from March to October, following NHS sun safety advice.
- If the temperature is above 28 degrees Celsius and/or the UV levels above 7, children will not access the outdoors for their safety.
- Children must have a clearly labelled sun hat which will be worn at all times whilst outside in sunny weather. This hat will preferably be of legionnaires design to provide additional protection i.e. with an extended back and side to shield children's neck and ears from the sun.
- Little Dragon's provides sun cream and consent is sort during the registration process to enable staff to apply it. Parents may wish to provide their own sun cream to meet the individual needs of their child. Staff must be aware of the expiry date and discard sunscreen after this date. Sun cream containing nut-based ingredients will not be allowed in the setting.
- Parents are requested to supply light-weight cotton clothing for their children suitable for the sun, preferably with long sleeves and long legs to provide protection from the sun.



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- Children's safety and welfare in hot weather is the nursery's prime objective so staff will work closely with parents to ensure all appropriate cream and clothing is provided.
- Whilst parental wishes are always taken into consideration, the safety and welfare of the children always take priority.
- Shaded areas are provided to ensure children are able to go out in hot weather, cool down or escape the sun should they wish to or need to.
- Children will always have sun cream applied before going outside in the hot weather and at frequent intervals during the day.
- Children are encouraged to drink cooled water more frequently throughout sunny or warm days and this will be accessible both indoors and out.
- Children are made aware of the need for sun hats, sun cream and the need to drink more fluids during their time in the sun in an age-appropriate way.
- Key persons also work with the parents of their key children to decide and agree on suitable precautions to protect children from burning, including those with more sensitive skin types and those that may be more tolerant to the sunshine, e.g. Black and/or Asian colouring.

Vitamin D

Sunlight is important for the body to receive vitamin D. We need vitamin D to help the body absorb calcium and phosphate from our diet. These minerals are important for healthy bones, teeth and muscles. Our bodies create vitamin D from direct sunlight on our skin when we are outdoors. Most people can make enough vitamin D from being out in the sun daily for short periods with their hands or other body parts uncovered.

We also promote the NHS recommendation to parents that all children aged under 5 years should be given vitamin D supplements even if they do get out in the sun.

Please see a breakdown of weather procedures below.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>August 2025</i>	Kate McLeod	<i>August 2026</i>

Weather Procedures for Forest School and Outdoor Play



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Greater risks of injury and harm can occur if the weather becomes unusually severe. The most concerning conditions in an outdoor learning environment are high winds and lightning, which can lead to falling trees or branches. However, all weather extremes require planning and action.

This policy ensures the safety and wellbeing of all children, staff and volunteers during outdoor sessions by outlining procedures for assessing and responding to adverse or extreme weather conditions. It supports the principles of dynamic risk assessment, ensuring outdoor learning continues whenever safety possible.

High Winds

Definition

- Moderate winds: 20–30 mph (32–48 km/h) – caution advised (Beaufort scale 5–6)
- High winds: 30–40 mph (48–64 km/h) – potential hazard (Beaufort scale 7)
- Gale-force and above: Over 40 mph (64+ km/h) – dangerous (Beaufort scale 8)

Risk Factors

- Falling branches or trees
- Reduced control over tools and tarps
- Increased fire risk due to wind spread
- Flying debris

Action Plan

Before the session:

- Check weather forecasts (e.g. Met Office or local weather apps).
- If forecasted winds exceed 35 mph, carry out a dynamic risk assessment and use professional judgement (consider both gusts and sustained wind speeds).
- Cancel the session if winds exceed 40 mph (Beaufort scale 8).

During the session:

- Monitor wind conditions continuously.
- Avoid areas with dead or unstable trees.
- Suspend activities involving fire or elevated platforms (e.g. tree climbing).
- Have an emergency exit strategy ready.

Outdoor sessions may continue during windy weather provided conditions are monitored. If wind gusts exceed 35 mph in open-field, sessions will be reviewed and adapted. If gusts exceed 40 mph, sessions will be postponed for safety. Wind speeds will be checked via the Met office forecast on the morning of each session and monitored on-site. Have a dynamic risk assessment approach- it's not just about the number, but how it feels on site with being mindful of other weather conditions.

Lightning

Risk Factors

- Open spaces and tall isolated trees
- Metal tools and structures
- Rapid weather changes reducing evacuation time

Action Plan

Before the session:

- Check thunderstorm warnings.
- Cancel the session if thunderstorms are forecast during core activity hours.

If lightning is seen or thunder is heard:

- Follow the 30/30 Rule:
- If the time between lightning and thunder is 30 seconds or less, seek shelter immediately.



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- Wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunderclap before resuming.

Shelter Guidelines:

- Seek a substantial building if possible.
- If no shelter is available:
 - Avoid open fields and isolated trees
 - Spread out group members (min. 5m apart)
 - Adopt the lightning crouch (squat low, hands over ears, head down)

Prohibited Actions:

- Do not use metal tools.
- Avoid fire and water-based activities.
- Do not shelter under tall or lone trees.

Heavy Rain / Flooding

Risk Factors

- Slippery or muddy terrain
- Flash flooding in low-lying areas
- Reduced visibility and cold exposure
- Water-damaged equipment

Action Plan

Before the session:

- Check flood alerts (e.g. Met Office or Environment Agency).
- Ensure children have waterproof clothing and spare layers.
- Waterproof the first aid kit.

During the session:

- Continuously assess ground and water conditions.
- Avoid saturated or fast-flowing water – no wading or play in floodwater.
- Walk back to the nursery if conditions worsen.
- Monitor for signs of hypothermia (e.g. shivering, lethargy).

Cancel the session if:

- Flood warnings are active for your area.
- Forecasts indicate unsafe ground or high hypothermia risk.

Cold Weather / Snow / Ice

Risk Factors

- Hypothermia or frostbite
- Slips on ice
- Cold-related tool handling injuries

Action Plan

Before the session:

- Monitor forecasts, especially below 0°C.
- Ensure layered clothing, waterproof footwear, and hot drinks are available.
- Pack emergency blankets.
- Consider shortening the session.

During the session:

- Keep children moving to maintain warmth.



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- Avoid icy or steep terrain.
- Watch for cold stress: pale skin, quietness, slowed reactions.
- Provide regular warm-up breaks under cover.

Cancel the session if:

- Severe cold warnings are issued.
- Ice significantly increases fall risks.

Hot Weather / Heatwave

Risk Factors

- Heat exhaustion or heatstroke
- Dehydration
- Sunburn or UV exposure

Action Plan

Before the session:

- Check UV index and temperature forecasts. If the temperature is above 28 degrees Celsius and/or the UV levels above 7, children will not access the outdoors for their safety.
- Ensure children wear sun hats, sunscreen, lightweight clothing and bring water.
- Plan shaded activities during peak sun (11am–3pm).

During the session:

- Encourage frequent hydration.
- Rotate groups through shaded rest areas.
- Monitor for heat stress: flushed skin, nausea, dizziness.
- Limit high-energy activities.

Cancel the session if:

- Heat health alerts (Level 3 or 4) are issued.
- Site lacks sufficient shade or hydration.

Fog / Poor Visibility

Risk Factors

- Increased risk of children becoming lost
- Harder to supervise
- Hidden trip hazards

Action Plan

Before the session:

- Check visibility forecasts – avoid sessions during dense fog.
- Use hi-vis vests or bright clothing.
- Restrict session to smaller, enclosed areas.

During the session:

- Keep group together in a clearly marked boundary.
- Use perimeter monitors and frequent call checks.
- Use walkie talkies or whistle signals.

Cancel the session if:

- Visibility is under 100m and supervision is compromised.

Severe Storms (Hail / Thunderstorms) (Lightning is covered separately above)



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Risk Factors

- Combination of wind, hail, and lightning
- Sudden deterioration in weather
- Flying debris

Action Plan

- Monitor Severe Weather Warnings (Met Office).
- Cancel if storms are expected during session times.
- Be prepared to evacuate quickly.
- If caught in a storm, follow high wind and lightning procedures.

Communication & Responsibility

- The Forest School Leader is responsible for monitoring all weather conditions and making real-time safety decisions.
- Staff are briefed on these weather procedures and their roles.
- Emergency contacts and evacuation routes must be accessible at all times.
- A dynamic risk assessment should be maintained throughout every session.