

Little Acorns Montessori

Ascot | Bracknell | Crowthorne

EXTREME WEATHER & TEMPERATURE POLICY

Document Control

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1. Policy Statement

Little Acorns Montessori is committed to maintaining a safe, comfortable and healthy environment for all children in our care at all times of the year. Extreme temperatures — whether hot or cold — pose a genuine risk to young children, who are significantly less able to regulate their own body temperature than adults.

This policy sets out the temperature thresholds at which we take action, the steps staff must follow in response to cold weather, hot weather and extreme heat or cold, and the circumstances in which a decision may be taken to close or partially close the nursery. It applies to all rooms used by children across all Little Acorns Montessori settings (Ascot, Bracknell and Crowthorne) and to all outdoor areas.

There is no single statutory temperature at which a nursery is legally required to close. However, our obligations under the EYFS 2025 Statutory Framework, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require us to maintain a safe environment. This policy operationalises those obligations with clear, practical thresholds.

2. Statutory Framework

Legislation / Guidance	Relevance
EYFS Statutory Framework 2025 (Reqs 3.64–3.66 GP)	Providers must ensure premises are fit for purpose and safe. Staff must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children in all circumstances, including environmental hazards.
EYFS 2025 – Safer Sleep (Req 3.69 GP)	Sleeping children must be frequently checked. Babies must be placed to sleep safely in line with NHS / Lullaby Trust guidance, which specifies a sleep room temperature of 16–20°C.

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	Employers must ensure the health, safety and welfare of all persons on the premises, including children.
Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 (Reg 7 & ACOP L24)	Sets a minimum workplace temperature of 16°C (the Ofsted-applied benchmark for nurseries). No statutory maximum is specified; risk assessment applies.
Building Bulletin 101 (BB101) 2018 – DfE	Floor temperatures above 26°C should be avoided in nursery settings, where children spend significant time on the floor. Radiator surface temperatures must not exceed 43°C.
NHS / Lullaby Trust Safer Sleep Guidance (EYFS 2025 Req 3.69 GP)	Baby sleep rooms must be maintained at 16–20°C. Overheating is a recognised SIDS risk factor. Room thermometers are required.
Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999	Requires suitable and sufficient risk assessments for all significant hazards, including extreme temperature events.
Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (revised November 2025)	Inspectors will assess whether the environment is safe and suitable at all times. Extreme weather management and temperature records may be reviewed on inspection.

3. Temperature Thresholds and Action Levels

The following thresholds apply to all internal rooms used by children. Temperatures should be monitored using wall-mounted thermometers in each room. The Manager must record room temperatures at least twice daily (morning and afternoon) during periods of extreme weather.

3.1 Cold Weather Thresholds

Status	Temperature	Required Actions
● Normal	18°C–24°C	No action required. Standard operation continues.
● Monitor	16°C–17°C	Manager alerted. Check heating system. Add extra layers for babies and non-mobile children. Increase physical activity for older children. Record temperature every hour.
● Action Required	Below 16°C	Minimum legal threshold breached. Manager must act immediately: attempt to restore heating, move children to warmer areas, contact parents. If temperature cannot be restored within 1 hour, initiate closure procedure (see Section 6).

3.2 Hot Weather Thresholds

Status	Temperature	Required Actions
● Normal	18°C–24°C	No action required. Standard operation continues.
● Warm – Monitor	25°C–28°C	Open windows and doors where safe. Deploy fans (not directed at babies). Increase water provision. Reduce

		physical exertion. Move babies away from direct sunlight. Record temperature hourly.
● Hot – Immediate Action	Above 28°C	Activate hot weather protocol (Section 5.2) immediately: maximise shading, fans, ventilation and water provision; suspend vigorous outdoor activities; reduce physical exertion indoors; increase sleep checks. Contact parents only if temperature rises above 32°C and cannot be reduced, or if the baby sleep room exceeds 25°C. This is to inform parents of the internal temperature only, and closure under Section 6 is a last resort only. Note: at internal temperatures above 35°C, fans alone may not prevent heat-related illness and may worsen dehydration; at that point, priority must shift to cool water provision, reducing activity and considering room relocation.

3.3 Baby Sleep Room — Specific Thresholds (SIDS Risk)

Baby Sleep Room Temperature (NHS / Lullaby Trust / EYFS 2025 Req 3.69 GP)

Required range: 16°C – 20°C at all times during sleep periods.

Below 16°C: Too cold for safe infant sleep. Add appropriate TOG-rated sleep bag. Check chest/back of neck (not hands/feet). Increase room temperature. If unresolvable, do not place further children down to sleep; contact parents.

Above 20°C: Overheating risk — a known SIDS risk factor. Remove layers. Increase ventilation (fan circulating air, not directed at baby). Check chest/back of neck for warmth or sweating. If above 25°C and cannot be reduced, do not place further children down to sleep; contact parents.

Room thermometers are mandatory in all baby sleep areas. Staff must record the temperature at the start and end of every sleep period on the Sleep Record Log.

Never place a hat on a sleeping baby indoors. Babies lose excess heat through their heads.

For children over 2 Years old: Where the room temperature falls outside the recommended range — for example during hot weather or heating failure — staff must not prevent children from sleeping. Instead, staff must manage the child's comfort through appropriate adjustment of clothing and bedding: removing layers if the child is too warm, or adding a lightweight layer if too cool. Staff must check the child's temperature by feeling the chest or the back of the neck (not the hands or feet, which are normally cooler). Checks must be increased in frequency when the room temperature is outside the recommended range and must be recorded on the Sleep Chart. Any prolonged inability to maintain an appropriate room temperature must be reported to the Manager, who must assess whether the environment remains safe for sleeping children.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Nursery Manager

- Must ensure room thermometers are in place and calibrated in every room used by children, including the baby sleep room.
- Must monitor weather forecasts during periods of predicted extreme heat or cold and prepare staff in advance.

- Is the decision-maker for nursery closure or partial closure on temperature grounds.
- Must ensure a temperature monitoring log is maintained during any period when thresholds are approached or breached.
- Must notify Ofsted of significant events (see Section 6, step 6) via the Early Years online portal within the required timescale.
- Must communicate any closure or amended operation to parents promptly, by the nursery's usual notification channel.
- Must review this policy following any significant temperature incident.

The Owner is registered for UKHSA/Met Office Weather-Health Alerts, which provide advance notice of forecast heat and cold events. Registration is free at <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=mRRO7jVKLkutR188-d6GZn06Ss-xPLpCuYeyOZ-eFiFUMEVIMDRTOE5FVzFFM0NXNjFMWUIWMkJVMCQIQCN0PWcu&wdLOR=cFDCFC283-EC6A-4CD2-BBF9-FC0C14953967>. This information is passed to managers where necessary.

4.2 Room Leaders and Key Persons

- Must check and record room temperature at the start of each session and at least every two hours during extreme weather.
- Must implement the relevant action level protocol without waiting to be directed, and inform the Manager immediately.
- Must record the temperature of the baby sleep room at the start and end of every sleep period.
- Must check sleeping children at minimum every 10 minutes during any period where sleep room temperature is outside the 16–20°C range.
- Must ensure children are dressed appropriately for the indoor temperature, communicating with parents via the daily handover where adjustments are needed.

4.3 All Staff

- Must be familiar with this policy and the action levels in Section 3.
- Must report any temperature concern to the Room Leader or Manager immediately.
- Must not leave children unattended in rooms that have breached a threshold.
- Must apply sun protection (parent-provided, age-appropriate sunscreen) before outdoor activities in hot weather, following parental consent already obtained at registration.

4.4 Parents and Carers

- Should dress children in layers appropriate to the season so that layers can be added or removed as needed.
- Should provide a named, age-appropriate sleeping bag with the correct TOG rating for the current season for babies who sleep at the nursery.
- Should provide named sunscreen for outdoor summer activities (to be applied by staff with consent).

- Will be contacted promptly if a closure decision is made or if their child's welfare is at risk due to temperature.

5. Procedures

5.1 Cold Weather Protocol

1. At the start of each session, the Room Leader checks and records the room temperature on the Temperature Monitoring Log.
2. If any room drops to 17°C or below, the Room Leader must inform the Manager immediately.
3. The Manager must check the heating system and arrange emergency repairs if required.
4. Children must be moved to the warmest available rooms. Babies and non-mobile children must have additional layers added.
5. If the temperature in any room drops below 16°C and cannot be restored within one hour, the Manager must move all children to the warmest available rooms and assess whether the setting can continue to operate safely. Closure of the affected room should be considered first; whole-nursery closure is only initiated under Section 6 if no room can be maintained at or above 16°C and conditions cannot otherwise be managed safely.
6. Staff must ensure babies are not placed in draughty areas, near external walls, or close to windows.
7. Outdoor activities must be risk-assessed. Children must not remain outdoors if the wind chill makes conditions unsafe or if they show signs of being cold.

5.2 Hot Weather Protocol

1. During forecast heatwaves or when internal temperatures reach 25°C, the Manager must activate this protocol at the start of the session.
2. Windows and doors must be opened where it is safe to do so. External blinds or temporary blackout measures should be deployed to reduce solar gain.
3. Fans should be in use in all rooms to increase air movement. Fans must not be directed at babies or young children. In baby sleep rooms, fans should circulate air within the room only. Note: at internal temperatures above 35°C, fans alone may not prevent heat-related illness and may worsen dehydration; at that point, priority must shift to cool water provision, reducing activity and considering room relocation.
4. Fresh water must be available and actively offered to all children at least every 30 minutes.
5. Outdoor play must be moved to shaded areas. Children must not play in direct sunlight between 11:00 and 15:00 during hot weather.
6. Age-appropriate sunscreen (SPF 30 minimum) must be applied before any outdoor activity, using parent-provided, named sunscreen.
7. Physical activities must be reduced in intensity. Rest periods should be increased.
8. Baby room staff must check and record sleep room temperature at the start and end of each sleep period and every 30 minutes during sleep if the temperature is at or above 19°C.

9. Light, cotton bedding should be used. Sleeping bags should be a low TOG rating appropriate to the room temperature.
10. If, after all hot weather protocol measures have been deployed (shading, fans, water provision, reduced activity, redistributed room use), the temperature in a main children's room cannot be maintained below 32°C, the Manager must contact parents and inform them of the internal temperature, and the mitigations in place. If the baby sleep room exceeds 25°C and cannot be reduced despite all protocol measures, babies must not be placed to sleep; parents must be contacted, again, for information. Closure will only be initiated under Section 6 where conditions present a genuine and unmanageable risk to children's health and all other measures have failed.

5.3 Outdoor Activities in Extreme Weather

- A risk assessment must be completed before any outdoor activity when the forecast is for temperatures below 0°C or above 28°C.
- Children must be appropriately dressed for outdoor conditions at all times.
- In icy or frosty conditions, outdoor areas must be inspected before use and gritted where appropriate. Areas that cannot be made safe must be closed.
- Parents should be informed via the daily communication channel if outdoor activities are cancelled or modified due to weather.

5.4 Recognition and Response to Heat-Related Illness

All staff must be able to recognise the following conditions and respond appropriately.

Heat stress: child appears out of character, irritable or uncomfortable; symptoms worsen with activity; dark urine or dry nappies indicate dehydration. Action: move to cooler area; offer cool water; reduce activity; monitor closely.

Heat exhaustion: tiredness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, excessive sweating, pale or clammy skin. Action: move child to a cool area; offer cool water; cool the child rapidly by sponging or spraying with cool water and placing cold packs around neck and armpits; contact parent. If symptoms worsen or do not improve promptly, contact NHS 111.

Heatstroke (medical emergency): confusion, lack of coordination, seizures, loss of consciousness, high body temperature (40°C or above), red hot skin, fast heartbeat, fast shallow breathing. Action: call 999 immediately; begin cooling whilst awaiting emergency services; place unconscious child in recovery position.

This guidance is consistent with UKHSA/DfE Hot Weather Guidance (June 2025).

6. Emergency Closure Procedure

The Manager may decide to close the nursery partially or fully only where temperature conditions cannot be managed safely and all other reasonably practicable measures have been exhausted. Closure is a last resort. Current DfE and UKHSA guidance is that early years settings should remain open during hot or cold weather wherever conditions can be managed safely, and this nursery will seek to do so in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

1. Attempt to resolve the temperature issue (emergency heating repair, additional cooling measures). Allow up to one hour before committing to closure, unless conditions are immediately unsafe.
2. Inform all room leaders and staff that closure is being considered / confirmed.
3. Contact all parents by the nursery's primary communication channel (e.g. app notification, phone call). Give clear information on timing, collection arrangements and whether funded hours will be honoured.
4. Ensure all children are supervised at all times until collected. Maintain standard ratios and safeguarding procedures during the closure period.
5. Complete a closure incident record, noting: date, time, temperatures recorded, action taken, time parents contacted, time all children collected.
6. Consider whether Ofsted notification is required. Not every unplanned closure is automatically notifiable. A significant event is one that affects the suitability of the registered person or the safety of children. If a child has been harmed or there has been a serious incident connected to the temperature event, notify Ofsted of a serious childcare incident within 14 days via the Ofsted online portal. If closure was precautionary and no child was harmed, use your judgement and consult current GOV.UK guidance at www.gov.uk/guidance/childcare-significant-events-to-notify-ofsted-about before deciding whether to notify.
7. Following reopening, the Manager must review what happened, update the risk assessment if necessary, and brief all staff. Record the review outcome.

7. Monitoring and Recording

- A Temperature Monitoring Log must be maintained in each room. It must record: date, time, room temperature, name of staff member recording, and any actions taken.
- Baby sleep room temperatures must be recorded at the start and end of every sleep period, using the Sleep Record Log. The time and temperature at both points must be noted.
- During extreme weather (any day where a threshold is reached), temperatures must be recorded every hour.
- All closure incidents must be recorded in the Closure Incident Record and retained as part of the nursery's health and safety records for a minimum of 3 years.
- Temperature logs and closure records must be made available to Ofsted on inspection.

8. Required Equipment

Item	Requirement
Room thermometers	One per room used by children, including baby sleep room. Wall-mounted, at child height. Checked for accuracy annually.
Fans	Available in all rooms. Baby-safe positioning (not directed at infants). Tested before each summer season.

Portable heaters (if used)	Must comply with electrical safety requirements. Guards required where children could touch. Never left unattended when in use.
Sunscreen	Parent-provided, named, SPF 30 minimum. Written consent obtained at registration. Check expiry dates each season.
Sleep bags / bedding	Parent-provided, appropriate TOG for season. TOG guidance available from the Lullaby Trust. No duvets, pillows or loose bedding for babies.
Window / door guards	Where windows are opened for ventilation, restrictors or guards must prevent children accessing openings. Safety must not be compromised to achieve ventilation.

9. Training and Awareness

- All staff must be briefed on this policy at induction and at each annual review.
- Room Leaders must be able to locate and read room thermometers and know the thresholds in Section 3 without reference to the policy document.
- Baby room staff must receive specific training on safer sleep temperature requirements and SIDS risk factors, in line with EYFS 2025 Requirement 3.69 GP and the Lullaby Trust guidance.
- Staff should be trained to recognise and respond to heat stress, heat exhaustion and heatstroke in young children, in line with UKHSA guidance (Section 5.4 of this policy).
- Training records must note completion of temperature and safer sleep awareness training.

10. Policy Review

- This policy must be reviewed annually.
- It must also be reviewed following any unplanned closure due to temperature, any Ofsted inspection recommendation, or any change to the relevant statutory guidance.
- The review date and any changes must be recorded in the Document Control table and communicated to all staff. Staff acknowledgement must be obtained and filed.

Policy Sign-Off

Policy Author	Jonathan Duffy
Date	June 2026

This policy has been written in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Building Bulletin 101 (2018), NHS / Lullaby Trust Safer Sleep guidance, and UKHSA/DfE Hot Weather Guidance (June 2025).