

**COVID-19 policy**

reviewed

9/12/2020

**Aim of Policy**

This policy defines and assists the operating arrangements in place within the pre school that assures compliance to the Government and leading bodies requirements with relation to the outbreak of a pandemic such as COVID19. This information builds upon our current procedures however new practices may emerge as the situation continues. The policy and considerations may evolve and be built upon as the situation deepens and new precautionary measures have been introduced and practices reflected upon.

**Method**

As early years providers we ensure to offer a continuum of very high standards of practice of childcare and education. The fundamental principles to be outlined in this policy are set out to ensure physical distancing is enabled and implement good hygiene practices as well as avoiding coming into contact with infected children and adults or anyone displaying symptoms. It states the protective measures put in place for children, parents and staff as best as possible to ensure the risk of transmission is reduced. We will continue to follow our other policies as long as they do not conflict with this policy and be guided by the EYFS as best as we can. The main areas we will be considering are:-

- Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell
- Maintaining personal and respiratory hygiene (handwashing, catch it, kill it, bin it)
- Ensuring cleanliness of the environment (especially frequently touched surfaces)
- Minimising general contact and mixing (creating bubbles and limiting numbers)
- The use of Protective and Personal Equipment (PPE)
- Testing

**Focus/Areas of consideration/Recommendation**

**Children**

**Attendance**

- Only children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period should attend the setting
- Extremely vulnerable children should continue under government guidance advice (to shield)
- Families who attend at least 2 settings should choose only 1 for the foreseeable future, to minimise spread of infection.
- Children who display 1 or more of the symptoms of COVID19 must self-isolate for 14days or until a negative test result is received. Known symptoms are new persistent cough, high temperature (above 37.8), loss of taste or smell.

The updated guidance states that vaccines may cause a mild fever, this is common and expected reaction and isolation is not required unless COVID19 is suspected. Teething can cause flushed cheeks, sore gums, etc but NHS guidelines state that fever is not a symptom of teething and as such, cannot be treated in this way.

**Physical distancing/grouping (bubbles)**

- Care routines including lunchtimes, nappy changing and toileting will be within the space allocated ensuring no more than 4 children are sat at lunch tables and only 2 children at a time access toilet facilities.
- The use of communal spaces will be restricted as much as possible

- The use of the outdoor space will actively be encouraged and children should come dressed appropriately for this. Onesies and wellies will be allocated to a child at the beginning of the week and washed weekly, at least. Wellies will be sanitised at the end of each day.
- Sunscreen should be applied by parents/carers before the child arrives at pre school, using the 1 application suncream so we can minimise staff having to top up suncream. T-shirts covering shoulders and leggings would be preferable.

### **Wellbeing and education**

- Children will be supported in age appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe including regular hand washing, coughing into an elbow, using a tissue and adopting a catch it, kill it, bin it regime
- EYFS framework will continue to be delivered through play and adult led activities
- Children have access to fresh water throughout the day. The drinks station is cleaned regularly throughout the day.
- Children will be provided with meals which are delivered from Early Years Catering and served by consistent staff member for that day. At this current time meals will be served on each child's plate but the children are responsible for clearing their plates and placing in appropriate bowl.

### **Staff**

#### **Attendance**

- Staff should only attend preschool if they are symptom free, having completed the required isolation period or achieved a negative test result. All staff and their household are eligible for testing if they display symptoms
- Consideration will be given to limiting the number of staff in the pre school at any one time to only those required to care for the expected occupancy levels on any given day
- Staff will work within staff teams, supporting their children but not engaging with other staff/children unless a situation arises where this is the only available option
- Staff hours, days they work and length of day may change in order to meet childcare demands and considerations within this policy

#### **Physical distancing/grouping/safety**

- Staff will complete a risk assessment before opening to address any risks from the virus, ensure sensible measures are in place to control risks
- Staff to be informed of measures in place and sign a disclaimer to state they have read and understood the policy and procedures
- Wherever possible Staff will remain with their 'bubble' of children who they are allocated to and will not come into contact with other groups
- Staff have been advised by the government not to wear PPE such as facemasks during the day but will continue to wear PPE at the usual times such as intimate care. Facemasks will be worn at drop off/pick up times by staff and parents  
Staff will wear a facemask and shield, apron and gloves if supporting a child who becomes unwell whilst in our care. Once the child has been collected the staff member will continue to wear PPE and clean the infected area with disinfectant.
- All PPE will be disposed of following the government guidelines, double bagging before placing in bin. The staff member will then wash their hands for at least 20 seconds

- The staff member supporting a child who becomes unwell does not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves.
- Social distancing must be maintained between all adults. Staff will not have breaks together.
- Staff will be responsible to ensure appropriate cleaning takes place and enough ventilation is in the room such as opening windows and keeping doors open, ensuring the safety of the children is maintained.
- Staff need to avoid physical contact with each other including handshakes, hugs, etc
- Staff must wear fresh, clean clothes every day.
- On return to their home staff should remove their work clothes, place them direct in the washing machine and then shower to remove any germs they have picked up

### **Training**

- Where possible meetings and training sessions will be conducted remotely using virtual platforms
- All staff members will receive appropriate instruction, undertake the on-line Prevent COVID-19 course and be given the standard operating procedure and risk assessments we will be using during this time

### **Working from another Location**

- It may be necessary for some staff to work from home where relevant. The Company will consider this as part of its operating arrangements to remain compliant with Government guidance. Obviously, this will not be possible for the majority of roles, however we will assess the viability of this option taking into consideration any equipment needed. Employees should not assume that they will be permitted to work from home and advanced authorisation will be needed in every case.

### **Temporary Business closure**

- As time progresses, it may become apparent that the business is unable to continue its operations as normal. In this scenario, we may be forced to close all, or part of the business temporarily until such time we are able to resume operations. Whilst we will do everything to ensure this does not happen, we may be left with no option.

## **Parents**

### **Physical distancing**

- Only parents who are symptom free and/or have completed the required isolation periods will be able to drop off/pick up their child
- Wherever possible only 1 parent to do drop off/pick up to reduce the number of adults at these busy times
- Parents/carers will wear a mask on drop off/pick up
- Staggering drop off and collection times will reduce the queues at the beginning and end of the day
- When parents are waiting, social distancing should be adhered to in line with government policies
- Where a child arrives distressed, parents will not be able to enter the setting so handover will take place in the outdoor environment. If a child is too distressed a delayed start to their pre school entry may be preferred or short settling in sessions without the parent.

### **Communication**

- Parents should receive clear communication regarding the role they play in the safe operating procedure and all measures being taken to ensure the safety of their children and themselves
- Parents should inform pre school of their circumstances and if they plan to keep their child away, this helps the pre school to conform with our safeguarding policy

- Parents may incur a nominal charge to provide snack and extra consumables needed, which we may struggle to afford.
- Parents will sign a parental agreement prior to their child starting, to ensure all rules are clear.

### **Visitors**

- Attendance will be restricted to only children and staff unless it is felt essential, i.e. building maintenance
- Where essential visits are required these should be made outside of the usual preschool operational hours, wherever possible
- As far as possible parents and carers should not enter the premises

### **Travel**

- Wherever possible staff and parents should travel to preschool alone, using their own transport or if possible, walk
- If public transport is necessary, current guidance on the use of public transport should be adhered to
- Parents should not leave travel accessories including buggies, scooters, etc in the setting premises or grounds
- Outings from the pre school into the local community should be restricted to ensure mixing with members of the general public does not happen

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## **Hygiene, Health and Safety**

### **Handwashing**

- All children and staff must wash their hands upon arrival for at least 20 seconds
- Children and staff will be encouraged to wash their hands frequently, this includes as soon as they arrive each morning, before and after eating food, after using the toilet or playing outdoors, after sneezing, coughing and blowing their nose or dealing with unwell people
- Bodily fluid spills should follow the correct procedures as normal

### **Cleaning**

- An enhanced cleaning schedule must be implemented that includes furniture, surfaces, children's toys and equipment and all staff are responsible for this within their area of work
- Communal areas, touch points and bathroom facilities must be cleaned and sanitised throughout the day and thoroughly every evening
- A deep clean will be conducted at the end of each week
- A deep clean may be needed after a child has become unwell in the area they are waiting in
- Tissues must be immediately disposed of and placed in a bin
- Bodily fluids must be double bagged and placed in the bin/yellow bin, if applicable

### **Laundry**

- The amount of soft furnishing will be reduced dramatically but these will be washed, if used by a child for comfort/sleeping/etc

- Onesies will be washed at the end of every week and hung in the outdoor environment to dry
- Any blankets/sheets used for sleeping will not be shared by any other child

### **Risk assessment**

- The setting and all activity should be risk assessed before opening or going ahead to address the risks from the virus and consideration given to any adaptations to usual practice. Sensible measures should be put in place and policies and procedures followed
- It is expected this would include but not be limited to, the suspension of learning experiences using materials which are not easily washable and the suspension of sharing of food and utensils.
- Available resources will be reduced within the pre school
- Anything that cannot be easily wiped down or washed at the end of the day, should be removed
- Mouthing of toys should be discouraged, consider whether play food, crockery should be available, to discourage this
- Baking, food play and finger painting should be avoided unless the child has their own equipment/resources to use

### **PPE**

- Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in early years settings to protect against COVID-19 transmission
- PPE should continue to be worn and disposed of as normal for nappy changing and 1to1 care
- If a child shows symptoms, staff should wear a face mask and shield, disposable gloves and apron and move the child to an area away from others. PPE should then be disposed following government guidelines

### **Premises/building**

- Keep windows open where possible to ensure good levels of ventilation. If doors are open ensure the safety of the children at all times

### **Resources**

- Children should not be permitted to bring items from home unless absolutely essential for their wellbeing. Anything brought in from home should remain in their bag, outside on the cloakroom trolley
- All resources for play and learning experiences for children will be regularly washed/sterilised. Resources which cannot be cleaned will be removed. This applies to inside and outside resources.
- Equipment used by staff such as tablets should be cleaned regularly

### **Responding to a suspected case**

- In the event of a child developing suspected coronavirus symptoms whilst attending the setting, they should be collected as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with the current NHS guidance
- Whilst waiting for the child to be collected they will be isolated from others, wherever possible and if possible, a window/door should be opened for ventilation
- The staff member will wear a face mask and shield, apron and gloves during this time.
- When the child is collected the staff member will be responsible for thoroughly cleaning this area.
- In the event of a staff member developing suspected coronavirus symptoms whilst attending the setting, they should return home immediately and isolate at home in line with NHS guidance. They should also follow current testing advice for themselves and their household.
- Should a child or member of staff have a confirmed case of COVID-19 the children and staff in that room will be sent home for 14 days and will have to self-isolate for this period. All staff would be expected to have a

Covid test and if negative, return to work. The Pre School will be closed for at least one day whilst a deep clean of the whole site is undertaken.

### **Reporting of suspected/confirmed COVID-19 cases**

- Education Learning and Skills / Early Years Team must be contacted in any single case of COVID-19. The school/setting must not put out any communication to parents until the central team of ELS have been consulted, in addition the school/setting should not be closed without a consultation with the ELS Department. ELS will inform the Strategic Communications Department of the Council.
- Public Health England (PHE) ask that schools and other settings inform their local PHE Health Protection Team (HPT) and Education, Learning and Skills if they notice 2 or more people (pupils or staff) with possible COVID-19 symptoms occurring within 14 days which may be linked in time or place, as they may have an outbreak.
- All suspected outbreaks of COVID-19 or any other infection should be notified to the PHE South West Health Protection Team.  
0300 303 8162 Option 1 Option 1 [swhpt@phe.gov.uk](mailto:swhpt@phe.gov.uk)

### **Monitoring of this policy**

This policy will be reviewed on a monthly basis by the management team, incorporating new government legislation and policies appropriately.

This policy was written on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and has been approved and agreed by all Management team.

Updated 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020