

The Children's Workshop

Epidemic and Pandemic Policy (Covid-19)

Statement of Intent

The Children's Workshop intends to use this policy to provide precautionary measures to minimise transmission risks of disease in the setting during an epidemic or pandemic. It also states ideas for continuity of business if allowed.

Legislation and leading authorities which have guided and influenced this policy are:

Corona virus Act 2020, Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Government Briefings, Public Health England (PHE) and World Health Organisation (WHO). Advice from but not limited to, The Secretary of State, The Chief Medical Officer, Local Authority (LA) and Department for Education (DfE). The policy also has regard to Ofsted and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance where appropriate.

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 for areas such as Safeguarding, Child Protection and Equality and Diversity, 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 have been 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 (hand washing, 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 / Recommendations

Children

Attendance

- Only children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period should attend the setting.
- Any child with symptoms of being unwell including a runny nose will not be admitted into the setting

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- Extremely vulnerable children should continue under government advice (to shield).
- Families who attend at least two settings should choose only one for the remainder of the term to ensure their 'bubble' remains small.
- Children should be encouraged to leave toys/belongings at home
- Children to wear fresh, clean cloths everyday
- Parents to provide **named** spare clothes, nappies, and sun hats to be kept at the Setting
- Parents should apply sun-cream to their children prior to drop-off.
- Lunch boxes to be kept clean and wiped with antibacterial spray.

Physical Distancing/grouping

- Children will be organised into groups or given designated rooms within the setting, this will also involve the outdoor area. Wherever possible these groups or 'bubbles' should not mix during the day as best as possible. This is to minimise contact with others and mixing. Staff may exercise their own judgement during the day for the high standards of safety for all children.
- Children in should have the same staff team caring for them wherever possible to limit the amount of people coming into contact with each other.
- Smaller amounts of children in the whole setting may be advised or preferable. This could be achieved by, but not limited to:
 - A temporary cap on the amount of children in the setting at any one time.
 - Temporarily limiting funded hours to only 15 hours per child, ensuring all children have access to some preschool time.
 - Changing children's hours to and/or days.
 - Only allowing the older children or those moving to Primary school to attend.
 - Grouping children to certain days, such as in groups of children moving to next school, this would help with transitions.
 - Changing the preschool open hours (if possible).
 - Prioritising children such as those who are vulnerable, those with special educational needs, those from households where both parents work (or work full time)
 - The take up on places may be small so there may be no need to change children's hours.
- Care routines including provision of meals, nappy changing and toileting should be within the space allocated to each 'bubble' wherever possible.
- The use of communal internal spaces should be restricted as much as possible and outdoor spaces should be utilised as much as possible and used by 'bubbles' in different areas during the day.
- A phased return may be best to ease their transition back into preschool if the preschool has been closed for quite a while.
- Sunscreen should be applied by the parents / carers before the child arrives at the preschool.

Wellbeing and education

- Children should be supported in age appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe including regular hand washing (for 20 seconds or longer) with soap and water, or alcohol sanitizer if hand-washing facilities are not available
- Coughing into an elbow, using a tissue and adopting a **catch it, kill it, bin it regime**.
- Children should be supported to understand the changes and challenges they may be encountering as a result of Covid-19 and staff need to ensure they are aware of children's attachments and their need for emotional support at this time.
- EYFS framework will continue to be delivered through play and adult led activities.

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- A Designated safeguarding lead and SENCO will be available at all times on the premises. If this is not manageable, the DSL and Senco leads will still be contactable at all times

Workforce

Attendance

- Staff should only attend preschool if they are symptom free, have 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 should be given to limiting the number of staff in the preschool at any one time to only those required to care for the expected occupancy levels on any given day
- Staff hours, days they work and length of day may change in order to meet childcare demands and considerations within this policy.
- Staff are not to leave the premises during session
- Only jewellery to be a wedding band or similar. No watches, bracelets or necklaces
- Lanyards are not to be worn
- Hair to be tied back
- Aprons/tabards to be worn
- Staff to use own pens and separate signing in books to be used for each group.
- I pads are to be thoroughly cleaned between use when being shared by staff.

Physical distancing/ grouping /safety

- Management 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 and will comply with measures in place and sign a disclaimer to state they have read and understood the preschool policies and procedures.
- Wherever possible staff should remain with the group of children who they are allocated to and not come into contact with other groups.
- Emergency revisions to the EYFS may have been implemented which provides some flexibility on ratios and qualifications to make this feasible.
- Staff can use to wear a mask and/or visor if they choose. Staff should continue to wear PPE at the usual times such as intimate care and wear disposable gloves and apron if completing one to one care and if supporting an ill child a face mask and visor should also be worn if a 2 metre distance cannot be maintained.
- Staff should take responsibility for the safe disposal of their personal masks/PPE and thorough cleaning of reusable PPE such as Visors and reusable masks.
- After dealing with an ill child who displayed symptoms the staff member should continue to wear PPE and clean the affected area with disinfectant.
- All PPE should be removed and disposed of following current government guidelines; the staff member should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds.
- The staff member who supported the unwell child does not need to go home unless they are developing symptoms themselves.
- Social distancing must be maintained during breaks. This may be achieved through a range of strategies including the staggering of breaks and subdivision of spaces allocated to team breaks where possible.
- Blue and Red staff will use separate kitchens
- Staff may be required to be in charge of specific rooms or areas including the outdoors to minimise their contact with surfaces etc. Staff will be responsible to ensure appropriate cleaning takes place and enough ventilation is in the room such as opening windows. If doors are open ensure the safety of the children is maintained.

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- Staff members should avoid physical contact with each other including handshakes, hugs etc.
- Staff to wash hands regularly throughout the session and practice good hygiene measures.
- Staff to wear fresh, clean clothes for each session.
- Advise staff to remove their work clothes before they enter their home and take a shower immediately to remove any germs they may have picked up.

Training

- Where possible, meetings and training sessions should be conducted through virtual conferencing or in small groups maintaining appropriate social distancing.
- All staff members must receive appropriate instruction and training in infection control and the standard operating procedure and risk assessments within which they will be operating.
- Online training may be available to allow their training levels to be maintained if appropriate.

Parents

Physical distancing

- Only parents who are symptom free and or have completed the required isolation periods will be able to drop off or collect their child.
- We will aim to limit drop off and pick up to one parent per family.
- We will stagger the drop off and collection timings where possible to avoid a queue of families waiting to enter preschool.
- Drop off and pick up will be at both of the pre-school entrances to avoid parents entering the pre-school unnecessarily.
- When parents are waiting to drop off or collect their child, physical distancing should be maintained in a safe area sticking to government social distancing policies.
- We may consider allowing some parents to enter the preschool for the purpose of a settling in session if not doing so would cause a child distress; this could take place in the outdoor environment. We will consider measures to minimise contact between the parent and other children and staff members. This includes the wearing of PPE
- If the child is too distressed a delayed start to their preschool entry may be preferred or half hour settling in sessions without their parent.
- Children's scooters/bikes/buggies cannot be left at the setting during sessions

Communications

- 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 pre-school to conform to our safeguarding policy.
- Parents must advise us of any illness and absence. If their child displays COVID symptoms they should get them tested.

Visitors

- Attendance to the setting will be restricted to only children and staff as far as practically possible and visitors will not be permitted to the pre-school unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance).

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- Early Years Professionals such as Speech and Language therapists and Social Workers will be able to enter the setting. They must wear PPE and remain socially distanced wherever possible.
- Where essential visits are required these will be made outside of the usual pre-school operational hours where possible.
- As far as possible parents and carers should not enter the premises.
- We will obtain contact details from ALL visitors for the purpose of Track and Trace.

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 must be followed.
- Parents should be encouraged to ensure they do not leave travel accessories including buggies, car seats, and scooters in the setting premises or grounds.
- Outings from the preschool into the local community should be restricted to ensure mixing with members of the general public does not happen.

Hygiene and Health & Safety

Hand Washing

- All children and staff must use anti-bac hand gel immediately upon arrival.
- Children and staff members should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently (for 20 seconds or longer) with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitizer if hand washing facilities are not available, this includes before and after eating food, after visiting the toilet or playing outdoors, after sneezing, blowing their nose or coughing into their hand and 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 and children's toys and equipment and all staff are responsible in their area of work. Cleaned resources (including toys etc) will be stored separately from items in use/items waiting to be cleaned.
- Disposable cleaning cloths will be used throughout the setting, for example blue roll for cleaning hard services and disposable mop heads.
- Toys will be rotated and sterilised between uses to prevent cross contamination between children who attend on different days. Cleaned toys will be kept separate from toys in use that need to be cleaned.
- Garden equipment to be sanitised using anti-bac/disinfectant spray after use
- Communal area, touch points and hand washing facilities must be cleaned and sanitised regularly and cleaned thoroughly every night.
- A deep clean may be needed after a child has become ill in the area where they were waiting.

Waste disposal

- All waste must be disposed of in a hygienic and safe manner following government guidelines.
- Tissues must be immediately disposed of and placed in a bin with a bag, lid and foot pedal.
- Bodily fluids must be double bagged and disposed of in a bin with a bag, lid and foot pedal.
- All waste that has been in contact with an un-well individual, including used tissues and PPE, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It should be put in a safe place and marked for storage until a test result is available. If the individual tests negative, this can be put in the normal

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waste. Should the individual test positive, the Setting will be instructed what to do with the waste.

Laundry

- All items within the setting requiring laundering must be washed in line with NHS laundry guidelines.
- Items such as towels must not be shared by children.

Risk assessment

- The setting and all activity will be risk assessed before opening or going ahead to address the risks from the virus and due consideration given to any adaptations to usual practice. Sensible measures should be put in place and policies and procedures followed.
- It is expected that would include, but not be limited, to the suspension of learning experiences involving materials which are not easily washable such as malleable materials (dough, clay) and the suspension of the sharing of food and utensils.
- Cut down on the available resources out in the preschool.
- Remove anything which cannot be easily wiped down or washed at the end of the day.
- Play food, play cutlery and crockery etc. should be removed or anything else which may be 'mouthed' by many children.
- Baking, food play and finger painting should be avoided.

PPE

- Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in early years settings to protect against COVID- 19 transmission however staff may choose to wear a mask and/or Visor.
- PPE should continue to be worn and disposed of as normal for nappy changing, one to one care and the administration of first aid.
- If a child shows symptoms, staff should wear a face mask, visor, disposable gloves and apron if a 2-metre distance cannot be maintained at all times. PPE should be disposed of following government guidelines
- An Isolation Box will be available in the Isolation Area. This will contain: Disposable face masks, disposable face shields, disposable aprons, disposable gloves, anti-bac wipes, hand sanitiser, paper towels, vomit bag, water and waste bags.

Premises Building

- Where premises have been temporarily closed during the lockdown period or where they may need to temporarily close during future lockdowns appropriate Health & Safety checks should be conducted prior to reopening including legionnaires checks.
- Keep windows open where possible to ensure good levels of ventilation. If doors are opened ensure the children safety is maintained with locked gates.

Resources

- Children should not be permitted to bring items from home into the setting unless absolutely essential for their wellbeing. Anything that is brought in from home should remain in the child's bag on their peg.
- All resources required for play and learning experiences of children should be regularly washed and/or sterilized. Any resources which are difficult to clean should be removed.
- Equipment used by staff such as stationery, tablets etc. should be allocated to individual staff members where possible and cleaned regularly.

Supplies Procurement & monitoring

- The pre-school should ensure an adequate supply of essential supplies and contingency plans such as additional suppliers are in place to minimise the impact of any shortages of supplies.
- The pre-school will not be able to operate without essential supplies required for ensuring infection control.

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- A monitoring system for the usage of PPE is essential to ensure that a supply of stock is available to all who require it as and when required to meet the operational needs of the setting. When stocks are low, other options may be considered, such as the use of washable tabards and facemasks. These items will be washed at a high temperature in accordance with relevant guidelines and separate to any other preschool washing.

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 should be isolated from others in a previously identified room or area. If possible, a window should be opened for ventilation.
- The staff member responsible for the child during this time should be a staff member from their 'bubble'. The provider may consider suitable PPE for this staff member such as the addition of face mask, visor disposable gloves and apron.
- The area should be thoroughly cleaned, immediately if the area cannot be left unvisited, and if the area can be left unvisited then cleaned after 72 hours.
- The person responsible for cleaning ideally should be the person dealing with the unwell child and should continue to wear their PPE. This should then be disposed of according to current government guidelines.
- In the event of a staff member developing suspected corona virus symptoms whilst working at the nursery, they should return home immediately and isolate at home in line with the NHS guidance. They should also follow current testing advice for themselves and their household.
- Parents of children and staff in the 'bubble' will be informed of a positive case and any close contacts will be told to self isolate for 10 days on the advice form HPU

Testing

- The parent of the child or team member who has symptoms must contact 111 or apply online immediately and request a test.
- Tests are available to all team members and their families, children attending the Setting and their families.
- If any person in a team member or child's household shows signs of COVID-19 the family must get tested immediately. They cannot attend the Setting whilst they await the results and the entire household must isolate.
- The Setting must be informed of the result as soon as possible to enable appropriate action to be put in place if required.

What to do if a case of COVID-19 is suspected in the Children's Workshop

- If anyone has been in contact with a suspected case in the Setting, no restrictions or special control measures are required while laboratory test results for COVID-19 are awaited. There is no need to close the setting or send other learners or staff home.
- Once the results arrive, those who test negative for COVID-19 will be advised individually about return to Setting

What to do if a case of COVID-19 is confirmed in the Children's Workshop

- The Setting will need to contact the local Public Health England Health Protection Team to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken. An assessment will be undertaken by the Health Protection Team with relevant staff. Advice on the management of children and staff will be based on this assessment.

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- The Health Protection Team will also be in contact with the patient directly to advise on isolation and identifying other contacts and will be in touch with any contacts of the patient to provide them with appropriate advice.
- Advice on cleaning of communal areas such as playrooms and toilets will be given by the Health Protection Team.
- If there is a confirmed case, a risk assessment will be undertaken by the Children's Workshop with advice from the local Health Protection Team.
- The room or group that has been affected will be required to close, all team and children within this group will be required to self-isolate for 10 days along with the other members of their household.
- In most cases, closure of the whole setting will be unnecessary.

What to do if children or staff in the Setting are contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19 who was symptomatic

A contact can be:

- Anyone who lives in the same household as someone with COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19
- Anyone who has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 with a PCR test:
 - Face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
 - Been within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
 - Sexual contacts
 - Anyone who has been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)
 - Travelled in the same vehicle or a plane

Contacts are not considered cases and if they are well, they are very unlikely to have spread the infection to others, however:

- they will be asked to self-isolate at home for 10 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the home isolation guidance
- they will be actively followed up by the Health Protection Team
- if they develop any symptoms within their 10-day observation period they should call NHS 111 for assessment
- if they become unwell with cough, fever or shortness of breath they will be tested for COVID-19
- if they require emergency medical attention, call 999 and tell the call handler or ambulance control that the person has a history of potential contact with COVID-19
- if they are unwell at any time within their 10 day observation period and they test positive for COVID-19 they will become a confirmed case and will be treated for the infection.

Family and friends who have not had close contact (as listed above) with the original confirmed case do not need to take any precautions or make any changes to their own activities such as attending childcare or educational settings or work, unless they become unwell. If they become unwell, they should call NHS 111 and explain their symptoms and discuss any known contact with the case to consider if they need further assessment.

If a confirmed case occurs in the Setting the local Health Protection Team will provide advice and will work with the management team. Outside those that are defined as close contacts, the rest of the Setting does not need to take any precautions or make any changes to their own activities attending educational establishments or work as usual, unless they become unwell. If they become unwell,

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they will be assessed as a suspected case depending on their symptoms. This advice applies to staff and children in the rest of the group. The decision as to whether children and staff fall into this contact group or the closer contact group will be made between the Health Protection Team and the Setting. Advice should be given as follows:

- if they become unwell with cough, fever or shortness of breath they will be asked to self-isolate and should seek medical advice from NHS 111
- If they are unwell at any time within the 10 days of contact and they are tested and are positive for COVID-19 they will become a confirmed case and will be treated as such.
- All positive cases and actions taken will be reported to OFSTED and the local Authority.

Returning from travel anywhere else in the world within the last 14 days

- Staff or children returning from abroad are required to self-isolate for 10 days upon their return and cannot attend the pre-school during this time.

Monitoring of this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the setting manager, new government legislation and policies will be incorporated appropriately as and when required or informed.