



COVID-19 Safe Operating Procedures



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1. Introduction

It is very important that everyone complies with the latest Government guidance on COVID-19. These Safe Operating Procedures were developed based on guidance from the Department of Education and Public Health England. It is important that we adapt our everyday practices to ensure that we continue to offer a safe environment to everyone. Hygiene and social distancing remain the two key elements of infection prevention and control. If any symptoms are displayed, families must be alert and self-isolate in line with the [current NHS guidelines](#), for the safety of everyone.

Covid-19 appears to affect young children less often and with less severity. Children's role in its transmission is unclear but it seems that it is not significant. Compassionate leadership is at the heart of this reopening and we will do everything we can to be honest, open and to communicate with you. There will be a lot of anxieties and we acknowledge that it is okay to feel worried and that COVID-19 and the lockdown has had an impact on everyone.

Everyone involved in the day to day running of the nurseries will receive appropriate instruction and training on how to operate under the terms of the Safe Operating Procedures. We aim to work in partnership with parents and trust that everyone understands and follows these Safe Operating Procedures.

The key principles of these procedures are:

1. Any child, staff member, parent or visitor with coronavirus symptoms must not attend nursery and must self-isolate at home in line with the [current NHS guidelines](#).
2. Increased cleaning processes are in place, throughout and at the end of the day.
3. A member of staff will be coming out of the main building to collect children from their parents and then hand them over at the same place at the end of the day.
4. Parents to wait 2 meters apart from each other, while waiting in the passage/walkway to enter the building and collect or drop their child/children to minimise adult-to-adult contact. **Wherever this is not possible a distance of at least 1 meter should be kept away from others.** Please note the designated area will be different for each branch. The Nursery Manager will inform parents of their specific designated areas.
5. Parents are asked to drop off and collect their child/children swiftly to minimise the amount of time other parents will be waiting.
6. Face coverings must be worn by parents/carers/ visitors when entering the building.
7. Unlike older children and adults, early years age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. Therefore, changes to our routines were made to ensure that we have groups of less children using a specific area at any one time.
8. Children will be reminded to wash their hand more often, small group activities both indoor and outdoor will be arranged and introduction of new games to help children interact with the new changes was implemented.
9. We ensure good respiratory hygiene "catch it, bin it, kill it" approach;
10. Toys that are more difficult to clean were removed and replaced with toys that are easy to clean. We steam clean toys at the end of each day and disinfect them weekly.
11. Staff will continue to wear disposable gloves and aprons when handling food.
12. Hand sanitiser for parents and visitors to use before entering the main building, is located in designated areas.

2. Attendance

Children and employees are welcome to attend nursery but must not be displaying any coronavirus symptoms, the most common being a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of taste and smell.

It is important that you seek medical advice if you are unsure.

It is important that children do not attend nursery if unwell for their own wellbeing and for the safety of others.

Calpol or other medication that can mask fever symptoms should also not be given before they come to nursery.

If anyone is experiencing any symptoms they cannot return to nursery until they have completed the required isolation period and be symptom free or have achieved a negative test result (proof will be required). Prompt exclusion is essential to preventing the spread of infection. Children and employees who are classed as clinically vulnerable should follow their medical advice before attending nursery. It is preferable that your child only attends one setting to avoid mixing with different groups of children. Please speak with the Nursery Manager if this is going to be a problem or to make them aware that this is the case.

2.1. Drop off and collection of children

Parents are asked to drop off and collect their children at designated safe area and not to enter the nursery. ***Please note the designated area will be different for each branch. The Nursery Manager will inform parents of their specific designated areas.*** Whilst parents are waiting, it is important to maintain social distancing by keeping a distance of 2 metres apart. ***Wherever this is not possible a distance of at least 1 meter should be kept away from others.*** It is preferable if only one parent carries out drop off and collection. We will give you a limited handover, unless there is an important issue to discuss, as other parents may be waiting.

2.2. Temperature and symptom monitoring

Routine temperature testing is not recommended as a reliable method for identifying coronavirus. Parents and employees should follow the NHS guidelines and, in particular, evidence of a high temperature and/or new continuous cough.

2.3. Travel to nursery

It is better not to share transport and to travel by car, bike or walk. Face coverings have been advised by the Government for use on public transport.

2.4. Travel outside of local area

If you or a close contact of yours travels internationally or to an area of the UK under local Covid-19 restrictions, then you must be tested and have a negative result before returning to nursery. This is not limited to countries listed on the current government quarantine list. The only exception is if you have already quarantined for 14 days after your arrival back into the UK.

3. Implementing social distancing

It is very difficult to avoid a level of physical interaction with young children and it is important to have their wellbeing at the centre of everything we do. If a child is in need of a hug, then it would not be fair to deny them this. To help with social distancing, we made some changes to our routines to ensure that we have small groups of children, using a specific area at any one time. Wherever possible, these groups will not mix during the day. The routine includes more often hand washing, small group activities both indoors and outdoors, and introduction of new games to help children interact with the new changes.

3.1. Playrooms and groups

We are fortunate to already have different rooms for different age groups and smaller room capacity which allows us to follow the Government Guidelines and keep everyone safe. We are using different rooms for different age groups and keeping those groups apart. *We would only merge two age groups if there was no other choice.*

3.2. Mealtimes

- As always, children will eat in their rooms.
- One practitioner will serve the children using disposable aprons and gloves.
- No food will be eaten out of shared platters or containers.

3.3. Employees

All employees will undergo a return-to-work induction and training on the new Safe Operating Procedures, with emphasis on good hygiene practices and maintaining social distancing.

3.4. Fire drills and lockdown practice

Social distancing during evacuation is not age appropriated. Children are too young to be walking by themselves outside of the premises and staff is required to hold their hands for safety purposes. However, straight after fire drills all children and staff will be required to wash their hands thoroughly. The safety of the children and employees will always come first.

4. Wellbeing

We know that this is a very unusual and worrying time for everyone. It is very important that at the forefront of this heightened awareness of safe operating procedures, we do not forget that care and consideration must be taken of the need to ensure that everyone within the nursery community feels safe and secure. We will try our best to create a normal nursery environment and hope that you will bear with us.

We will concentrate on building secure attachments and we will continue observing and assessing the children, regularly updating EyLog. We will not be able to carry out lengthy handovers. We want our team to spend time with the children, playing and building their relationships. We would always speak with you immediately if we had any concerns. If your child is expressing any concerns or worries, it is important that you inform the key person/Nursery Manager.

Below are few useful links to help you with yours and your family wellbeing during these uncertain times:

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Looking after your feelings and your body:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876989/Easy_read_looking_after_your_feelings_and_body.pdf

Guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Every Mind Matters:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

MindEd for Families:

<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/>

Storybook developed by and for children around the world affected by COVID-19.

<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-04/My%20Hero%20is%20You%2C%20Storybook%20for%20Children%20on%20COVID-19.pdf>

Staying safe online during the COVID-19 pandemic

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-staying-safe-online#parents>

Please speak to the Nursery manager if you need any further help.

5. Visitors

5.1. Settling in sessions/transitions

Parents may enter the nursery for the purpose of settling-in sessions, if not doing so would cause a child distress. The Manager will give further guidance on the day. It is important that social distancing continues to be maintained. We will ask parents to wear face covering during the settling in session, in order to minimise any risk of infection.

We will aim to organise groups of children who are due to transition so they can transition together. However, some children who were due to transition might need the reassurance of the age group they were part of in order to feel safe and secure and parents might prefer them to stay within a particular age group. The Nursery Manager will assist with this.

5.2. Visitors

Wherever possible, we will not allow visitors to the nursery. However, if visitors need to attend in person, they will be inducted to follow our Safe Operating Procedures and will be expected to closely follow the protective measures in the setting. The number of attendances will be kept to a minimum. Interviews or meetings will be conducted outdoor while observing the 2 meters social distancing rule. We will conduct parents meeting outdoor where possible while observing the 2 meters social distancing rule. Where not possible, we will conduct online meetings with parents/carers. Mass events such as pre-school graduations, parties, etc. are currently not allowed.

5.3. Nursery Show-round visits

Prospective parents should make use of the nursery website for information relating to the ethos and organisation of the nursery. However, Show around visits will be arranged with prospective parents, and we will ask them to wear face covering. We will not allow more than one parent/carer inside the rooms where children play, at any one time; the time prospective parents can spend inside the rooms will be kept to minimum. Any discussion will be happening outside the rooms, in the passage/walkway, while observing the 2 meters social distancing rule.

5.4. Contractors

Whenever possible contractors will be booked on a day when children are not present or on a weekend. Any contractors to the nursery will be inducted on our Safe operating Procedures and will be expected to strictly follow these. If contractors are booked to carry out urgent/essential works, the staff and children will use different space from the contractors, until they complete their job.

6. Health, Hygiene and Safety

6.1. Reducing the spread of the virus

It is recognised that good hygiene and cleaning practices will significantly reduce the spread and transmission of the virus as well as everyone being alert to the symptoms. Doors and windows will be opened as much as possible.

6.2. Cleaning

An enhanced cleaning schedule was implemented throughout and at the end of the day. Communal areas, door handles and shared facilities e.g. iPads, are cleaned regularly.

The rate of hand washing is significantly increased. Everyone, including children, must wash their hands on arrival at nursery. There are regular opportunities for hand washing throughout the day.

6.3. Use of Tissues

The children will be supported in age-appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves and others safe and this includes sneezing into a tissue (or their arm if immediate) and then to dispose of the tissue - “catch it, bin it, kill it” approach.

6.4. Toileting

The children will be taken to the toilets and supervised. Hand washing signs will be displayed to ensure hand washing is thorough and the practitioners will talk to the children about why we are washing our hands.

6.5. Clothing

All employees and children should wear clean clothing every day. If you have travelled on public transport, it is advised that you change your clothing on arrival at nursery. Children should always have available changes of clothing to last their weekly booking pattern.

6.6. Risk assessments

All risk assessments reflect the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Certain activities were adapted or removed to reflect this risk e.g. going on trips using coaches.

6.7. Items from home

If your child requires a comforter e.g. soft toy or blanket, please bring it in a bag and then take home at the end of the day and wash it. We would prefer no toys or comforters to be brought into nursery but do understand that this could cause distress.

6.8. Resources at Nursery

Toys and resources that are difficult to clean were replaced with toys that are easy to clean. We steam clean toys at the end of each day and disinfect them weekly. The children will only share toys and activities within their age groups.

7. Responding to a person displaying symptoms of COVID-19

7.1. A child

If a child is suspected of displaying coronavirus symptoms whilst attending the nursery, they should be collected as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with the [current NHS guidance](#). The child must be tested before they return. Please note if you present a proof of negative test result, your child/children can return to nursery as long as there is no temperature, or they are feeling unwell. Whilst waiting to be collected, they will be isolated from others in a designated area. An employee will stay with them and will wear PPE.

If the child becomes very unwell, we will follow our normal emergency procedures and call 999. The isolation area will be cleaned once the child has been collected.

7.2. An employee who displays symptoms

In the event of an employee developing coronavirus symptoms whilst at work, they will leave work as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with the [current NHS guidance](#). They will be required to have a test before they return. They will be allowed to return to work as long as they provide us with proof of negative test result and they are feeling well.

7.3. PPE Equipment

Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in nurseries to protect against COVID-19 transmission. Hand washing, effective cleaning and social distancing are the most effective measures. Gloves and aprons will be used for nappy changing and first aid. Aprons will be worn at mealtimes.

7.4. Reporting, testing and tracing

Everyone is now eligible for a COVID-19 test, should they display coronavirus symptoms. Any suspected or confirmed case must be reported to the Nursery Manager as soon as possible. If a positive result is confirmed, the practitioners and children associated with that group must self-isolate for 14 days before returning to nursery. Positive tests will be reported to the National Institute for Health Protection and Ofsted by the Nursery Manager.

The Nursery Manager is responsible for contacting the National Institute for Health Protection if a case is confirmed or if a symptomatic person is admitted to hospital, a possible case refuses testing, there are a cluster of possible cases/unexpected increase in absenteeism or a suspected case has a definite link to a confirmed case.

If there is reasonable evidence that a positive diagnosis was caused by exposure at work, this will be reported to RIDDOR.

If someone in your household, or someone you have close contact with, is contacted by track and trace and told they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, you need to be tested. If they test positive, then you will also need to self-isolate in line with the [current NHS guidance](#).

8. Further guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>

[https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-](https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-04/covid19%20advice%20for%20parents%20when%20child%20unwell%20or%20injured%20poster.pdf)

[04/covid19 advice for parents when child unwell or injured poster.pdf](https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-04/covid19%20advice%20for%20parents%20when%20child%20unwell%20or%20injured%20poster.pdf)