

COVID-19 Safety and Adaptations Policy

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| Type | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Update <input type="checkbox"/> New Policy | Date of release: | 28 th February 2022 |
| Reviewer: | Managing Directors HR Manager | Owner: | Operations Advisor |
| Type of Policy: | <input type="checkbox"/> All nurseries <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nursery specific <input type="checkbox"/> Internal only | Policy Review Committee sign off | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Implementation:

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|---------------|--|------------------------|---|
| Nursery name: | | Implementation date: | |
| Reviewer: | | Area Manager sign off: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

| Component | Element |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safeguarding and Child Protection <input type="checkbox"/> Learning and Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety <input type="checkbox"/> HR <input type="checkbox"/> General Administration | <p>This policy provides an overview to the nursery procedures, measures and practices in managing the COVID-19 pandemic</p> |

COVID-19 Nursery Procedures

This policy has been updated based on the government advice from the 21st February 2022, and the plan for living with COVID-19. Our objectives are to continue providing high quality care and education for all children with the safety of our children, families and staff being paramount. The science is not unequivocal, and no measures can reduce the risk to zero; however it is equally imperative to reduce the impact to children's education.

As an organisation, we will be led by Government advice, and our safety measures will reflect those recommended or mandated by the Department for Education (DfE), the sector, and through staff input. We must remember, however, that we are ALL responsible for safety. Management, staff and parents all have a shared responsibility to act.

This policy now includes details that were previously in our Standard Operating Procedures, and replaces it from the 1st March 2022. All staff members, including casual workers, are required to read and confirm their understanding of this policy and the procedures documented. Staff should act responsibly and remember their commitment to ensuring the welfare of the wider staff team and the children in their care. If they have any questions on doing so, they should, in the first instance, speak to their nursery or setting manager.

Designated COVID-19 Safety Lead

The nominated Designated COVID-19 Safety Lead for this setting is [NAME] and the named deputy is [NAME]. It is their responsibility to monitor the implementation of setting and national guidelines. Their names should be displayed at the nursery for all to see.

Additional Safety Measures

As we begin the strategy for living with COVID-19, we appreciate that is not the same as having no risk of catching the illness. The following safety measures are still in place:

- While the legal requirement to self-isolate has been lifted, we still strongly discourage anyone from attending nursery if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19. This includes staff, parents, and contractors. Children are not permitted to attend with symptoms of COVID-19 under our Child Illness policy.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in the reception/lobby area of each site, and we encourage all visitors, staff, and customers to use it.
- We ask visitors and parents to bring in their own face masks. In addition, each nursery keeps a supply of face masks for staff, and for visitors if needed.
- Staff continue to both teach and demonstrate good hygiene, including hand-washing and sneezing into a tissue.
- The nursery will continue to ensure good ventilation within the rooms, using a CO2 monitor where available.
- Individual nurseries will have a risk assessment to take into account their specific building layout and structure.

Response to an Outbreak

If a staff member starts showing COVID-19 symptoms while at work, they will be asked to go home and take a lateral flow test. While there is no legal requirement to self-isolate, we recommend staying at home for at least 5 days.

If a child starts showing COVID-19 symptoms, we will call the parents to come and collect. In the meantime, we will keep the child socially distanced from other children, and ideally in another room. Windows will be kept open to improve ventilation, and staff who are supervising this child should wear a face mask. Once the child is collected, we will clean the room thoroughly before allowing other children in. The child should stay away from nursery for at least 5 days from the onset of symptoms, unless they can show proof of a negative test.

Despite these measures, it is still possible that there is an outbreak of COVID-19 within the nursery. If there are multiple confirmed cases of COVID-19 within a fortnight, the Nursery Manager will:

- Stop allowing non-essential visitors (the manager will need to decide what is “essential”, but in essence, visitors in relation to legal compliance, health and safety, safeguarding will all be allowed during operating hours. Other visitors should only come outside of operating hours during an outbreak);
- Ask all parents to wear a mask on pick-up and drop off, and stay socially distanced from other parents and staff;
- Re-introduce bubbles, where children stay with their age group, and staff are assigned to a single age group as much as possible.

If these do not control the spread of infection, it may be necessary to close. The Nursery Manager will inform their Director of Public Health or local Health Protection Team if they believe they are experiencing an outbreak. They should also contact OFSTED if they are closed for 3 days or longer.

Raising concerns

All staff should be aware that they have a responsibility to stringently follow this policy and all related guidance. However, if any staff member is at all concerned that a colleague/parent is not following these expectations, they should, in the first instance, try to politely raise this with the colleague/parent in question. If they are at all uncomfortable to do so or unhappy with the response received, they should follow the below escalation procedures:

- Raise the concern with the setting Designated COVID-19 Safety Lead (DCSL) or deputy if the DCSL is not available
- If still dissatisfied, contact the Area Manager [NAME and CONTACT DETAILS]

Training

Staff are expected to join the nursery manager and/or Designated COVID-19 Safety Lead on regular training sessions about nursery procedures, including information about the Employee and Parent COVID-19 Procedures, and cleaning procedures.

Testing & Vaccination

There is no longer a requirement to test yourself regularly for COVID-19. The nursery will keep a supply of lateral flow tests, to be used by staff who were previously considered vulnerable or extremely vulnerable; staff who are currently pregnant; staff who are or have shown symptoms of COVID-19.

All staff are highly encouraged to take the Coronavirus vaccine. The exception to this is where staff have been advised by a medical practitioner that it is not safe for them to take the vaccine, e.g. due to allergies or other legitimate medical reasons.

Disruption to Services & Temporary Variations to T&Cs

Throughout the pandemic, we have endeavoured to remain open, and will continue to do so. However, there are times when it is safest for the children, their families and our staff if we close a room or the entire setting. We will always endeavour to keep any closure period as short as possible.

The key principles of our approach are:

- To be transparent in our communication so that parents can make an informed choice;
- To be fair in our approach to fees and refunds, taking into account the impact on our overheads, including rent, rates, utilities and nursery wages, and the impact any disruption has on our ability to continue operating in a financially viable manner;

From 4 January 2022 until further notice, our Terms and Conditions will be varied and will be as follows:

- 1) Where a Government body prohibits us from providing services to all children, as it did from 23 March 2020 – 1 June 2020, then it is our intention to apply a 100% refund of nursery fees in the form of a credit note to any family prohibited from accessing our services. This is based on the expectation that the Government will provide financial support for a mandatory closure;
- 2) Where a decision is taken to temporarily close full or part of the nursery due to a COVID-19 related reason, for example a confirmed outbreak or multiple staff needing to isolate, we will apply a 50% refund of nursery fees due from parents during the closure days in the form of a credit note for all affected parents.
- 3) Where we are required to close the nursery or part of the nursery for more than 10 days in a single half-term period, we will consider the extent to which we can go further in any amounts that we are able to credit back to parents, recognising the additional strain that a subsequent closure in short succession would cause to family finances. We cannot commit to any amount at this stage as it will depend on the availability of Government support at that time. However, our intention would be to look to maximise the extent of any refund on the subsequent occasion;
- 4) Where an individual child is required to isolate, but the room/nursery continues to be open to unaffected children and our services will continue to be provided, the nursery will continue to incur overheads, and, therefore, full fees will remain payable in these circumstances in line with our Child Absence and Attendance Policy.

We appreciate that for some parents, this may not go far enough. We encourage any parents impacted by financial hardship to speak privately to the Nursery Manager about your options, and to take advantage of government schemes aimed to support those on low-income who are required to self-isolate.