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Dear Parents/Guardians

CORNAVIRUS – HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY – PREVENTING RISK OF INFECTION

Following Government guidance and confirmation that “the transmission rate of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased” we have been asked to reopen and start welcoming back **ALL** children from Monday 1st June. Importantly the government expressly states:

“We want to get all children and young people back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know how important it is for their mental wellbeing to have social interactions with their peers, carers and teachers. Children returning to educational and childcare settings in greater numbers will also allow more families to return to work...This decision is based on the latest scientific advice”

I agree with this policy and feel that to remain closed beyond June would cause more harm in the long term. I appreciate that many of you will have concerns about safety but it is important to note that many nurseries across the UK have remained open since March to vulnerable children and children of critical workers without any detrimental effect upon transmission of the virus. Essentially the government are just extending this practice in order to start the process of returning to normal life.

Effective infection protection and control

There are important actions that children, parents and our staff can take during this time to help prevent the spread of the virus.

These can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that creates an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. These include:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, **do not** attend nursery
- cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
- minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as classroom layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times)



No Need For Face Masks

Government guidance expressly states:

“Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings **is not recommended**. Face coverings may be beneficial for short periods indoors where there is a risk of close social contact with people you do not usually meet and where social distancing and other measures cannot be maintained, for example on public transport or in some shops. This **does not** apply to schools or other education settings. Schools and other education or childcare settings should therefore **not require staff, children and learners to wear face coverings**. Changing habits, cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus. Face coverings (or any form of medical mask where instructed to be used for specific clinical reasons) **should not be worn in any circumstance** by those who may not be able to handle them as directed (for example, young children, or those with special educational needs or disabilities) as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission”.

We are pleased with this guidance as we long felt that wearing masks would provoke fear in children and only exacerbate insecurity. Furthermore, it is clear that the government feels that masks could actually encourage transmission of the virus.

The majority of staff in nursery will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:

- children whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive their care in the same way – we already use PPE when changing nappies for example.
- if a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in nursery and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A fluid-resistant surgical face mask will be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical face mask will be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection will also be worn.

Group Sizes

The government know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, they have told us that they have taken this into account and have advised that we:

- avoid contact with anyone with symptoms
- increase hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regularly clean internal spaces
- minimise contact and mixing

It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we can achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children and staff where possible, only mix in a



small, consistent group and that small groups remain separate from other people and groups.

Public Health England (PHE) is clear that if early years settings do this, and crucially we are also applying regular hand cleaning, hygiene and cleaning measures and handling potential cases of the virus as per the advice, then the risk of transmission will be lowered. They also note that where settings can keep children in those small groups 2 metres away from each other, they should do so. Importantly they say while in general groups should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, **is low risk**.

We will:

- organise small class groups and keep groups of children at least 2 metres apart where possible. We will not mix groups when playing outside and will separate areas for each group to play outside if the weather is warm.
- organise where possible space between seats and between focused activities
- alter our usual planned activities and promote more outdoor learning, activities and play (fresh air is considered the best environment). At the same time we will reduce movement around the building
- stagger outdoor time as much as possible
- ask parents if they can give times when they will drop-off and collect children in order to minimise adult to adult contact
- insist that only one parent drops off and collects their child
- ask that each parent stays within the entrance foyer while dropping off and collecting their child
- ensure play equipment is appropriately cleaned between groups of children using it, and that multiple groups do not use it simultaneously
- remove unnecessary items from classrooms where there is space to store it elsewhere
- remove soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean (such as those with intricate parts)
- ask that parents consider how children arrive at the nursery and where possible to encourage you to come on foot or car rather than public transport. Please read the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#)

In addition (as part of a Risk Assessment undertaken)

- Please DO NOT enter the building if either you or your child are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (following the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#).) This also applies to any visitors or suppliers.
- If anyone in your household is displaying any symptoms of coronavirus then please stay at home for at least 7 days and do not bring your child to nursery. This also applies to any visitors or suppliers.
- Please let us know an idea of your preferred drop off and collection times so that we can allocate times and therefore reduce traffic at both entrances.
- If you arrive and another parent is in front of you then please stand outside and 2 metres apart – the ground will have markers to help you. Please wait until it is clear to enter the either the front or rear foyer. Allocating time slots will help with this and will reduce waiting.
- Please try to avoid gathering at either the front or rear entrance. We appreciate that you might want to talk and if so we would be grateful if you could move away from the entrance doors and keep 2 metres apart if you want to chat or catch up with one another.
- Please only use the front entrance if your child is over 2 years old and the baby room entrance (at the back of the building) if your child is under 2 years old.
- Please take prams and pushchairs away with you in order to prevent unnecessary equipment which could be touched by other parents.



When Open

We Will:

- ensure as far as possible that children and young people are in the same small groups at all times each day, and different groups are not mixed during the day, or on subsequent days
- ensure as far as possible that the same staff member and other staff are assigned to each group and, as far as possible, these stay the same during the day and on subsequent days. We will try to keep staff rotation to a minimum.
- ensure that wherever possible children use the same area of a setting throughout the day, with a thorough cleaning of the rooms at the end of the day.

For cleaning and hygiene:

- ensure that all staff and children frequently wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly.
- ensure all staff and children are encouraged clean their hands on arrival at the nursery, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing
- ensure that all staff and children are reminded not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose
- ensure that all staff and children use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it')
- children already wash their hands after being outside, after going to the loo and before mealtimes but we will increase this and actively encourage children and make it into an enjoyable activity through games, songs and repetition. We will also provide individual face cloths and wash their faces on a more regular basis throughout the day. These facecloths will be washed at the end of the day (this is usual practice).
- clean surfaces that children and staff are touching, such as toys, books, desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets, light switches, more regularly than normal
- parents and visitors and suppliers must use the antibacterial hand sanitiser placed in each entrance foyer even though they will not be entering the nursery itself. This is good practice and helps keep door handles clean of bacteria.
- frequently wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly. Review the [guidance on hand cleaning](#)
- ensure that help is available for children who have trouble cleaning their hands independently
- ensure that bins for tissues are emptied throughout the day
- where possible, all spaces will be well ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows)
- prop patio doors open, where safe to do so (bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding), to limit use of door handles and aid ventilation
- ensure that there is enough hand soap and antibacterial hand sanitiser available at all times

Reduce mixing within education or childcare setting by:

- accessing rooms directly from outside where possible
- we will consider placing a divider down the middle of the corridor to keep groups apart as they move through the setting where spaces are accessed by corridors
- ensuring that toilets do not become crowded by limiting the number of children who use the toilet facilities at one time



- we know that some children will need additional support to follow these measures (for example, we might use meaningful symbols, and social stories to support them in understanding how to follow rules]

Outside space will be used more than usual:

- for exercise and breaks
- for outdoor education, where possible, as this can limit transmission and more easily allow for distance between children and staff
- we will limit the amount of outdoor equipment so that we can clean it more easily between outdoor sessions.
- stagger the use of the staff room, office and kitchen to limit occupancy

Reduce the use of shared resources:

- we will limit the amount of shared resources.
- ask that you do not to bring toys in from home, we already operate this policy. We will not send pictures home during this time so as to limit exchange of materials
- we will limit the sharing of stationery and other equipment where possible and shared materials and surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected more frequently
- practical activities will go ahead if equipment can be cleaned thoroughly and the classroom or other learning environment is occupied by the same children in one day, or properly cleaned in between.

Useful information:

Will there be contact tracing in the future?

- The government is developing a new national test and trace programme. This will bring together an app, expanded web and phone-based contact tracing, and swab testing for those with potential coronavirus symptoms. This programme will play an important role in helping to minimise the spread of coronavirus in the future. It will also include more traditional methods of contact tracing if a child or parent tests positive. This could include, for example, direct discussion with parents on recent contacts. The government is recruiting 18,000 contact tracers to support contact tracing and will recruit more if needed. They will play an important part in tracing the contacts of those with coronavirus, including children.

What happens if someone becomes unwell at the nursery?

- If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in the nursery they will be sent home and advised to follow the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance](#).
- If a child is awaiting collection, they will be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision. Ideally, a window will be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them we will move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

- If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they will use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom will be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
- PPE will be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).
- In an emergency, we will call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. We will not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.
- If a member of staff has helped someone who is unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves (and in which case, a test is available) or the child subsequently tests positive (see ‘What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in a setting?’ below). They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in the nursery?

- If a child or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending a childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and will be encouraged to get tested in this scenario.
- Where a child or staff member tests negative, they can return to the nursery and their fellow household members can end their self-isolation.
- Where a child or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within the nursery will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.
- As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England’s local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise us on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases a larger number of other children may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole class, site or year group. Please note where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.

Should educational settings ask parents to report pupils’ temperatures at the start of each day?

- Parents, carers and settings **do not need** to take children’s temperatures every morning. Routine testing of an individual’s temperature is not a reliable method for identifying coronavirus. Educational and childcare settings should reiterate to parents the need to follow the standard national advice on the kind of symptoms to look out for that might be due to coronavirus, and where to get further advice. If anyone in the household develops a fever or a new continuous cough they are advised to follow the [COVID-19: guidance for households](#)



[with possible coronavirus infection guidance](#) (which states that the ill person should remain in isolation for 7 days and the rest of the household in isolation for 14 days).

Will children and young people be eligible for testing?

- When settings open to the wider cohort of children, all those children eligible to attend, and members of their households, will have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus. This will enable them to get back into childcare or education, and their parents or carers to get back to work, if the test proves to be negative. To access testing parents will be able to call 111 if their child is aged under 5.
- Our staff will be able to get tested if they have symptoms
- Access to testing is already available to all essential workers. This includes anyone involved in education, childcare or social work – including both public and voluntary sector workers, as well as foster carers. See the [full list of essential workers](#). Education settings as employers can book tests through an online digital portal. There is also an option for employees to book tests directly on the portal.

I appreciate that this is a long list but it is important that you have complete trust that we will do all that is necessary to ensure your child's safety. I hope it provides a comprehensive guide to how we will operate when we reopen on 1st June. I know that these procedures will change over time and that the policy will need adjustment as we move ahead.

It is my priority to be able to continue to offer the highest standards of childcare at this time and this means keeping all children, parents and staff safe. Please try not to be fearful, these documents often sound worse than the reality. I have studied outcomes in childcare settings in Denmark which have had excellent results since reopening over a month ago. The feedback I have had has been very positive and children are excellent at adapting to new ways and have in fact embraced the changes. Parents have also found these different methods more beneficial in practice than before, for example in dropping off and collecting their children.

I hope you are all well and on behalf of myself and our excellent staff we look forward to seeing you all very soon.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Warm regards

Clare Russell
Director

