

Epidemic and Pandemic Policy: Coronavirus COVID-19

Policy statement

Lymington Centre Pre-school intend 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. This policy will supersede any of our policies during an pandemic or epidemic and is a working policy which will be constantly updating and evolving as the pandemic, epidemic or guidance changes.

We aim to provide care for healthy children through preventing cross infection of viruses and bacterial infections. Due to an epidemic or pandemic health warning, we as a Pre-School will make changes in light of Legislation and Leading Authorities such as: Coronavirus Act (2020), Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Government Briefings, Public Health England (PHE), UK Health Security Agency, and World Health Organisation (WHO). Taking into account advice from but not limited to, The Secretary of State, The Chief Medical Officer, Local Authority (LA), Department for Education (DfE), NHS, Hampshire County Council, and Services for Young Children (SFYC). 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 will 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 wherever possible physical distancing is enabled and the continued implementation of good hygiene practices as well as trying to avoid 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 if 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 where and when necessary),
- The use of Protective and Personal Equipment (PPE),
- Testing when directed too according to the latest guidance.

Focus/ Areas of Consideration / Recommendations

Children

Attendance

- Only children who are healthy, symptom free, had a negative test or have completed the required isolation period should attend the setting.
- If you or your child are showing any cold/flu like symptoms or a temperature, or a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, low temperature a rash, are having headaches, sore throat, runny or blocked nose, an aching body, experiencing fatigue or feeling tired, shortness of breath, or continuously sneezing, or are off their/your food, they/you will need to stay at home, avoid contact with other people for 5 days and will need to be well, before they can return to Pre-School.
- If your child is showing any signs of:

Septicaemia (sepsis) the characteristic symptoms are:

- blue, pale or blotchy skin, lips or tongue
- a rash that does not fade when you roll a glass over it, the same as meningitis
- difficulty breathing (you may notice grunting noises or their stomach sucking under their ribcage), breathlessness or breathing very fast
- a weak, high-pitched cry that's not like their normal cry
- not responding like they normally do, or not interested in feeding or normal activities
- being sleepier than normal or difficult to wake

They may not have all these symptoms.

You should follow the NHS advice and call 999 or go to the A&E, further details can be found at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sepsis/> ,

or

Kawasaki Disease the characteristic symptoms are:

- a high temperature that lasts for 5 days or more, with:
- a rash
- swollen glands in the neck
- dry, cracked lips
- red fingers or toes
- red eyes

You should follow the NHS advice which can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/kawasaki-disease/>

- All medication given to your child before they are due in **must** be reported to staff prior to you leaving your home, via email or phone, please do not leave before you have spoken to a member of staff.
- **NO** child will be allowed to attend Pre-School if they have been given **any kind of medication to lower their temperature.**
- LCPS staff may consider taking temperatures of children on arrival and risk assessing with regular health questionnaires for returning children.
- Extremely clinically vulnerable children and adults are now not considered to have a high level of vulnerability because vaccination has been shown to protect at high levels against severe disease. Those whose immune systems means they are still vulnerable have been offered additional vaccinations and have access to the new anti-viral medications and will continue to have access to tests. Therefore if you fall into this category you should continue to follow the government advice.
- Families who attend more than one setting may need to choose only **one** if guidance to use 'bubbles' returns.
- Parents/Carers **must** inform us prior to leaving the house, to ensure you or your child does not pose a risk to other children and members of staff if -
 1. Your child has been admitted to hospital or has seen a doctor recently.
 2. If any immediate family member has recently travelled abroad.
 3. If you have any family visiting you from abroad or another area in the country.
 4. If you or a member of your household or anyone show any Coronavirus symptoms.
 5. If you or any member of your family has encountered anyone showing signs of the virus or have been contacted by Test and Trace.

In the case that Physical Distancing/grouping is reinstated

- Children may be organised into small groups which would mean changing your child's days and times they attend.
- If possible whilst children are in small groups we will try to have the same staff team caring for them.
- Smaller amounts of children in the whole setting may be advised or preferable. As we usually run to capacity most days this could be achieved by, but not limited to:
 - A temporary cap on the number of children in the setting at any one time.
 - Prioritising provision starting with our vulnerable children or children on our SEN register, followed by cared for children, children who have parents who are front line workers, children in receipt of two year funding, households who have 2 key working parents, or single household who work, children receiving 3 and 4 year funding and then all other children.
 - Temporarily limiting funded hours to only 15 hours per child, ensuring all children have access to some pre-school time.

- Changing children's hours, this could be all mornings or all afternoons or 2 and a half days.
 - Grouping children to certain days, such as in groups of children moving to next school, this would help with transitions.
 - Changing the days the Pre-School is open and maybe extending the opening hours on those days to all children so the days are longer, so the parents are able to work a longer day.
- The take up on places may be small so there may be no need to change children's hours.
 - Routines including snack, lunch, should be within the space allocated to each 'bubble' wherever possible.
 - Care routines such as nappy changing and toileting will be done by the practitioner allocated to each 'bubble' wherever possible.
 - The use of communal internal spaces will be restricted as much as possible and outdoor spaces will 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 or only open for critical workers.
 - During hot weather - Sunscreen should be applied by the parents / carers before the child arrives at the preschool. Hats, T shirts covering shoulders and leggings or trouser must be worn to minimise how much top up of sunscreen the pre-school staff will do. No sandals or open toed shoes are to be worn.

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, coughing into an elbow, using a tissue and adopting a catch it, kill it, bin it regime, also encouraged not to touch their faces, Parents are expected to reinforce this learning at home.
- 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, wherever possible.
- Snack times may be discontinued but children can ask for drinks throughout the day if they are thirsty, staff will monitor this. Parents will be asked to ensure their child has had breakfast or lunch and a drink before they arrive, and supply a clean, named, filled water bottle for their child, daily.
- Snacks and lunches including a drink for lunch are to be provided by parents in a clean, plastic named lunch box, containing any cutlery that is needed, and a sports bottle. This is to prevent cross contamination from using cutlery, crockery and cups, (during an pandemic or epidemic we will not provide cups, and cutlery).
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Workforce

Attendance

- Staff should only attend preschool if they are symptom free, have completed the required isolation period or achieved a negative test result.
- The Manager may consider taking temperature of staff on arrival and risk assessing with regular health and wellbeing questionnaires for returning staff.
- Consideration will 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 to wear fresh clean clothes daily and must leave a spare set either in their car or in their draw string bag.
- Staff can change before leaving pre-school after their shift has ended.
- Staff are not permitted to travel abroad during term time and are to inform the Manager of travel abroad during the holidays, during an epidemic or pandemic.
- Staff **must** inform the Manager before they travel within the country during an epidemic or pandemic.

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 pre-school policies and procedures.
- Wherever possible staff should remain with the small group of children, the 'bubble' 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 may be advised to wear PPE such as facemasks during their day but 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.
- Staff are to wear PPE if supporting an ill child, a face mask, visor, gloves and apron should be worn if a 2-meter distance cannot be maintained.
- 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 apart from the visor which should be disinfected and then all other 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 and staff are not permitted to visit shops and other congested areas whilst on their break.

- Staff may be required to oversee specific areas including the outdoors to minimise their contact with surfaces etc. This includes potentially working from one particular table if tabletop toys are available. 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.
- Staff members should avoid physical contact with each other including handshakes, hugs etc.
- Staff to wear fresh, clean clothes for each session, and 'go bear' from the elbow down, staff are only permitted to wear a wedding band.
- Staff are advised 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.
- All staff members have been asked to complete an online COVID-19 and an Infection Prevention and control in an Early Years setting course.
- All staff will have received a copy, read and signed the Epidemic and Pandemic: Coronavirus COVID-19 policy, received appropriate instruction on the standard operating procedure and risk assessments within which they will be operating.
- Online training will be available to allow their training levels to be maintained if appropriate.

Parents

Physical distancing

- Only parents who are symptom free, have a negative test and or have completed the required isolation periods will be able to drop off or collect their child.
- Aim to minimise the 'pinch points' during the day only **one** parent per family will be able to drop off and pick up.
- Staggered drop off and collection times will be issued where possible to avoid a queue of families waiting to enter preschool, if you are late you will need to wait until all the other families have arrived.
- If you see a queue forming, please stay in your car and wait for the queue to disperse.
- Any signing will also be done at the gate, this may take longer so we ask you to be patient during this time.
- Drop off and pick up will be done at the wooden garden gate to avoid parents entering the pre-school unnecessarily.
- When parents are waiting to drop off or collect their child, physical distancing should be maintained, sticking to government social distancing policies when in use.
- During settling in sessions of new children we may consider allowing a parent to enter the pre-school garden if not doing so would cause a child distress. We will try and make every measure we can to minimise contact between the parent and other children and staff members.
- If the child is too distressed perhaps a delayed start to their pre-school entry may be preferred or half hour settling in sessions without their parent.

- Parents need to ensure children are bathed daily prior to attending Pre-school and are wearing fresh clean clothes and shoes daily.

Communications

- Parents will 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 must ensure they keep up to date with Pre-School policies and Parent Mail and inform staff of any changes within the family, or with their child/ren etc. via the phone or email, you will not be able to chat with staff at the door as usual.
- Parents **must** 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 may be needed to support the running of the pre-school by providing extra resources and consumables the pre-school may not be able to source or afford such as cleaning wipes or products, tissues, toilet rolls etc. This is to ensure the safe running of the pre-school is not hindered by lack of equipment and resources.

Visitors *during high Covid numbers or new variants*

- Attendance to the setting should be restricted to only children and staff as far as practically possible and visitors should not be permitted to the pre-school unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance).
- Where essential visits are required, these should be made outside of the usual pre-school operational hours where possible.
- As far as possible parents and carers should not enter the premises.

Travel *during high Covid numbers or new variants*

- Wherever possible staff and parents should travel to pre-school alone, using their own transport or if possible, walk or ride a bike.
- If public transport is necessary, a face covering must be worn and the current guidance on the use of public transport must be followed.
- Parents cannot leave travel accessories including buggies, car seats, scooters in the setting premises or grounds.
- Outings from the pre-school into the local community will be restricted to ensure mixing with members of the general public is minimised.

Hygiene and Health & Safety

Hand Washing

- All children and staff must wash their hands upon arrival at the pre-school for at least 20 seconds.

- Children and staff members should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently, this includes before and after eating food, after visiting the toilet or playing outdoors, after sneezing, blowing their nose or coughing into their elbow/hand and dealing with unwell people.
- Bodily fluid spills should follow the correct procedures as normal.

Cleaning

- An enhanced cleaning schedule has been implemented that includes furniture, surfaces and children's toys and equipment and all staff are responsible to ensure this happens (they may be given an area at the end of their session).
- Communal areas, 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 they were waiting, and the pre-school will be deep cleaned during half terms by the caretaking team.

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 following government guidelines.
- Nappies will be bagged and disposed of by placing them in the nappy bin and the nappy bin will be emptied daily.

Laundry

- All items within the setting requiring laundering must be washed in line with NHS laundry guidelines.

Risk assessment

- The setting and all activity should 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 (playdough, sand, clay) and the suspension of the sharing of food and utensils.
- Cut down on the available resources out in the Pre-School environment.
- Remove anything which cannot be easily wiped down or washed at the end of the day.
- Play food, play cutlery and crockery etc. will be removed or anything else which may be 'mouthed' by many children should be removed.
- Baking, food play and finger painting will be avoided.

PPE

- Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in early years settings to protect against COVID- 19 transmission.
- Masks will be worn by staff throughout the day, during high levels of cases.
- PPE will be worn at drop off and pick up times by the member of staff at the cross over point during high levels.
- 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-meter distance cannot be maintained at all times.
- PPE should be disposed of following government guidelines.

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.
- We will keep windows open where possible to ensure good levels of ventilation. If doors are opened we will ensure the children safety is maintained with locked gates.

Resources

- Children will **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.
- All resources required for play and learning experiences of children should be regularly washed and/or sterilized. Any resources which are difficult to clean will be removed.
- Equipment used by staff such as stationary, tablets etc. will be allocated to individual staff members where possible and cleaned regularly.

Supplies Procurement & monitoring

- The Lymington Community Association will 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.
- 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 pre-school washing.

Responding to a suspected case

- In the event of a child developing suspected coronavirus symptoms whilst attending the setting, they must be collected within 20 minutes and isolated at home for 5 days until they have completely recovered.
- Whilst waiting to be collected the child will 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', if bubbles are being used. 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 coronavirus symptoms whilst working at the pre-school, they should return home immediately they then should isolate at home in line with the NHS guidance. They should also follow current testing advice for themselves and their household.

Fees

- If you or your child must self-isolate due to the virus, then full fees will still be charged one week in advance.
- If we must close due to the UK Government recommendations then we will follow the advice of HCC, SFYC regarding charging fees.

Staffing

- If a number of staff are absent from work due to them being ill, and there isn't enough staff to meet ratios, a decision will be made to **close or part close**. In the case of a part closure **priority** will be given to vulnerable children, children on the SEN register, cared for children, children whose parents are critical front-line workers. However, we cannot guarantee that priority parents will receive all of their current hours or days. In the case of reduced hours or opening hours parents/carers will be made aware of this as soon as humanly possible, via Parent mail. How may this look; we may have to shorten the length we are open per day or open for less than 5 days a week or we may need to apply a combination of both. We will as previously stated give you as parents/carers as much notice as humanly possible. However, please be aware that these types of decisions may be out of our control as we will be guided by the UK Government, and other organisations such as PHE, NHS, WHO, DfE.

This policy was correct at the time of printing and is subject to constant change due to recommendations out of our control, this policy will also be overhauled annually. As new government legislation and policies are changed

and updated, we will incorporate them into this policy appropriately as and when required. Please appreciate the guidelines are changing often daily as new scientific evidence is coming to light.

Further guidance

- Coronavirus Act 2020,
- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974),
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE),
- Public Health England (PHE),
- World Health Organization (WHO),
- The NHS,
- Hampshire County Council,
- Services for Young Children (SFYC),
- UK Government - Cobra Team Briefings,
- Local Authority.

This policy is continuously being updated and this version was adopted by Lymington Centre Pre-School on 4th April 2022.