



Safe Operating Procedures during Coronavirus (Covid-19) – COVID Secure

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Introduction

In these exceptional circumstances we must all comply with the latest Government Guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19).

These Safe Operating Procedures (SOP) are based on Public Health England and DFE¹ guidance for nursery schools and their key workers. Detailed guidance or evidence supporting a procedure can be found in the accompanying footnotes.

Nursery schools play an essential role in society, and we must make adaptations to the way we work to keep our children, parents, and team safe during this time. The design of nurseries as relatively small communities with further subdivided rooms, greatly assists our ability to create physical distance between groups. The fundamental principle of the guidance is to manage the risk of spreading of the virus through control measures. The main principles for control measures focus on:

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, using standard products such as detergents.
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.
4. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Attendance

Children and team members who are not displaying coronavirus symptoms² are welcome to attend the nursery. Anyone who has experienced coronavirus symptoms must have completed the required isolation period³ and be symptom free or achieve a negative test result before returning to the nursery.

If someone in your household is displaying coronavirus symptoms or has tested positive for coronavirus, you will not need to self-isolate if any of the following apply:

- You're fully vaccinated – this means 14 days have passed since your final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine given by the NHS
- You're under 18 years, 6 months old
- You're taking part or have taken part or have taken part in a COVID-19 vaccine trial
- You're not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

Shielding advice⁴ for all adults has been paused, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Children previously on the shielded patient list are no longer considered to be Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, this means all children can attend settings, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

¹ [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/actions-for-early-years-and-childcare-providers-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak)

² <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/>

³ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/what-to-do-if-you-or-someone-you-live-with-has-coronavirus-symptoms/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>



Children and team travelling abroad

Parents of children and team planning travel outside of the UK should inform the nursery management and must adhere to any government guidance and quarantine requirements when returning to the UK.

Lateral Flow Tests (LFT)

As of March 22nd, staff members are invited to participate in asymptomatic rapid COVID-19 testing, including those who have had vaccination. Staff members, including relief can opt in to participate in the programme and request a home test kit from their Manager (7 Lateral Flow Device LFD self-tests per kit). It is recommended staff members test twice a week at home, tests to be taken 3 to 4 days apart. Rapid testing is only for those without symptoms of Coronavirus. Staff members are responsible for self-administering the test and providing their results.

All staff members engaging in the programme are responsible for reporting their test results (positive, negative or void) straight away to NHS Test and Trace online via www.gov.uk/report-covid-19-result and in addition, must inform their Manager of their result that same morning.

If a positive LFD result, the staff member must self-isolate immediately and book a confirmatory PCR test. If the test result is void (invalid) the staff member should take another test as soon as possible. A negative LFD result is not a means to relax protective measures, SOP's must continue to be adhered to in full.

Drop off and collection of children

Parents/carers are permitted into the nursery to drop off and collect children, in line with the normal drop off and collection procedures. Ideally, we prefer one adult to drop off and collect to minimise the traffic in the nursery. We recommend parents/carers to continue wearing face coverings whilst in the nursery and be aware of physical distancing where possible.

Temperature and symptom monitoring

Routine temperature testing is not advised as a reliable method for identifying coronavirus. Parents and team members should follow the national advice on the kind of symptoms to look out for that might be due to coronavirus:

- A new continuous cough and/or
- A high temperature
- A change to or loss of the sense of taste/smell

Temperature after routine vaccinations and teething

If a child has recently had a routine vaccination or is teething it is common that a mild fever may occur. If a temperature develops within 2 days of a vaccination or when a child is teething self-isolation is not required unless coronavirus is suspected. This guidance is in line with the NHS advice.

Day to Day Arrangements

Homebase rooms & Key Groups

Wherever possible children and team will remain within their homebase room groups. Normal child to staff ratios are maintained. Meals and snacks should be served in home base rooms. Children will have access to the outdoor classroom daily.



Homebase transitions

Information sharing with the new Key Person will be conducted via the ParentZone App and Microsoft Teams. Children will visit their new homebase ahead of their first day during a planned group transition session.

Visitors and meetings

Visitors

Visitors to the nursery are permitted however there is additional COVID-19 protocols for visitors into the nursery.

All visitors will be required to wear a face covering, use hand sanitiser on arrival and use the hand washing facilities and be mindful of physical distancing whilst on site. All visitors should check in on the NHS Covid-19 App using the QR code on the front door and will sign into the visitor's book. The visitor should minimise their movement around the nursery and only enter homebase rooms where necessary, using the outdoor classroom space is preferred. The visitor should minimise their interaction with other children and team members.

Stay & Play sessions and Prepared for School Workshops are currently postponed.

Nursery views and tours

Views and tours for prospective parents can be conducted in line with the above visitor guidance, with a limit of 2 adults to attending at any one time.

Settling in sessions

Initial information sharing will be conducted between parents and the Key Person via e-All About Me and Microsoft Teams where possible. Children joining nursery will be offered settling in sessions prior to their first day. Parents will be invited to attend their child's first settling in session, this will be limited to one parent for around 1 hour. As above the parent should minimise their movement around the nursery and only enter their child's homebase room, using the outdoor classroom space is preferred. The parent should minimise their interaction with other children and team members. The use of Microsoft Teams and the ParentZone App to reassure parents is encouraged.

Contractors Visits

Specific contractors are permitted into the nursery for example fire alarm, extinguisher, pest control and intruder alarm engineers. The above visitor procedures must be followed whilst on site regarding face coverings, be mindful of physical distancing, hand sanitiser and signing in on entering the nursery. Contractors should also follow their own organisations COVID-19 procedures. Contractors are always supervised by a senior member of the nursery team. Areas where contractors need to access will be clear of staff and children as practicable, keeping interaction to an absolute minimum and conforming to social distancing guidelines.

Students

Early years settings are encouraged to support colleges with student placements to protect the pipeline of future early years staff. Early Years students are included in the definition of critical workers. Students will be required to have lateral flow tests twice weekly and will follow the same SOP's as team members.



College and Training Centre Tutors and Assessors will be permitted into the nursery to carry our observation and training with trainees. The above visitor procedures must be followed whilst in the nursery regarding face coverings, hand sanitiser, signing in on entering the nursery with team and visitors mindful of physical distancing. The Tutor/Assessor should minimise their movement around the nursery and only enter homebase rooms where necessary, using the outdoor classroom space is preferred. The Tutor/Assessor should minimise their interaction with other children and team members.

Hygiene & Safety

Good hygiene and cleaning practices significantly reduce the spread and transmission of the coronavirus. Enhanced hygiene and cleaning practices must be implemented, rigorously followed, and validated.

Cleaning

An enhanced cleaning schedule has been implemented. Communal areas, toilets, touch points and hand washing facilities must be cleaned and sanitised regularly. A senior person is responsible for validating and recording cleaning schedules.

Hand washing

The rate of handwashing must be significantly increased⁵. All team must sanitise/ wash their hands with soap and water upon arrival to the nursery and children should be encouraged to do the same. Adequate supplies of soap and paper towels are provided at identified handwash stations. Hand sanitiser should only be used in areas where hand washing facilities with soap, water and paper towels cannot be provided. Hand sanitiser is not required after hand washing with soap and water. A hand sanitiser station will be provided in the lobby of the nursery with all visitors required to use it.

Children will be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and running water throughout day as part of the normal routine for example on arrival at nursery, before mealtimes and after toileting and any other time we feel is appropriate for example after playing in the outdoor classroom.

Ventilation

The nursery environment will be well ventilated at all times, windows will be opened as part of the opening procedures. In nurseries with air conditioning this is used during extremely hot periods of weather and windows should also remain open. Air conditioning units are fresh air systems.

Nursery Laundry

Nursery laundry continues to be collected by The Professional Nursery Kitchen and washed by industrial machines with specialist detergents, in line with NHS laundry standards.

Resources

Play equipment is frequently cleaned in line with enhanced cleaning schedules.

⁵ <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

Responding to a person displaying symptoms of COVID-19

A child displaying symptoms

In the event of a child developing suspected coronavirus symptoms⁶ whilst attending the nursery, they should be collected as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with the NHS guidance.

Whilst waiting for a parent/carer to collect the child, they should be isolated away from others where possible. The team member most closely associated with their care should care for them on a 1:1 basis. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is available for the team member if they feel it is appropriate.

If the child becomes very unwell, it may be necessary to call 111 or 999. Normal procedures on child illness must be observed.

Targeted and enhanced cleaning should then take place in the areas of the nursery the child had accessed.

A team member displaying symptoms

In the event of a team member developing coronavirus symptoms whilst attending nursery, they should leave the nursery as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with NHS guidance. Targeted and enhanced cleaning should then take place in the areas of the nursery the team member had accessed.

PPE Equipment

Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in nurseries to protect against COVID-19 transmission. Changing habits, cleaning and hygiene are the most effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus. Gloves and aprons should continue to be worn as normal for nappy changing and the administration of first aid.

A PPE box is available if a team member is required to care for a child displaying coronavirus symptoms or when deep cleaning after any person has displayed coronavirus symptoms.

PPE Box Contents:

1. Face Mask
2. Eye protection/visor
3. Disposable gloves
4. Disposable aprons
5. Tissues
6. Hand sanitizer
7. Antibacterial/viral wipes

PPE should be disposed of safely after use⁷ and the equipment replenished.

Responding to a confirmed case

All children, parents, team members and members of their households are eligible for a [COVID-19 test](#), should they display coronavirus symptoms.

⁶ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>



In the event a child, team member or member of their household tests positive for COVID-19 they should engage with Test and Trace and report it to the nursery management. Test and Trace will contact the nursery directly should they need to identify close contacts in the nursery.

The AHO will also inform Ofsted and the relevant Local Authority.

Essex: early.years@essex.gov.uk

Hertfordshire: COVID.EYSEducation@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Returning to nursery

Children and team members who were required to isolate can return to the nursery after 10 days, providing they have been free of the following symptoms for 48 hours:

- a high temperature or feeling hot and shivery
- a runny nose or sneezing
- feeling or being sick
- diarrhea
- loss of appetite

Outbreak Management Plan (Contingency Planning)

Outbreak definition:

- 5 children, pupils, students or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period; or
- 10% of children, pupils, students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period for special schools⁸.

In line with government guidance the outbreak management plan outlines how we will step up and step-down control measures should an outbreak be identified in the nursery or in the local area. Given the detrimental impact that restrictions on education can have on children, measures around non-attendance will be considered as a last resort, we will keep the nursery operational wherever possible.

In the event of an outbreak, we seek advice from the DfE and Public Health England and assess the outbreak management plan. Central government may offer local areas of particular concern an enhanced response package to help limit increases in transmission.

If an outbreak is identified in the nursery, management will contact the dedicated advice service who will escalate the issue to our local health protection team where necessary and advise if any additional action is required, such as implementing elements of the contingency plan. You can reach them by calling the DfE helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case.

The AHO alongside nursery management will determine what contingencies they deem are necessary, this should be done quickly.

⁸ [contingency framework](#)



If an outbreak is identified this will be communicated to parents and team along with any alterations to the SOP's/control measures in line with the review of the outbreak management plan.

Outbreak management plan considerations/review:


The following practices will be considered and reviewed if an outbreak is identified:

- Enhanced cleaning schedules and fogging
- Minimising group mixing i.e. start and end of day, outdoor classroom, transitions, re-introduce bubbles
- Minimising adults contacts i.e., social distancing, cross site working
- Reducing visitors, use of MS Team as an alternative
- Attendance of children and team who are classed as extremely clinically vulnerable
- Limiting attendance/isolating close contacts
- Home learning for children not attending
- Resources used i.e. malleable materials, soft furnishings, etc.
- Use of face coverings

Advice for parents during coronavirus

Whilst coronavirus is infectious to children it is rarely serious. If your child is unwell it is likely to be a non-coronavirus illness, rather than coronavirus itself.

Whilst it is extremely important to follow Government advice to stay at home during this period, it can be confusing to know what to do when your child is unwell or injured. Remember that NHS 111, GPs and hospitals are still providing the same safe care that they have always done. Here is some advice to help:

 <p>RED</p>	<p>If your child has any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Becomes pale, mottled and feels abnormally cold to the touch Has pauses in their breathing (apnoeas), has an irregular breathing pattern or starts grunting Severe difficulty in breathing becoming agitated or unresponsive Is going blue round the lips Has a fit/seizure Becomes extremely distressed (crying inconsolably despite distraction), confused, very lethargic (difficult to wake) or unresponsive Develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (the 'Glass test') Has testicular pain, especially in teenage boys 	<p>You need urgent help:</p> <p>Go to the nearest A&E department or phone 999</p>
 <p>AMBER</p>	<p>If your child has any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is finding it hard to breathe including drawing in of the muscles below their lower ribs, at their neck or between their ribs (recession) or head bobbing Seems dehydrated (dry mouth, sunken eyes, no tears, drowsy or passing less urine than usual) Is becoming drowsy (excessively sleepy) or irritable (unable to settle them with toys, TV, food or picking up) - especially if they remain drowsy or irritable despite their fever coming down Has extreme shivering or complains of muscle pain Babies under 3 months of age with a temperature above 38°C / 100.4°F Infants 3-6 months of age with a temperature above 39°C / 102.2°F For all infants and children with a fever above 38°C for more than 5 days. Is getting worse or if you are worried Has persistent vomiting and/or persistent severe abdominal pain Has blood in their poo or wee Any limb injury causing reduced movement, persistent pain or head injury causing persistent crying or drowsiness 	<p>You need to contact a doctor or nurse today.</p> <p>Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 - dial 111</p> <p>The NHS is working for you. However, we recognise during the current coronavirus crisis at peak times, access to a health care professional may be delayed. If symptoms persist for 4 hours or more and you have not been able to speak to either a GP or 111, then take your child to the nearest A&E</p>
 <p>GREEN</p>	<p>If none of the above features are present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can continue to provide your child care at home. Information is also available on NHS Choices Additional advice is available to families for coping with crying of well babies  Additional advice is available for children with complex health needs and disabilities. 	<p>Self care</p> <p>Continue providing your child's care at home. If you are still concerned about your child, call NHS 111 - dial 111</p>