

## **33. Epidemic and Pandemic Policy (Covid 19)**

**Symptoms of covid 19. Taken from the NHS website 25/11/21**

- **A high temperature. This means feeling hot to touch on chest or back, you do not need to take the temperature**
  - **A new or continuous cough. This means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)**
  - **A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal**
- Most people with coronavirus have at least 1 of these symptoms.**

**OFSTED 0300 123 1231**

**CALL 119 OR GO ONLINE TO BOOK A COVID TEST**

**MIND mental health charity 0300 123 3393**

### **33.1 Statement of Intent**

Walton under fives 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.

Legislation and leading authorities which have guided and influenced this policy are:

Coronavirus Act 2020, Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Government Briefings, Public Health England (PHE) and World Health Organisation (WHO). Advice from but not limited to, The Secretary of State, The Chief Medical Officer, Local Authority (LA) and Department for Education (DfE). The policy also has regard to Ofsted and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance where appropriate.

Walton under fives has registered with the Gov.uk website to receive updates to guidance or legislation regarding pandemics, epidemics within the early years remit. These will be adhered to when changes are made.

The policy below conforms to Government guidance, rules and laws on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022. These are subject to change without necessarily changing this policy. Any changes will be shared with all staff giving as much notice as possible and change our risk assessment where necessary.

### **33.2 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.

### **33.3 Method**

As early years providers we 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 physical distancing is enabled and implement good hygiene practices as well as avoiding 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 as long as 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)
- The use of Protective and Personal Equipment (PPE)
- Testing
- Reporting any positive cases to the appropriate organization.

### **33.4 Focus/ Areas of Consideration / Recommendations**

#### **Children**

##### *Attendance*

- Only children who are totally symptom free, have completed the required isolation or quarantine period should attend the setting. No exceptions will be granted.
- Extremely vulnerable children should continue under government advice (to shield).
- Families who attend more than one setting need to inform the manager in advance. The WU5 risk assessment and policy will be forwarded to the other setting and in return ask for theirs. Once this has been done and risk assessed, then the child can attend with us.
- Children who need calpol (or any other paracetamol/ibuprofen/pain reducing based medicine) for any reason before preschool will continue not to be admitted. Preschool staff are first aid trained and these medicines may mask other symptoms that staff cannot identify.
- Children who have vomited or had diarrhoea will always need to be absent from preschool for 48 hours since the last episode.

##### *Physical Distancing/grouping*

This will be based on Governmental guidance at the time so subject to change

- Children may be organised into small groups or given designated rooms within the setting, this will also involve the outdoor area. Wherever possible these small groups should not mix during the day as best as possible. This is to minimise contact with others and mixing. Staff may exercise their own judgement during the day for the high standards of safety for all children.
- The children should have the same staff team caring for them wherever possible to limit the amount of people coming into contact with each other. Where possible the key person will conduct the intimate care of their key children.
- Smaller amounts of children in the whole setting is preferable. Depending on how long the guidance from the Government continues and how busy the preschool gets to how this is monitored. If numbers need to be restricted this could be achieved by
  - Temporarily limiting funded hours to only 15 hours per child, ensuring all children have access to some preschool time.
  - Prioritising children who's parents/carers are deemed to be key workers in essential job roles
  - Only allowing the older children or those moving to primary school to attend.
  - Grouping children to certain days, such as in groups of children moving to next school, this would help with transitions.
  - Prioritising children such as those who are vulnerable, those with special educational needs, those from households where both parents work (or work full time)
- The use of communal internal spaces should be restricted as much as possible and outdoor spaces should be utilised as much as possible
- 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. The first week of term is reserved for our families who have attended WU5 before. The manager is then organising phased starts for the new children to a maximum of 2 per week.
- Sunscreen should be applied by the parents / carers before the child arrives at the preschool. T shirts covering shoulders and leggings would be preferable to minimise how much top up of sunscreen the preschool staff will do. Where possible, the key person will apply sun cream to their key children. Staff will wash hands before and after applying sun cream to one child.

##### *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, coughing into an elbow, using a tissue and adopting a catch it, kill it, bin it regime.
- 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.
- Staff will continue to provide physical contact where necessary to the children as this is essential to their wellbeing.
- WU5 will continue to offer a routine that is clear and predictable, but also offers flexibility.
- Circle time will continue in preschool as this is an essential part of the day to welcome everyone and to give them a sense of belonging. Children will sit on chairs, mats to ensure social distancing.

- EYFS framework will continue to be delivered through a varied environment and tailored curriculum based on each child's level of development, interests and need. 2 year old checks will continue to be written when required.
- Lunches – parents/carers are still asked to provide a healthy lunch. The way this is stored and packed, where possible needs to be able to be opened by the children. This is to prevent cross contamination from staff opening packs. Staff will need to wash their hands before and after doing so where essential. Staff will wash any of our used resources in the dishwasher.
- Staff will promote activities and games that do not require physical contact. If ring games are played, everyone will wash their hands afterwards.

## **Workforce**

### *Attendance*

- Staff should only attend preschool if they are totally symptom free, have completed the required isolation period or achieved a negative test result. All staff and their household are eligible for testing if they display symptoms.
- WU5 will limit 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 must follow Government guidance on quarantine, self-isolation where necessary.
- If staff are contacted by 'test and trace' they are expected to follow the advice given.
- Staff are recommended to test using the LFD tests at home. If the result is negative, they can come into work. If the result is positive, they should book a PCR test and not attend work until the results are back. If negative, they can return to work, if positive, they need to follow current Gov guidance. Staff should record their results on the second page of the register.

### *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.
- Emergency revisions to the EYFS may have been implemented which provides some flexibility on ratios and qualifications to make this feasible.
- Staff have been advised by the government not 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 and if supporting an ill child a face mask and visor should also be worn if a 2 meter distance cannot be maintained. Staff who are on the door at drop off or collection times should wear a face covering.
- 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 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.
- Staff may be required to be in charge of specific rooms or areas including the outdoors to minimise their contact with surfaces etc. This includes potentially working from one particular table if table top 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.

### *Training*

- Where possible, meetings and training sessions should be conducted through virtual conferencing.
- All staff members must receive appropriate instruction and training in infection control and the standard operating procedure and risk assessments within which they will be operating.
- Online training may be available to allow their training levels to be maintained if appropriate.
- All continuous professional development and essential training for our staff meets the statutory framework as of 17/1/22

## **Parents**

### *Physical distancing*

- Only parents/carers who are totally symptom free and or have completed the required isolation or quarantine periods will be able to drop off or collect their child.

- Parents/carers need to tell staff if their child has any symptoms of Covid or anything else to reduce the risk of contagion.
- WU5 ask that only one adult drops off or collects their child to reduce the amount of people waiting at the door.
- When parents are waiting to drop off or collect their child, physical distancing should be maintained in a safe area sticking to government social distancing policies.
- Consider allowing some parents to enter the preschool for the purpose of essential settling in session if not doing so would cause a child distress, this could take place, preferably in the outdoor environment. The provider should consider measures to minimise contact between the parent and other children and staff members. If parents/carers enter the hall they must follow all the preschool policies and maintain their distance from other children and adults where possible. They must sign in using our visitors book.
- If the child is too distressed perhaps a delayed start to their preschool entry may be preferred or half hour settling in sessions without their parent.
- If a parent/carer is contacted by 'test and trace', they are expected to follow the advice given

#### *Communications*

- Parents should 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 should inform preschool of their circumstances and if they plan to keep their child away, this helps preschool to conform to our safeguarding policy.
- Parents may be needed to support the running of the preschool by providing extra resources and consumables the preschool 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 preschool is not hindered by lack of equipment and resources.
- Posters of 'catch it, kill it, bin it' and effective handwashing will be displayed in appropriate areas.

#### **Visitors**

- 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 preschool unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance).
- Where essential visits are required these should be made outside of the usual preschool operational hours where possible.
- Other hall users will be asked to use the gentlemen/ accessible toilet facilities so the preschool has sole use of the toilet block by the main entrance.
- As far as possible parents and carers should not enter the premises.

#### **Travel**

- Wherever possible staff and parents should travel to preschool alone, using their own transport or if possible walk.
- If public transport is necessary, current guidance on the use of public transport must be followed.
- Parents/cares should be encouraged to ensure they do not leave travel accessories including buggies, car seats, scooters in the setting premises or grounds.
- Outings from the preschool into the local community should be restricted to ensure mixing with members of the general public does not happen.

#### **Hygiene and Health & Safety**

##### *Hand Washing*

- All children, staff and other setting users must wash their hands upon arrival at the nursery for at least 20 seconds, or use the hand sanitizer provided
- 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 hand and dealing with unwell people.
- Bodily fluid spills should follow the correct procedures as normal.

##### *Cleaning*

- An enhanced cleaning schedule must be implemented that includes furniture, surfaces and children's toys and equipment and all staff are responsible in their area of work. Staff must use the surface spray provided that contains an anti-viral agent. Washing up detergent can be as effective too.
- Toys, equipment will be cleaned when it is put out and at times when deemed necessary throughout the day.

- Communal area, touch points and hand washing facilities must be cleaned and sanitised regularly and cleaned thoroughly before preschool opens and every night. This may need to be done more frequently if needed.
- A deep clean may be needed after a child has become ill in the area they were waiting.

#### *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
- Bodily fluids must be bagged and disposed of in a bin with a bag, lid. These items must be taken to the outside as soon as possible. If a child displays any symptoms of covid, the waste must be double bagged, labelled and dated, and stored securely for 72 hours before disposal

#### *Laundry*

- All items within the setting requiring laundering must be washed in line with NHS laundry guidelines.
- Items such as towels, flannels and bedding must not be shared by children.

#### *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 (dough, clay) and the suspension of the sharing of food and utensils. Water play with soap can still be used.
- Cut down on the available resources out in the preschool. We will limit the amount of tables and chairs we set out every day and where possible we will rotate these for next sessions.
- Items that the children bring in – bags, lunch boxes, snacks etc will be put into their individual, labelled basket that will be kept in the main foyer.
- It may be necessary to change our opening times or close for some days if required to if symptoms of covid or positive test results are confirmed. If there are 2 or more confirmed cases within 10 days or an increase in absences due to suspected/confirmed cases WU5 will contact our local health protection team on
- **PHE South West Centre Health Protection Team, 2 Rivergate, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EH 0300 303 8162 – OPTION 1 AND THEN OPTION 2** and follow their advice

#### *PPE*

- Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in early years settings to protect against COVID- 19 transmission.
- 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 including legionnaires checks. The village hall committee have been asked for the legionnaires check. The manager is currently awaiting confirmation that this has been done.
- Keep windows open where possible to ensure good levels of ventilation. If doors are opened ensure the children safety is maintained with locked gates.

#### *Resources*

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

#### *Supplies Procurement & monitoring*

- The preschool should 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 preschool 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 preschool washing.

- In case the supply of food is interrupted, procedures must be implemented to ensure the appropriate food alternatives are sourced and normal food safety and hygiene processes are followed.

*Responding to a suspected case*

- In the event of a child developing suspected coronavirus symptoms whilst attending the setting, they should be collected as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with the current NHS guidance.
- Whilst waiting for the child to be collected they should be isolated from others in a previously identified room or area. If possible, a window should be opened for ventilation.
- The parent/carer is responsible for organising a covid test from the NHS. The child needs to be absent from preschool for a minimum of 5 days or with proof of a negative result and no symptoms, they can return earlier. Anyone else living at the same address must follow current Government guidance.
- If a test is refused then the child must be absent for at least 10 days and clear of any symptoms.
- The staff member responsible for this, where possible should be the child's key person. The provider may consider suitable PPE for this staff member such as the addition of visor, disposable gloves and apron.
- The manager is responsible for reporting the positive case to the relevant authorities – currently Ofsted, PHE Somerset and Somerset County Council depending on case numbers and dates
- 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 preschool, they should return home immediately and isolate at home in line with the NHS guidance. They should also follow current testing advice for themselves and their household.

**Monitoring of this policy**

This policy was reviewed and adopted at a meeting of Walton Under Fives Pre-School held in August 2020, updated January 2022.

Signed (Pre School manager) ..... Date .....

Signed (Committee Chair) ..... Date .....