



Epidemic and Pandemic Policy (Covid 19)

Statement of Intent

Blackberry Lane Pre-school and Nursery 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.

Aim of Policy

This Policy defines and assists the operating arrangements in place within the pre-school and nursery 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 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
- The use of Protective and Personal Equipment (PPE)
- Testing

Focus/ Areas of Consideration / Recommendations

Children

Attendance

- Only children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period should attend the setting.
- Providers may consider taking temperatures of children.
- Extremely vulnerable children should continue under government advice (to shield if required).
- Children who attend two separate settings will need to choose only one for the remainder of the time to minimize contact.
- Children will be attending set days to ensure they have the same staff team attending to their needs and to also limit the amount of people coming into contact with each other.
- 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 amount of children in the setting at any one time.
 - Grouping children to certain days, such as in groups of children moving to next school, this would help with transitions.
 - Changing the session availability to all children attending to suit the parents needs.

- 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 take up on places may be small so there may be no need to change children's hours.
- The use of communal internal spaces should be restricted as much as possible and outdoor spaces should be utilised as much as possible to minimize social contact.
- A phased return may be best to ease their transition back into preschool and nursery, if the preschool or nursery has been closed for quite a while or only open for critical workers.
- 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.

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 their 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.
- EYFS framework will continue to be delivered through play and adult led activities.
- Snack times will be in small groups and children can ask for drinks throughout the day if they are thirsty.

Workforce

Attendance

- Staff should only attend preschool if they are 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.
- Staff are to take their temperatures on arrival and before departure, making a record of the temperature on their timesheets. Staff who have been furloughed will complete a risk assessment and health questionnaire on their return.
- 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.

Social distancing/ grouping /safety

- Staff will complete a risk assessment before opening.
- Staff to be informed of measures in place and sign a disclaimer to state they have read and understood the preschool policies and procedures.
- 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 the 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 members can opt to wear face masks if they wish to do so.
- If supporting an ill child a face mask and visor should also be worn if a 2 metre distance cannot be maintained. A child showing symptoms will be placed in the office with 1 key person until collection.
- After dealing with a 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 office will be completely cleaned and sanitised.
- The staff member who supported the child does not need to go home unless they are developing symptoms themselves, however, will be offered the opportunity to go home if they want to.
- Social distancing must be maintained during breaks. This may be achieved through a range of strategies including the staggering of breaks and subdivision of spaces allocated to team breaks where possible.
- 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.
- Advise staff to remove their work clothes when they enter their home and shower.

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.

Parents

Social distancing

- Only parents who are symptom free and or have completed the required isolation periods will be able to drop off or collect their child.
- Limit pick up and drop offs to one parent to help minimise the number of people in one area.
- Stagger the drop off and collection timings where possible will avoid a queue of families waiting to enter preschool.
- Arrange drop off and pick up at the preschool entrance to avoid parents entering the preschool unnecessarily.
- When parents are waiting to drop off or collect their child, social 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 a settling in session if not doing so would cause a child distress, this could take place in the outdoor environment. The provider should consider measures to minimise contact between the parent and other children and staff members.
- If the child is too distressed perhaps a delayed start to their preschool and nursery entry may be preferred.

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 or nursery of their circumstances and if they plan to keep their child away, this helps the settings to conform to our safeguarding policy.

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.
- As far as possible parents and carers should not enter the premises.

Travel

- Wherever possible staff and parents should travel to preschool or nursery 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 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 or nursery into the local community will be discontinued for the foreseeable future.

Hygiene and Health & Safety

Hand Washing

- All children and staff must wash their hands upon arrival at the preschool and nursery 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 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.
- Communal area, 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.

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.
- Bodily fluids must be double bagged and disposed of in the designated sanitary bin.

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 activities should be risk assessed before opening or going ahead to address the risks from any 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).
- Cut down on the available resources in the preschool or nursery.
- Remove anything which cannot be easily wiped down or washed at the end of the day.
- Play food should be removed or anything else which may be 'mouthed' by many children.
- Baking activities will be discontinued for the foreseeable future.

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 metre 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.
- 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 regularly washed and/or sterilised. 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 and nursery 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 and nursery 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 etc.

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 staff member responsible for the child during this time should be a familiar staff member. The staff member will wear suitable PPE i.e. 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 nursery, 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.

Responding to a confirmed case

- In the event that a child or staff member tests positive for Covid 19 , the children and staff that attend the same sessions as that individual will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days and advised to request a test from NHS 111 if they begin to show symptoms.
- The staff member or child may only return to the setting after either receiving a negative test result or completing self-isolation for the recommended period and showing no symptoms.
- The setting will be cleaned thoroughly.

Monitoring of this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the setting manager/director, new government legislation and policies will be incorporated appropriately as and when required or informed.

This policy was adopted by	Blackberry Lane Pre-School & Nursery	
On	18 th January 2021	
Date to be reviewed	January 2022	
Signed on behalf of the provider		DocuSigned by: Victoria Stone
Name of signatory	Mrs D Gibson	Mrs V Stone
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Manager	Director