

## **Whitley Lodge Under Fives**

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

#### **Statement of Intent**

Whitley Lodge 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 operating if allowed.

#### **Legislation and references**

Coronavirus Act 2020  
Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)  
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)  
Government Guidelines  
Public Health England (PHE)  
World Health Organisation (WHO)  
Local Authority (LA)  
Department for Education (DfE)

The policy also has regard to Ofsted and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance where appropriate.

#### **Aim**

This Policy defines and assists the operating arrangements in place within the setting 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.

#### **Methods**

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 good hygiene practice (handwashing, catch it, kill it, bin it)
- Ensuring cleanliness of the environment
- Minimising general contact
- The use of Protective and Personal Equipment (PPE) when necessary

## Focus/ Areas of Consideration / Recommendations

### **Children Attendance**

- Only children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period should attend the setting. (in line with Government guidelines)
- Parents/Carers will be asked at drop off if their child has any Covid-19 symptoms
- Only children who have not had medication which may mask Covid-19 symptoms may attend (e.g. paracetamol)

### **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 method.
- 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 continue as normal, staff to wear disposable aprons

### **Staff Attendance**

- Staff should only attend playgroup if they are symptom free and have completed the required isolation period, (in line with Government guidelines) Staff will be asked this daily. All staff and their household are eligible for testing if they display symptoms.
- All staff take twice weekly Lateral flow tests.
- Staff hours and the days they work may change in order to meet childcare demands and considerations within this policy.

### **Physical distancing/safety**

- Physical distancing within playgroup is not possible.
- Sunscreen (if applicable) should be applied by parents/carers before the child arrives at playgroup.
- 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 this policy to state they have read and understood these policies and procedures.
- Staff have been advised by the government not to wear PPE such as facemasks during their day, but should continue to wear appropriate PPE at the usual times such as intimate care, first aid e.g. disposable gloves and aprons and if supporting an ill child, a face mask and visor should also be worn if a 2 metre distance cannot be maintained.
- Staff have the choice as to whether they wear a face covering during the session.
- After dealing with an ill child with suspected 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 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.

### **Training**

- All staff members must receive appropriate instruction and training in infection control, the safe operating procedure and risk assessments within which they will be operating. (Educare Infection Prevention and Control in Early Years Setting and Virtual College Prevent Covid-19)

### **Parents**

- Only parents who are symptom free 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 and encourage parents to leave the playground promptly
- Initially (in September 2021) drop off and pick up at the entrance, parents/carers not to enter the classroom
- When parents are waiting to drop off or collect their child they should respect others by giving them space where possible
- If a child is too distressed perhaps a delayed start 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 the setting of their circumstances and if they plan to keep their child away, this helps us to conform to our safeguarding policy.

### **Visitors**

Attendance to the setting will be restricted to only children and staff as far as practically possible and visitors will not be permitted unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance, speech and language team etc.

- Visitors will be encouraged to wear a face mask when in the setting

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

#### **Hand Washing**

- All children and staff must wash their hands upon arrival at playgroup for at least 20 seconds.
- Children and staff members should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently, this includes before 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 will be implemented that includes furniture, surfaces and children's toys and equipment.
- A deep clean may be needed after a child has become ill in the area they were waiting.
- Children will not be allowed to bring toys in from home.

## **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 in a bin with a bag, lid and foot pedal.

## **Laundry**

- All items within the setting requiring laundering must be washed in line with NHS laundry guidelines.
- Items such as towels 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.
- Cut down on the available resources in order to support cleaning schedules.
- Remove anything which cannot be easily wiped down or washed at the end of the day.

## **PPE**

- Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in early years settings to protect against COVID- 19 transmission.
- Normal PPE (disposable aprons and gloves) should continue to be worn and disposed of as normal for nappy changing and the administration of first aid.
- If a child shows symptoms, staff should wear disposable gloves and a disposable apron. A face mask and visor should be worn 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 including legionnaires checks.
- Keep windows open where possible to ensure good levels of ventilation. If doors are opened, ensure the safeguarding of the children is maintained e.g. locked gates.

## **Resources**

- Children should be encouraged not 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 if possible.
- 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 Ipads, should be allocated to individual staff members where possible.

## **Supplies Procurement & monitoring**

- The Manager should ensure that essential supplies/contingency plans such as additional suppliers are in place to minimise the impact of any shortages of supplies.
- Data Controller (Lucy Brown) should ensure that enough Lateral Flow Tests are in place.
- The setting 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.
- Snack to share will be suspended until further notice, playgroup to provide all snacks.

## **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, staff will isolate the child from others in the cloakroom. If possible, the door should be opened for ventilation.
- The staff member responsible should wear suitable PPE to protect themselves e.g. disposable gloves and disposable apron. A face mask and visor should be worn if a 2-metre distance cannot be maintained at all times.
- 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 playgroup, 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.

This policy and The Safe Operating Procedure was read and understood by all staff

Carol Shields.....

Helen Graham-Potts.....

Jayne Pronk.....

Amy Kennedy.....

Lucy Brown.....

Dated 1/9/2021

To be revised October 2021