

Coniston Early Years Centre Policy Document

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

The provider must promote the good health of children attending the setting.



High Quality Care for All Children
A Firm Foundation for Education

6.7 Pandemic/Epidemic Policy

Policy Statement.

It is our intention to keep the children in our care as safe as possible and this policy has been created based on information received throughout the COVID19 Pandemic that began in March 2020. Part of what we learnt was that in a pandemic/epidemic advice and guidance can change very rapidly and that any policy we hold for such an event must reflect this. We must understand that this policy can only provide broad guidelines and what we consider to be best practice but that we must be prepared to also follow latest government guidance in any such future event.

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.

Procedures

St chads 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.

As early years providers we aim to ensure we offer a continuum of very high standards of practice of childcare and education in all circumstances. The fundamental principles 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

Children

Attendance

- Only children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period should attend the setting.
- We may consider taking temperatures of children on arrival, and consider the results of any temperature check alongside the child's general demeanor and any other signs and symptoms they may present with.
- Extremely vulnerable children should continue to follow latest government guidance in the event of any pandemic/epidemic (to shield).
- Families who attend more than one setting should consider reducing this to one in the event of any future pandemic in order to limit the amount of contacts they have.

Physical Distancing/grouping

- 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 or 'bubbles' 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.
- Children in small groups should have the same staff team caring for them wherever possible to 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.
 - Temporarily limiting funded hours to only 15 hours per child, ensuring all children have access to some preschool time.
 - Changing children's hours to all mornings or all afternoons or 2 and a half days.
 - 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.
 - Changing the preschool open hours to all children so the days are longer so the parents are able to work a longer day.
 - 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.

- Care routines including provision of meals, nappy changing and toileting should be within the space allocated to each 'bubble' wherever possible.
- The use of communal internal spaces should be restricted as much as possible and outdoor spaces should 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.
- 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 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.
- EYFS framework will continue to be delivered through play and adult led activities.

Staff

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.
- Providers may consider taking temperature of staff on arrival and risk assessing with regular health questionnaires for returning staff.
- Consideration should 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.

Physical distancing/ grouping /safety

- Staff will complete a risk assessment before opening to address any risks from the virus and to 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 preschool 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 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.
- 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.
- 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 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.
- Advise staff 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 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

Physical 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.
- We will aim to minimise the 'pinch points' during the day and limit drop off and pick up to one parent per family.
- It may be necessary to stagger the drop off and collection timings where possible to avoid a queue of families waiting to enter preschool.

- Pick up and drop off will be through the gates to avoid parents entering the preschool unnecessarily.
- 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 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 entry may be preferred or half hour settling in sessions without their parent.

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 should inform preschool of their circumstances and if they plan to keep their child away, this helps preschool 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.
- Visitors will be required to answer a set of questions to ascertain their level of well being and provided with PPE and hand gel as appropriate.

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 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 and staff must wash their hands upon arrival at the 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, 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, flannels and bedding must not be shared by children.
- In the event of a pandemic soft furnishings and other hard to launder/clean items will be reduced so as to maintain as high a level of cleanliness as possible

Risk assessment

- The setting and all activities 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).
- Cut down on the available resources out in the preschool.
- Remove anything which cannot be easily wiped down or washed at the end of the day.
- Play food, play cutlery and crockery etc. should be removed or anything else which may be 'mouthed' by many children.

- Baking, food play and finger painting should be avoided.

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.
- 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 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 on their peg.
- All resources required for play and learning experiences of children should be regularly washed and/or sterilized. 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 there is plentiful 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 staff member responsible for the child during this time should be a staff member from their 'bubble'. 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 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.

Legal Framework

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.

