

Pandemic Safe Operating Procedures

1 Introduction

It is important that everyone complies with the latest Government guidance on Coronavirus.

We have developed these Safe Operating Procedures based on guidance from the Department of Education and the National Institute for Health Protection specifically for Early Years. It is important that we adapt our everyday practices to ensure that we continue to offer the staff and children a safe environment. Hygiene and social distancing remain the two key elements of infection prevention and control. If any symptoms are displayed, families must be alert and self-isolate for the safety of everyone.

COVID-19 appears to affect young children less often and with less severity. Children's role in its transmission is unclear but it seems that it is not significant.

Compassionate leadership is at the heart of offering continued nursery care and we will do everything we can to be honest, open and to communicate with you. There will be a lot of anxieties and we acknowledge that it is OK to feel worried and that COVID-19 and the lockdown has had an impact on everyone.

Everyone involved in the day to day running of the nurseries will receive appropriate instruction and support on how to operate under the terms of the Safe Operating Procedures.

We aim to work in partnership with parents and trust that everyone understands and follows these Safe Operating Procedures.

The key principles of these procedures are:

1. Any pupil, staff member, parent or visitor with coronavirus symptoms must not attend nursery and must isolate at home
2. Increased cleaning processes are in place, throughout and at the end of the day
3. Children and team members will be social distancing as far as possible
4. Children will each day stay in key family groups (a bubble) where possible and will wherever possible ensure continuity of staffing and children
5. Key family groups will be in place inside and outside
6. Arrival and departure may be staggered if necessary and children will be dropped off at the door, where this is possible.
7. Parents will not be encouraged to come on site unless this is explicitly arranged with the Nursery Manager e.g. in the event of a child being distressed
8. The process for settling in sessions will be managed away from the other children. In full lockdown situations first settling sessions may have to take place via video link.
9. Parents and staff members will wear masks during drop off and collection at nursery.

2 Attendance

Children and employees are welcome to attend nursery but must not be displaying any coronavirus symptoms, the most common being a new, continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of taste and smell. There is some suggestion that mottled skin or sickness and diarrhoea can also be a symptom.

It is important that you seek medical advice if you are unsure.

It is important that children do not attend nursery if unwell for their own wellbeing and for the safety of others.

Anyone who is experiencing any symptoms cannot return to nursery until they have completed the required isolation period, in line with government guidelines, and be symptom free or have achieved a negative test result. Prompt exclusion is essential to preventing the spread of infection. Children and employees who are classed as clinically vulnerable should follow their own medical advice before attending nursery.

It is preferable that your child only attends one setting to avoid mixing with different groups of children. Please speak with the Nursery Manager if this is going to be a problem or to make them aware that this is the case.

2.1 Drop off and collection of children

Parents are asked to drop off and collect their children at designated entrances and not to enter the nursery. Whilst parents are waiting, it is important to maintain social distancing by keeping a distance of two metres apart. It is preferable if only one parent carries out drop off and collection. Parents are requested to wear masks and handovers will continue to be predominantly outdoors. Early years practitioners will also wear masks at drop off and collection.

Parents may be allocated a suggested time for arrival and drop off to ease pressure or waiting outside.

Children will be assigned to a key family group based on the room they are in and a team member from that group will be responsible for collecting and delivering that child back to the parents. We will give you a limited handover, unless there is an important issue to discuss, as other parents may be waiting. If you wish to speak with an Early Years Practitioner in more detail, please contact the nursery directly.

2.2 Temperature and symptom monitoring

Routine temperature testing is not recommended as a reliable method for identifying coronavirus. Parents and employees should follow the NHS guidelines regarding isolation and testing criteria.

Eversley is very conscious that during the colder, winter months young children will get temperatures to help them to fight cold and flu symptoms. Snotty, red eyed, catarrh filled coughs are not thought to be symptomatic for COVID-19 and may not indicate that a child needs to undergo a coronavirus test. Staff members will monitor the children in their care and will make reasonable judgements on whether a family is advised to undergo testing. We ask that families do the same and monitor their children's wellness, making the decision if they need to isolate, undergo testing, or

are well enough to attend a nursery setting. If a child has a dry, continuous cough or a persistent temperature (over 24 hours) accompanied by flu or cold symptoms they will still be asked to book a coronavirus test.

If your child is due vaccinations Eversley may ask for evidence of this by sharing the child's red book to justify a child's temperature.

Children who have asthma or other breathing related difficulties should be known to nursery staff and can attend nursery as usual with their medical plans in place.

If a child needs a routine medical appointment, we are asking parents that wherever possible this is booked on a non nursery day or at the end of the child's session. If this is unavoidable the child will be allowed to return to nursery after the appointment, provided they are fit and well in themselves.

2.3 Travel to nursery

It is better not to share transport and to travel by car, bike or walk. Face coverings have been advised by the Government for use on public transport.

2.4 Travel outside of local area

If you travel internationally to a country not on the travel corridors list or to an area of the UK under local COVID restrictions, and are displaying symptoms, then you must be tested and have a negative result before returning to nursery. This is to ensure every possible protection factor is in place for the staff and the children in our care. While we understand the practicality of this may seem difficult for some we will continue to put the safety of everyone first and this is a precautionary measure that we have chosen to have in place.

We ask that you are aware of the restrictions in place and the tier rating of any area that you are visiting is in and follow government guidelines for any travel in and out of the area.

If you have travelled to a country or area of the UK under local COVID restrictions, you can opt in to pay for a private COVID-19 test.

If you are travelling from a destination not on the travel corridors list, do not have a job that qualifies you for a travel exemption or do not want to opt in to test to release, you will need to self-isolate for 10 full days after you were last in a destination not on the travel corridors list.

3 Implementing social distancing

It is very difficult to avoid a level of physical interaction with young children and it is important to have their wellbeing at the centre of everything we do. If a child is in need of a hug, then it would not be fair to deny them this. To help with social distancing the children will be grouped in small groups (a bubble) with a practitioner and this group will work alongside a buddy group to ensure that an adult is always available. Social distancing will also apply to coat pegs, seating arrangements and sleeping.

3.1 Playrooms and groups

We aim to keep children in their groups which will be identified by their usual age groups for outdoor play in order to continue with the small group approach. We would only merge groups if there was no other choice.

We are fortunate that we already have a system in place of key family groups and so this arrangement will not be unusual for the children and will not interrupt their play.

The practitioners will organise designated areas, indoors and outdoors, for the children in their groups. Children will have access to the full range of activities that are considered safe at this time.

3.2 Mealtimes

- As always, children will eat in their rooms.
- The practitioners will serve the children.
- No food will be eaten out of shared platters or containers.
- Drinks will be offered at intervals instead of cups being at the children's level to avoid accidental sharing of cups.

3.3 Employees

All employees will undergo regular induction and training on the Safe Operating Procedures, with emphasis on good hygiene practices and maintaining social distancing.

3.4 Fire drills and lockdown practice

If we have to respond to a fire or emergency lockdown, we will continue to manage social distancing, as far as possible. The safety of the children and employees will always come first.

4 Wellbeing

We know that this is a very unusual and worrying time for everyone. It is very important that at the forefront of this heightened awareness of safe operating procedures, we do not forget that care and consideration must be taken of the need to ensure that everyone within the nursery community feels safe and secure. We will try our best to create a normal nursery environment and hope that you will bear with us.

We will concentrate on building secure attachments and we will continue observing and assessing the children, regularly updating Tapestry. We will not be able to carry out lengthy handovers. We want our team to spend time with the children, playing and building their relationships.

We would always speak with you immediately if we had any concerns. If your child is expressing any concerns or worries, it is important that you inform the key person or Nursery Manager.

5 Visitors

5.1 Settling in sessions/transitions

Parents may enter the nursery for the purpose of settling-in sessions, if not doing so would cause a child distress. The Manager will give further guidance on the day. It is important that social distancing continues to be maintained. The parents will not be able to spend time in the children's rooms in order to minimise any risk of infection.

During any full lockdown restrictions settling in sessions will be carried out via video link.

We will aim to organise groups of children who are due to transition so they can transition together. However, some children who were due to transition might need the reassurance of the family group they were part of in order to feel safe and secure and parents might prefer them to stay within a particular age group. The Nursery Manager will assist with this.

5.2 Visitors

Visitors to the nursery will not be encouraged unless it involves a safeguarding issue that cannot be resolved by telephone. Interviews or meetings will be conducted via video conference. Parent's evenings will still be organised but will be conducted over the telephone. Any SEND or Social Work visits will go ahead in a separate area of the nursery.

5.3 Nursery show-rounds

Prospective parents should make use of the nursery website for information relating to the ethos and organisation of the nursery. Show rounds will be by appointment only with social distancing measures in place, mask wearing and not mixing with children.

5.4 Contractors

Any contractors to the nursery will be reminded of National Institute for Health Protection guidance prior to entering the building. Non-essential visitors will not be allowed on site during lockdown and will need to be rearranged.

6 Health, Hygiene and Safety

6.1 Reducing the spread of the virus

It is recognised that good hygiene and cleaning practices will significantly reduce the spread and transmission of the virus as well as everyone being alert to the symptoms. Doors and windows will be opened as much as possible.

6.2 Cleaning

An enhanced cleaning schedule will be implemented throughout and at the end of the day. Communal areas, door handles and shared facilities e.g. iPads, must be regularly cleaned. The Nursery Manager will be responsible for recording these cleaning schedules.

The rate of hand washing must be significantly increased. Everyone, including children, must wash their hands on arrival at nursery. If no wash basins are available, sanitiser can be used. There will be regular opportunities for hand washing throughout the day.

6.3 Use of Tissues

The children will be supported in age-appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves and others safe and this includes sneezing into a tissue (or their arm if immediate) and then to dispose of the tissue.

6.4 Toileting

The children will be taken to the toilets and supervised. Hand washing signs will be displayed to ensure hand washing is thorough and the practitioners will talk to the children about why we are washing our hands.

6.5 Risk assessments

All risk assessments will reflect the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Certain activities will be adapted or removed to reflect this risk e.g. going on trips.

6.7 Items from home

If your child requires a comforter e.g. soft toy or blanket, please bring it in a bag and then take home at the end of the day and wash it. We would prefer no toys or comforters to be brought into nursery but do understand that this could cause distress.

6.8 Resources at Nursery

Toys and resources that are difficult to clean will be kept for play with only one bubble group. The children will only share toys and activities within their groups. We will aim to sanitise items at the end of each day. Furnishings (i.e. cushions, rugs, dressing up clothes) can move between bubble groups after being washed or disinfected and left for 48 hours.

7 Responding to a person displaying symptoms of COVID-19

7.1 A child

If a child is suspected of displaying coronavirus symptoms whilst attending the nursery, they should be collected as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with NHS guidance. The child must be tested before they return. Whilst waiting to be collected, they will be isolated from others in a designated area. An employee will stay with them and will wear PPE. If the child becomes very unwell, we will follow our normal emergency procedures and call 999. The isolation area will be cleaned once the child has been collected.

7.2 An employee who displays symptoms

In the event of an employee developing coronavirus symptoms whilst at work, they will leave work immediately and isolate at home in line with NHS guidance. They will be required to have a test before they return.

7.3 PPE Equipment

Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in nurseries to protect against COVID-19 transmission. Hand washing, effective cleaning and social distancing are the most effective measures. Gloves and aprons will be used for nappy changing and first aid.

7.4 Reporting, testing and tracing

Everyone is now eligible for a COVID-19 test, should they display coronavirus symptoms. Any suspected or confirmed case must be reported to the Nursery Manager as soon as possible. If a positive result is confirmed, the practitioners and children associated with that group/bubble must self-isolate for 10 days before returning to nursery, regardless of whether they have a negative test result themselves. Positive tests will be reported to the National Institute for Health Protection and Ofsted by the nursery.

Eversley is responsible for contacting the National Institute for Health Protection if a case is confirmed or if a symptomatic person is admitted to hospital, a possible case refuses testing, there are a cluster of possible cases/unexpected increase in absenteeism or a suspected case has a definite link to a confirmed case.

If there is reasonable evidence that a positive diagnosis was caused by exposure at work, this will be reported to the National Institute of Health Protection.

If someone in your household, or someone you have close contact with, is contacted by track and trace or is told they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, you do not need to be tested. If they test positive, then you will also need to self-isolate for 10 days even if you do not test positive yourself. You should only book a test yourself if you develop symptoms.

**This policy was revised & updated on the 15th August 2022
Eversley Nursery School**