



COVID-19 policy

Policy statement

At Little Squirts we are committed to delivering a high level of care and education. During these uncertain times we will continue to operate a normal working pattern to support the children in our care.

Our intention

It is our intention is to provide a safe environment for our colleagues and children. We intend to use this policy to provide precautionary measures to minimise transmission risks of disease in the setting during a pandemic.

Implementation

The following information has been gathered from the latest Government documents:

- Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings
- Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak

The Government guidelines state that in childcare settings, providers will welcome back all children below statutory school age.

Where the physical layout of a setting does not allow small groups of children to be kept at a safe distance apart, the Government expect practitioners to exercise judgement in ensuring the highest standards of safety are maintained.

Absence / Sickness Management Procedure for Staff Members

Exclusion periods: any staff member with symptoms of coronavirus will be asked to follow government isolation guidelines. Further information can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-homeguidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection

Staff should also not attend if they have symptoms, or are self-isolating, due to symptoms in their household. Staff should inform management immediately and if not already arranged a test for COVID-19 should be arranged.

Admissions

Children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period, can attend Pre-School. Families are asked to inform Pre-School if they, the child, or anyone in their household has any symptoms and to follow the COVID-19 guidance.

Children that have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, due to pre-existing medical conditions, have been advised to shield and are not expected to return to Pre-School yet. We will continue to communicate with you as much as possible and share useful educational resources. This will be reviewed in line with government guidelines. We will provide parents with clear communication regarding the role they play in the safe operating procedures and all measures being taken to ensure the safety of their children and themselves. If anyone becomes unwell with the most common symptoms of coronavirus in an education or childcare setting, they must be sent home and advised to follow the COVID-19: Guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance> Up to date information about the symptoms of coronavirus can also be found here.

When a child develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate. Staff and children in all early years' settings are eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms, as will members of their household. A negative test will enable children to return to their childcare setting, and their parents to get back to work. A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect their peers and staff in their setting.

Arrivals and departures.

The Government have recommended where practicable, and safe to do so, that drop off and collection takes place outside of the Pre-School building. It is paramount that this is done both safely and consistently, to ensure the children's emotional needs are met. The following should also be considered:

- This will mean that children are to be dropped off at the front entrance, you will ring the bell and then be met by a staff member who will take them to their room.
- You can pick up from the front entrance or the back entrance to minimise queuing. A staff member will answer the door/gate and then go and fetch your child to do their handover to you while you wait.
- Only parents who are symptom free and/or have completed the required isolation periods will be able to drop off or collect their child

- All parent/carers are asked to follow safe social distancing when dropping and collecting children.

Precautions the setting is taking.

- Increased frequency of cleaning; toys sterilised after use, any toys/equipment/resources that cannot be easily cleaned e.g., soft toys will not be used during this time. Big play equipment to be cleaned frequently and tables chairs sinks etc.
- Increased cleaning of surfaces that are often touched (door handles, light switches etc) This will be done every hour.
- The building will be cleaned thoroughly each evening by a Covid-19 trained cleaner.
- Play-dough and other sensory/messy resources will be thrown out after one use.
- Parents where possible are asked to limit bringing items to the setting, e.g., bags to only be taken to and from Pre-School when changes of clothes are needed, no toys to be brought in unless essential for their well-being, no scooters, and bikes etc.
- Visitors to the site will be limited to only those that are urgent.
- Children and staff will be encouraged to wash hands frequently throughout the day. After first coming in, after playing outside, before mealtimes etc. Children will be encouraged to wash hands for 20seconds ensuring that hands are covered in soap and then washed in running water and dried properly with a paper towel which is then to be disposed of.
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene - use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste.
- Ensure that help is available for children who have trouble cleaning their hands independently or blowing their nose independently.
- Encourage young children to learn and practise these habits through games, songs, and repetition.
- Where possible, ensure spaces are well ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows)

Incidents

We will continue to follow all government guidelines regarding COVID-19 -19 and keep staff and parents up to date with any changes. This includes following any procedures if the virus spread across the setting and/or the infection rates were to increase again. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronaviruscovid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures

Children's learning.

There will be some gaps in children's assessment records due to the lockdown period. As children settle back into Pre-School there will be a strong focus on personal, social, and emotional development and re-establishing strong attachments. We will spend time observing and assessing children's development, working with parents to find out current interests and plan appropriate next steps. To enable us to distinguish children's next steps the emphasis when children return will be on getting to know what stages children are working at following the lock down period. You can help nursery by uploading observations from home with details of what you have been doing with your child.

Health and Safety.

Social distancing: The early years sector knows that unlike older children and adults, babies and young children cannot be expected to remain two metres apart from each other and staff. The government guidelines acknowledge this. Policies and procedures have been put in place to help minimise the risk of infection through avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms, frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices; regular cleaning of settings, minimising contact and mixing, where possible.

COSHH assessment: We will ensure that a COSHH assessment is completed for any intended use of bleach and disinfectant products used on site.

Personal protective equipment (PPE): Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in early year's settings to protect against COVID- 19 transmission. PPE will be continued to be worn as normal for nappy changing and the administration of paediatric first aid. PPE will also be worn by staff caring for a sick child while they await collection

Face covering: During everyday practice, staff and children will not be asked to wear face coverings as per the government guidelines.

Coronavirus testing: Staff and children in all early year's settings are eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus symptoms, as will members of their households. A negative test will enable children to return to their childcare setting and their parents to get back to work. A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect their peers and staff in their setting. Staff are encouraged to take advantage of rapid testing which they are now eligible for.

Children's Temperatures.

Routine testing of children's temperatures will not take place as per government guidelines. We remind parents and staff to follow national advice on Covid-19 symptoms. We ask all staff and parents to follow government advice if anyone in their household displays any symptoms. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-forhouseholds-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

If a child has a high temperature whilst at nursery, parents will be called immediately. The child will be cared for until they can be collected and will be kept apart from the other children as much as is possible.

Parents and Carers.

We will need to minimise the time parents and carers are spending at nursery. We will communicate via telephone, email and tapestry and ask you to do the same to share information about your child. For parents' evenings etc these will be done via Zoom/Phone until further notice. Staff will maintain safe distancing when sharing information about your child's day. We may contact you via phone or email to discuss any other matters rather than face-to-face. We will continue to keep in touch with any families and children not yet returning to nursery and keep sending through home learning ideas.

EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that schools, and childcare settings must meet for the learning, development, and care of children from birth to 5 years old. We will use reasonable endeavours to deliver the learning and development requirements, as far as possible, in the current circumstances and ensure we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage: Coronavirus Disapplication's where required. Further information can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stageframework--2/early-years-foundation-stage-coronavirus-disapplications

As part of our quality practice, we will carry out more frequent cleaning of toys and resources. We still want to provide children with a wide range of activities and experiences, however some of these may differ to minimise the spread of germs

Staff keeping Pre-School safe and healthy.

Personal hygiene: Staff are reminded to always ensure personal hygiene, including washing hands as they enter the building and periodically throughout the day.

Cleaning: Staff are asked to support the continued cleaning of the Pre-School throughout the day e.g., toilets, wiping light switches, kitchen areas.

Use of offices: Staff will be asked to stagger the use of the office to limit occupancy. All equipment e.g., laptop and keyboard, are to be cleaned frequently.

Staff equipment: Equipment used by staff such as stationary, tablets etc. will be allocated to individual staff when possible.

Uniform: Staff are asked to wear a clean uniform each day.

Travelling to work: Staff are encouraged to drive alone, walk or cycle to work and avoid public transport at peak times, where possible.

Safeguarding children.

We will continue to follow our comprehensive safeguarding policy and procedure. In addition, we will follow the specific government Covid-19 safeguarding in schools document: www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers

Settling in.

Setting visits may be planned based on individual needs, taking in to account the age/stage of development Where settling visits are required, different options will be considered such as:

- Where possible the child and parent and key worker have a room to themselves
- If an older, confident child they may be able to come in without parent if they are happy to.
- Parent can sit to the side of the room away from children so child can go to them if needed.

Once children are settled parents will be asked to follow the same drop off/collection procedures as the other children, maintaining safe distancing between them and others.

Sickness and illness

If anyone becomes unwell whilst at Pre-School with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, we will contact their parent/carer immediately. The child will be sent home and advised to follow the COVID-19: Guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection. Whilst the child is awaiting collection they will be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child, and with appropriate adult supervision (ensuring safeguarding procedures are met.) Ideally, a window will be opened for ventilation. Where it is not possible to isolate them, they will be moved to an area away from other children and adults.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves or the child subsequently tests positive (see ‘What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in a setting?’ below.) They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left, will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. Further information about cleaning the room used for isolation can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-nonhealthcare-settings> When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they will be sent home and advised to self-isolate.

Where the child or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation. Where the child, young person, or

staff member tests positive, the rest of their Pre-School group (this includes the children in their base room and staff) should be sent home and advised to self-isolate. The other household members of that group do not need to self-isolate.

Special Educational Needs.

Vulnerable children continue to be expected and encouraged to attend educational provision where it is appropriate for them to do so (for children with education health and care (EHC) plans this will be informed by a risk assessment approach.) Children, young people, and staff who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions, have been advised to shield and are not expected to attend nursery. They should continue to be supported to learn at home, as much as possible.

Staff development and training.

The training records of all staff members will be checked and any expired mandatory training that is required (including safeguarding, paediatric first aid, food hygiene) will be planned as soon as possible. Where possible, meetings and training sessions should be conducted online.

Visitors.

Attendance to the setting will be restricted to children and staff where practicable.

Visitors will only be allowed to enter where prior permission has been granted and that they are not displaying any symptoms of coronavirus.

Suppliers such as food deliveries will be asked not to enter the Pre-School but to make other arrangements, for example to ring the bell and leave the delivery at the door. Where essential visitors e.g., building maintenance, are required these will be made outside of the usual Pre-School operational hours where possible.

Visits and Outings.

To help ensure the safety of staff and children no external visits and outings from the nursery setting will take place during this pandemic. This will be reviewed in line with government guidelines.

Well-being at nursery.

Children are supported in age-appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe including regular hand washing and sneezing into a tissue. Staff will help them to understand the changes and challenges they may have/be encountering because of Covid-19 through play, discussions, and stories. Staff are aware of the importance of attachments and that some children may experience separation anxieties during this time. They will work with parents to ensure they help to ease the transition back to Pre-School and give children the emotional support they need at this time.

This policy was adopted by Little Squirts Preschool on 3rd April 2020 and reviewed on 19/02/2021.
Next review date (19/05/2021)

Signed.....

Name.....

Role.....