



Epidemic and Pandemic Policy (Covid 19)

Statement of Intent

Whitegrove Pre-School (Initial Steps Ltd) 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 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 endeavor physical distancing, encourage 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.

Systems of Control

This is the set of actions early years settings MUST take. These are outlined below:

Prevention:

- 1) Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the settings.
- 2) Where recommended, the use of face coverings
- 3) Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
- 4) Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the "catch it, bin it, kill it approach
- 5) Maintain enhanced cleaning, including frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
- 6) Minimise contact between groups of children where possible
- 7) Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- 8) Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

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Numbers 1, 3, 4, 5 and 8 must be in place in all settings, all the time.
Number 2 and 6 must be properly considered, and settings must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances
Number 7 applies in all specific circumstances

Response to any infection:

9) Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process

10) Manage and report to Ofsted and the PHE advice line confirmed cases, of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the setting community

11) Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

Numbers 9 to 11 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

Focus/ Areas of Consideration / Recommendations

Children

Attendance

-) Only children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period should attend the setting.
-) Upon arrival we will be assisting children to wash their hands before entering the main hall.
-) We will risk assess the setting with regular health questionnaires for all children in attendance
-) Families who attend at least two settings should if possible only attend one. Childminders are not considered an additional setting and are permitted.
-) Pre-school will continue to support the learning of children who are not returning to the setting.

Physical Distancing/grouping

-) If necessary children may be organised into small groups or given designated rooms within the setting, this will also involve the outdoor area.
-) Care routines including provision of snacks, lunch club, nappy changing and toileting should continue within the space allocated.
-) 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.

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 wherever possible.
-) Snack and lunch club will take place in small groups to maintain safety.

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Workforce

Attendance

-) Staff should only attend pre-school if they are symptom free, have completed the required isolation period or achieved a negative test result. Education and childcare workers are classed as priority for testing. All staff and their household are eligible for testing if they display symptoms.
-) Should staff travel on public transport they will need to change into their uniform upon arrival at the pre-school.
-) 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, 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 pre-schools policies and procedures.
-) It is not recommended by government that Early Years staff wear facemasks during their day; this said, the wearing of a face masks is optional to staff., Staff 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.
If supporting an ill child a face mask and visor should also be worn.
-) 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.
-) 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 uniform for each session that has been washed, as per government guidelines at a minimum of 60 degrees.
-) Advise staff to remove their uniform as soon as they arrive home to remove any germs they may have picked up at the pre-school.

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.
-) Staff should have completed 'COVID-19' training and the correct use/safe removal of PPE training on the 'World Health Organisation' website before returning to work.

Parents

Physical distancing

-) Only parents/carers who are symptom free and or have completed the required isolation periods will be able to drop off or collect their child. Only one parent/carer per child should drop off/collect their child from pre-school and ideally this should be the same parent/carer each session. **Parents/carers MUST wear a face covering at drop off/pick up.**

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- J Arrange drop off and pick up at the pre-school. Drop off is at the main entrance, pick up is at the side door near the basketball court. This is to avoid parents/carers entering the pre-school unnecessarily.
- J When parents/carers are waiting to drop off or collect their child, **physical distancing must** be maintained in a safe area sticking to government social distancing policies.
- J Consider allowing some parents/carers to enter the pre-school for the purpose of a settling in session (Maximum one hour) if not doing so would cause a child distress. **If a parent is accompanying their child on a settling visit they will be required to wear a face covering.** Parents should only assist with their own child in pre-school and not touch any toys/resources.
- J The provider should consider measures to minimise contact between the parent/carer and other children and staff members.
- J If the child is too distressed perhaps a delayed start to their pre-school entry may be preferred or half hour settling in sessions with their parent/carer. (Declaration for visitors to be completed before entry **and a face covering worn**).
- J For prospective parents/carers wanting to view the pre-school a virtual tour is available on our website.
- J Parent/carers should be available to collect their child promptly should they become unwell at pre-school.

Communications

- J Parents/carers 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.
- J Parents/carers should inform pre-school of their circumstances and if they plan to keep their child away, this helps pre-school to conform to our safeguarding policy.
- J Parents/carers of 3 & 4 year old children receiving 'Free entitlement funding' will be expected to promptly pay the newly implemented consumables charge invoice to assist in the purchase of snacks, resources and consumables which their funding does not cover. (50p for morning and 25p afternoon). This does not apply to children in receipt of "Early Years Pupil Premium" or Two Year Old Funded children.

Visitors

- J 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 pre-school unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance). **No visitor will be permitted into the pre-school if they are symptomatic.**
- J All essential visitors will be required to sign a "Visitors Declaration" and **wear a face covering and will be required to wash their hands upon arrival and when leaving the setting.**
- J Where essential visits are required these should be made outside of the usual pre-school operational hours where possible.
- J Wherever possible parents and carers should not enter the premises.

Travel

- J Wherever possible staff and parents/carers should travel to pre-school alone, using their own transport or if possible walk/cycle.
- J If public transport is necessary, current guidance on the use of public transport must be followed.
- J **Parents/carers should be encouraged to ensure they do not leave travel accessories including buggies, car seats, scooters in the setting premises or grounds.**
- J Pre-school outings are currently not permitted and only be re-introduced when it is safe to do so.

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Hygiene and Health & Safety

Hand Washing

-) All children and staff must wash their hands upon arrival at the pre-school 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.
-) Hands should be dried with paper towels and disposed of in a bin with a foot pedal and lid.
-) T-Towels should not be used in pre-school.

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 blankets 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.
-) 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, sand, mud, water unless it is disposed of at the end of each session**) and the suspension of the sharing of food and utensils.
-) Cut down on the available resources out in the pre-school.
-) 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.
-) Staff should remain 2 metres away from the children when a singing activity is taking place.

PPE

-) Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in early year's settings to protect against COVID- 19 transmission.

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- J PPE should continue to be worn and disposed of as normal for nappy changing, one to one care and the administration of first aid.
- J If a child shows symptoms, staff **should immediately** wear a face mask, visor, disposable gloves and apron. PPE should be disposed of following government guidelines.
- J A Covid-19 'Isolation Box' containing all the above plus water, tissues and a thermometer should be readily available at all times for immediate use if a child/staff member becomes symptomatic. **This should be immediately replenished by management if used.**

Premises Building

- J 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.
- J **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

- J 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 in the entrance area.
- J 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.
- J Equipment used by staff such as stationery etc. should be allocated to individual staff members where possible and cleaned regularly.
- J Floor mats are permitted but should be sanitized and cleaned thoroughly before use daily and deep cleaned each half term.

Supplies Procurement & monitoring

- J The pre-school 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.
- J The pre-school- will not be able to operate without essential supplies required for ensuring infection control.
- J 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 (minimum of 60 degrees) in accordance with relevant guidelines and separate to any other pre-school washing.
- J 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. Milk will be continued to be delivered.
- J Children will continue to bring in packed lunch for 'lunch club'. Lunch boxes/water bottles should be sanitized before being brought into the main hall/classroom.

Responding to a suspected case

- J 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 or obtain a test.
- J 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.
- J The staff member responsible for the child during this time should be the child's key person, where possible. The company will provide suitable PPE for this staff member such as the addition of face mask, visor, disposable gloves and apron. These items will be available in the 'Isolation box' located on the main desk.

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- J 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.
- J 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.
- J In the event of a staff member developing suspected coronavirus symptoms whilst working at the pre-school, 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.

Shortage of staff

If Whitegrove Pre-School has a shortage of staff due to high levels of staff sickness or staff being required to self-isolate a reduced service may be necessary. In this instance children will be accepted into pre-school in the following priority order:

- Vulnerable children who have a social worker working with their family and SEND children
- Children in receipt of Two Year Old Funding or Early Years Pupil Premium
- 3 & 4 year old children (prioritizing children who will transition to school at the end of this academic year)
- All other age groups
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Monitoring of this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Director, new government legislation and policies will be incorporated appropriately as and when required or informed

Declaration

I confirm that I have read, understood and agree to adhere to this policy. I understand that in the event of Whitegrove Pre-school (Initial Steps Ltd) not being able to provide a service due to a National Lockdown or staff shortage due to staff self-isolating (Maximum 10 days) fees will not be payable. If payment has been made an adjustment will be made on the child's next term's invoice or a refund maybe requested.

Should a child be required to self-isolate by NHS track and trace (evidence will be requested) fees will not be charged (Maximum 10 days).

This policy was adopted by: Kate Sillett

Date: 18th February 2021

Date to be reviewed: 18th February 2022

Signed on behalf of the Provider: 

Name of Signatory: Kate Sillett

Role of Signatory: Director

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