**Covid-19 policy**

Little eco steps intend to use this policy to provide precautionary measures to minimise transmission risks of disease in the setting during an epidemic or pandemic.

Aim of Policy

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 policy will be reviewed regularly in line with the government guidelines.

As early years providers we ensure to offer a continuum of extremely 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 if they do not conflict with this policy.

The main areas we will be considering are:

* Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell
* Maintaining personal and respiratory hygiene (hand-washing, catch it, kill it, bin it)
* Ensuring cleanliness of the environment (especially frequently touched surfaces and resources)
* Minimising general contact and mixing (creating bubbles)
* The use of Protective and Personal Equipment (PPE)
* Testing

Focus/ Areas of Consideration / Recommendations

Children

Attendance

* Only children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period should attend the setting
* It is the parent / careers responsibility to be open and honest with the setting and keep your child at home if they or anyone in the same household is showing any of the following symptoms: HIGH TEMPERATURE, CONTINUOUS COUGH, LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL or has had a positive test result or been contacted by track at trace.

Physical Distancing/grouping

* In little eco steps we are one bubble. Our staff are always the same.
* As we have such a large space we are able to separate the children and staff into groups and keep numbers lower in each area of activity.
* For all Care routines such as provision of meals the area must be cleaned before and after. We try to limit the amount of children sitting at each take to help with the spread of virus.
* Children going to toilets must be kept to a minimum 1-2 at a time to keep distance between them.
* Homework is done at different times to keep numbers lower.
* We try to use our outside space as much as we can to allow the children as much fresh air as possible
* If there is to be sunscreen applied, we will ask the parents to do so that morning before coming to us. If it has to reapplied we will wear PPE to protect ourselves when doing such a close contact care routine.

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 on entry and continuously throughout the day, coughing/ sneezing 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 because of Covid-19 and staff need to ensure they are aware of children’s attachments and their need for emotional support at this time.
* Children will have access of fresh drinks of water throughout the day if they are thirsty, staff will monitor this and ensure all cups are put into the sink to be washed after each use so no cross contamination,

Attendance of staff

* Staff should only attend work 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.
* Staff need to be open and honest if they feel they are experiencing symptoms and keep us informed.

Physical distancing/ grouping /safety

* Staff to be informed of measures in place and any new or updated 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 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.
* Staff may be required to oversee specific rooms or areas including the outdoors to minimise their contact with surfaces etc. This includes potentially working from one table if tabletop toys are available. Staff will be responsible to ensure appropriate cleaning takes place and enough ventilation is in the room such as opening windows.
* 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 the 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. If they have to be done through face to face, they should be kept to a minimum time wise and all staff need to keep a safe distance.
* 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.
* All staff to complete the COVID-19 Training online.

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
* Drop off and pick up means no parents will have access to the building, they must stay outside, we will check to see who is at the door, keep them closed, get the children and their belongings together, and then open the door to their family so keeps contact to a minimum.
* If parents need to speak to us they can do so from a safe distance at the door
* If it’s a more serious matter that needs addressed by meeting we could use zoom, or else a meeting face to face with correct PPE wore, social distancing, at a time when no children are in the building and keep staff and family members to a minimum.
* 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.
* The provider should consider measures to minimise contact between the parent and other children and staff members.
* Parents will not be allowed the setting, they must stay 2 meters away from staff
* We also have signs on our door stating clearly no one is allowed in the building

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.
* Although handovers are kept to minimum, we encourage parents and staff to have continuous communication via kindervibe app or phone calls throughout the day.
* Any parent meetings can be arranged via zoom at a convenient time for both the key person and parent/ guardian, or as stated above face to face but with appropriate ppe, social distancing and when no other children are in building, with staff and families keeping to a minimum for the meeting.

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 setting unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance).
* Where essential visits are required these should be made outside of the usual setting operational hours where possible, if this is not possible the area will be cleared of children, staff and the visitor will be asked to wear appropriate PPE. All visitors must sign our visitors book. To be kept for track and tracing records.
* Any Visitor that refuses to comply will be denied access to the setting.
* Parents and carers should not enter the premises, unless necessary in an emergency.

Travel

* Staff from little eco steps use their own cars to collect children, we must disinfect before and after every use.
* Staff should wear a mask
* Windows should be open where possible to allow in fresh air
* All children and staff should sanitise their hands Before getting into the car

Hygiene and Health & Safety

Hand Washing

* All children and staff must sanitise and wash their hands upon arrival at the club for at least 20 seconds.
* Hand washing is available in the toilet facilities
* 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 individuals.
* 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.
  + We have a covid 19 cleaning risk assessment to follow
  + Scouts come in on a Saturday to do a deep clean after we have been in all week

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.
* Bodily fluids must be double bagged and disposed of in a bin with a bag, lid, and foot pedal.

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)or every child will have their own dough in a bag labelled with their name which they cannot share, and the suspension of the sharing of food and utensils.
* Cut down on the available resources out in the setting.
* 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 cleaned after every use

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 one to one care and the administration of first aid, and at meal times.
* If a child shows symptoms, staff should wear a face mask, disposable gloves, and apron if a 2-meter distance cannot always be maintained. PPE should be disposed of following government guidelines

Premises Building

* Keep windows open where possible to ensure good levels of ventilation.

Resources

* Children should not be permitted to bring items from home into the setting unless 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 sterilised. 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.

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.
* 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.

In the event of a positive case, outbreak, or closure.

* Parents/ carers are responsible to notify a member of the management team at the earliest point of receiving a positive test result.
* If a “bubble” has been exposed a member of the management team will then notify all families within that ‘bubble’ as early as possible to notify of closures or to arrange immediate collection of their child.
* Additional cleaning will be arranged for that ‘bubble’ to ensure minimal spread of the virus.
* Staff will continue to contact the parents and families via the kindervibe app with activities, videos and or to answer any questions and offer support.
* The management will inform early years team as soon as possible, and follow the guidance from public health agency.

Procedure

The child will have to isolate for period of isolation recommended by public health and anyone that lives within the same household will have to also follow the current public health advice unless tested and has a Negative test result. Isolation MUST-continue until results are back.

Any parent / career failing to inform the setting of anyone living in the household with symptoms, a positive result or being exposed to COVID-19 and has been advised to isolate from track and trace but continues to attend will risk immediate termination of their contract with little eco steps for putting other children, staff and families at risk.

Reviewed January 2022