



## Ditton Church Pre-School



### Epidemic and Pandemic Policy v8 (Covid 19)

#### Statement of Intent

Ditton Church 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.

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 ensure physical distancing is enabled where possible 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
- 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.
- DCPS will be risk assessing with regular health questionnaires for returning children
- Extremely vulnerable children should follow current available advice.

##### *Use of more than one childcare provider*

- During any epidemic or pandemic, we will ensure we maintain contact with our local childminders and other settings with whom we have shared attendance of a child. Parents will be encouraged to follow Government guidance relating to shared care, which may include limiting to one childcare provider at this time, if possible. If this is not possible, for example, due to work commitments, we will ask the other provider to supply us with a copy of their own risk assessment and we will provide them with a copy of ours, to ensure all parties are comfortable that suitable precautions are being taken in accordance with guidance given.
- If parents do need to continue using more than one childcare provider, they will be asked to put into writing their reasons for this. All parents will be asked to sign a parent declaration form to accept the terms and conditions of attendance at our setting and to confirm they are following all other Government guidance, such as appropriate social distancing.

##### *Physical Distancing/grouping*

- Children may be organised into small groups and will access the outdoor area for a large percentage of the day, where possible, subject to staff ratios and weather.
- The use of communal internal spaces should be restricted as much as possible. Outdoor spaces will be utilised as much as possible.
- 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 will 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 will be supported to understand the changes and challenges they may be encountering as a result of any epidemic or pandemic, such as 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, as far as possible, whilst following Government Guidelines.
- Snack and lunch times may be altered or cancelled as appropriate, subject to opening hours.



## **Workforce**

### *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 may be supplied with Lateral Flow testing kits and are requested to take part in twice weekly testing when Government require.
- DCPS may consider risk assessing with regular health questionnaires for returning staff.
- Consideration will 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.
- The setting will ensure a named Manager or Deputy, a named DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead), or Deputy DSL, a named Senco or assistant Senco and at least one qualified first aider are on site at all times.

### *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 will be informed of measures in place and sign a disclaimer to state they have read and understood the preschool policies and procedures.
- Staff may be advised by the government not to wear PPE such as facemasks during their day, (Covid 19 advice). 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 members should avoid physical contact with each other including handshakes, hugs etc.
- Staff to wear fresh, clean clothes for each session.
- Staff are advised 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 or by maintaining a social distance.
- All staff members will 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.
- Aim to minimise drop off and pick up to one parent per family.



- Arrange drop off and pick up at the preschool entrance 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.

#### *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. (Parent declaration and policy)
- 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.
- Parents may be needed to support the running of the preschool by providing extra resources and consumables the preschool may not be able to source or afford such as cleaning wipes or products, tissues, toilet rolls etc. This is to ensure the safe running of the preschool is not hindered by lack of equipment and resources.
- During Pre-School hours parents/carers should communicate via phone or email, to minimise risk of transmission by avoiding prolonged face to face conversations or shared use of communication books.

#### **Visitors**

- Attendance to the setting should be restricted to only children and staff as far as practically possible and visitors will 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.

#### **Travel**

- Wherever possible staff and parents should travel to preschool alone, using their own transport or if possible, walk.
- If the use of 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 be suspended 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 thoroughly or use antibacterial gel upon arrival.
- Children and staff members will 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.
- Staff dealing with bodily fluid spills should follow the correct procedures as normal.

##### *Cleaning*

- An enhanced cleaning schedule will be implemented that includes furniture, surfaces and children's toys and equipment and all staff are responsible in their area of work.
- Communal areas, 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 by double bagging and placing 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. (60 degree wash)

### *Risk assessment*

- The setting and all activity will 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 will 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) and the suspension of the sharing of food and utensils.
- DCPS will reduce the available resources out in the preschool.  
Remove anything which cannot be easily wiped down or washed, throughout the day and at the end of the day.
- Play food, play cutlery and crockery etc. will 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 the premises have been temporarily closed during the lockdown period or where they may need to temporarily close during future lockdowns appropriate Health & Safety checks will be conducted prior to reopening including legionnaires checks.
- DCPS will keep windows open where possible to ensure good levels of ventilation. If doors are opened ensure appropriate health and safety checks have been completed.

### *Resources*

Children will not be permitted to bring items from home into the setting unless absolutely essential for their wellbeing. In most circumstances, children will be asked not to bring in anything from home, but if appropriate/necessary 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 will be regularly washed and/or sterilized. Any resources which are difficult to clean will be removed.
- Equipment used by staff such as stationery, tablets etc. should be allocated to individual staff members where possible and cleaned regularly.



*Supplies Procurement & monitoring*

- The preschool will 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.
- 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 maintained 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 will 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. Parents should also follow current testing advice for their child, themselves and their household.
- Whilst waiting for the child to be collected they will be isolated from others in a previously identified room or area. If possible, a window will be opened for ventilation.
- The staff member responsible for the child during this time will be a staff member. DCPS will provide suitable PPE for this staff member such as the addition of a face mask, visor disposable gloves and apron.
- The area will 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 setting, 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.

**Monitoring of this policy**

*This policy will be reviewed monthly during an epidemic or pandemic and then annually, by the setting manager/committee. Government legislation and policies will be incorporated appropriately as and when required or informed.*

**This policy was adopted by the:** Ditton Church Pre-School Management Committee

**Date:** March 2025

**Signed on behalf of the Management Committee:** .....

**Role of signatory:** Chair of Management Committee

**Next review date:** March 2026