

## **COVID-19 Policy**

Pickering Pre-School Playgroup intend to use this policy to provide precautionary measures to minimize risks of disease in the setting during an epidemic or pandemic. We will follow the latest Government guidance or requirements and as a result this policy should be regularly reviewed.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 the Government moved into a new phase of its Covid-19 response "Living with Covid". As a result the actions for early years and childcare providers during the Covid-19 outbreak guidance has been withdrawn with providers now directed to the broader "Emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings guidance". In line with this previous national Covid-19 requirements have been relaxed and replaced with general guidance.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Coronavirus disapplications are no longer in force and all early years providers must meet the requirements set out in the statutory framework for the EYFS.

Current NHS guidance states that the symptoms of Covid-19 can include:

- A high temperature or shivering (hot to touch on chest or back, you do not need to measure temperature)
- A new, continuous cough (coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours.
- A loss or change to sense of smell or taste
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling tired or exhausted
- An aching body
- A headache
- A sore throat
- A blocked or runny nose
- Loss of appetite
- Diarrhoea
- Feeling sick or being sick

Government guidance currently states that adults with Covid-19 should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people and in addition, either have a temperature or do not feel well enough to work or do normal activities. It adds that "you can go back to your normal activities when you feel better or do not have a high temperature"

If a child is experiencing Covid-19 symptoms government guidance states that a child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have symptoms of Covid-19 and they either, have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to school, college or childcare, or do their normal activities.

There is now NO legal requirement to isolate following a positive Covid-19 test.

The Government recommends that if an adult tests positive they should

- Try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for **5** days.
- Avoid meeting people at higher risk from Covid-19 for ten days. Especially if their immune system means they are at higher risk of serious illness from Covid-19, even if they have had a Covid-19 vaccine.

For children the Government advice is:

- "try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for **3** days starting from the day after the positive test".

"This is because children tend to be less infectious to others for less time than adults. If they are well and do not have temperature after three days, there's a much lower risk that they'll pass on Covid-19 to others".

### **Our Policy.**

**In line with Government guidance, our policy will be;**

- Staff / Volunteers who test positive will continue to be advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least **5** days. This is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our vulnerable staff, children and families
- Children who test positive will continue to be advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least **3** days from the test date. This is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our vulnerable staff, children and families

### **Informing Ofsted.**

There is no requirement to inform Ofsted of a confirmed case of COVID-19 affecting a child or member of staff.

There is no requirement to inform Ofsted of the setting closing, as long as there is no significant effect on how we provide childcare.

### **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. Parents will be recommended to follow Government advice. If possible, a window should be opened for ventilation. The area should be thoroughly cleaned, immediately.
- In the event of a staff member developing suspected coronavirus symptoms whilst working at the nursery, they should return home immediately and follow Government guidance.

### **Staff Shortage problem.**

Child to Adult ratios must be observed. Other Statutory EYFS requirements must be adhered to in respect of staffing numbers.

Government guidance states that if a setting becomes short staffed due to illness we can prioritise places in the setting (for example, if we cannot operate to full capacity). We should give priority to children of critical workers and vulnerable children, and then three and four year olds, in particular those who will be transitioning to Reception, followed by the younger age groups.

Closure for any day will require the Early Years team at North Yorkshire Council to be notified (in respect of funding claims) and also milk claims adjusted accordingly with CoolMilk and the NMRU. Unplanned closure (such as for Covid-19) for less than five normal pre-school days will not affect milk figures, we are to submit child numbers as would have been expected on the days where closed.

In the event of an outbreak, or closure. Additional cleaning will be arranged for the setting to ensure minimal spread of the virus. Staff will continue to contact the parents and families via the Tapestry app with activities, videos, progress reports and wellbeing checks or to answer any questions and offer support. Parents will be directed to our Facebook page for additional activities, etc.

### **Control Measures**

To attempt to prevent the spread of Covid-19 we must still obey rigorous infection control measures. All adults, including staff, and our families should be confident that our setting has rigorous infection control measures in place such as:

- good basic hygiene practices such as regular hand-washing (practitioners and children)
- supervise young children to ensure they wash their hands for 20 seconds more often than usual with soap and water
- clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces more often than usual using your standard cleaning products
- waterproof dressing to cover on any existing wounds or lesions
- personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons and gloves are used as necessary
- clear procedures are in place for cleaning equipment and wider environment
- immediate cleaning of spillages of blood and other bodily fluids
- clear procedures on safe disposal of waste
- infection control guidance and management procedures in place which are clearly understood and adhered to by staff
- any items that come into contact with mouths such as cups, bottles and straws should not be shared. Staff should monitor to reduce cross-contamination.

Staff are to be informed of measures in place and any new or updated policies and procedures.

**Handwashing.** Public Health England advises that children and staff should be encouraged to catch sneezes with a tissue, bin the tissue and wash their hands for at least 20 seconds. The "Catch it, Bin it, Kill it" slogan should be followed.

Adults should also remind children to wash their hands:

- after outside breaks
- before meals and snack times
- after using the toilet
- when they arrive at your setting
- at the end of the day before they go home.

If access to soap and water is not to hand at the time, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used instead. Products with minimum 60% alcohol should be used. It is important that everyone should try not to touch their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

**Staff Training.** 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.

**P.P.E.** Staff may continue to wear PPE if they wish though this will no longer be routinely supplied by the setting. This is down to individual preference. A stock of facemasks is available on the reception area shelving. All PPE should be removed and disposed of following current government guidelines.

**Ventilation.** Good ventilation can help reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus, so a focus on improving general air flow, preferably through fresh air or effective mechanical systems, can help to create a safer environment for staff and children. It is important to ensure the setting is

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well ventilated and that a comfortable environment is maintained. Poorly ventilated spaces should be identified as part of a risk assessment and take steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas, giving particular consideration when holding events where visitors such as parents are on site. Where it is safe to do so, opening external windows can improve natural ventilation and, in addition, opening internal doors, can also assist with creating a throughput of air. If necessary, external opening doors may also be used (where safe to do so).

**The use of CO2 monitors** - We have been supplied with a CO2 monitor and this should be placed within the main room of the pre-school. This is to help identify areas of poor ventilation.

**Parents.** Physical distancing. Social distancing requirements at drop offs and collections are no longer required.

**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 the Tapestry APP or phone calls).

**Additional information** - The Department for Education has a helpline for early years providers, as well as parents, carers and young people who have questions about coronavirus.

Telephone - 0800 046 8687

Email – [DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk)

### **Legislation and Guidance,**

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 Organization (WHO).

Advice from but not limited to:

The Secretary of State,  
The Chief Medical Officer,  
Local Authority (LA)  
Department for Education (DfE).  
Early Years Alliance

The policy also has regard to Ofsted and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance where appropriate.

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of Pickering Pre-School Playgroup held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.**

**Date to be reviewed – Before end of August 2024.**

**Signed on behalf of the management committee**

**Name of signatory – Richard Allenby (Chairperson).**