

Covid19 – Effective Infection Prevention

The coronavirus has sadly impacted on the lives of all of us in some form or another. As a result, our childminding setting has undergone many changes which are being implemented in order to ensure that those that attend, as well as the staff, and parents are safeguarded as much as possible from the potential threat of coronavirus.

We will continue to update our procedures in accordance with government guidance.

We have also ensured that we have undertaken further research and learning in the area of infection prevention to ensure that we as a childcare provider can implement the correct policies and procedures.

We are asking all parents/guardians, members of the childminding team and family not to enter the childminding setting if they or any family members are displaying ANY symptoms of coronavirus.

Please ensure that only one parent comes to the door when dropping off and picking up children from the setting. We ask that parents do not enter the setting so that we can reduce the number of people in the building each day.

Parents will be asked to stagger the times in which they drop off and pick up children as this will help alleviate the adult to adult contact.

When children arrive to the setting, we will ask that they are dropped off at the front door, and we will ask them to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds. In accordance with government guidance we will ask children to wash their hands regularly including after they cough or sneeze to minimise the risk of potential infection within the setting. When collecting your child we ask that you also come to the front door and a member of staff will bring your child/children to you. Children will also be asked to wash their hands before they leave the setting.

As per normal routine children will continue to wash their hands before and after lunch and when they visit the toilet. Children will have access to soap, warm water and paper towels to wash and dry their hands regularly.

The areas in which the children will have access to will be cleaned before arrival, each time children go outside to play and after the children leave.

Children will be in groups called play pods. A play pod is used to describe a small group of children and adults who remain in that group. The intention is that the same staff and children stay together in the same group each day, through the day as far as possible. The purpose of a play pod is to limit the number of people children and staff has contact with, to facilitate tracing and to support close positive interactions between children and their adult caregivers. Children will be able to share after school resources within their

own play pod and these resources will not be shared with any other play pod. Children will not be allowed to share any resources brought from home with other children in the setting, we will continue to provide lots of fun activities for the children including loads of games, outdoor play, crafts, cookery and experiments.

Illness and Exclusions from our setting

The childcare setting will have procedures in place to follow when a child becomes sick while attending the setting and measures in place to protect as much as possible the other children and childcare staff from covid19 illnesses. The Following procedure will be implemented to help prevent the spread of covid19:

- Children should not attend the setting if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household. Families must also follow the government guidelines if they have visited a country which is on the quarantine list.
- We will have a plan in place for sharing information and guidelines with parents and guardians and this includes:
 1. School staff will check with parents and guardians daily on the status of their children when children are dropped off at school and will pass on any need to know information to the After School staff in the afternoon.
 2. We will ensure we have up to date email addresses, home, work and mobile phone numbers for all parents and guardians of children attending the setting to ensure we can reach them at all times.
 3. We will continue to provide parents with up to date information on covid19 symptoms, transmission, and prevention and when to seek medical attention.
 4. We will encourage parents and guardians to share information with their children where appropriate.
 5. We will ensure that parents and guardians know to keep their children at home if they are sick, have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for covid19 or if someone in their household has symptoms.
 6. We will ask that parents voluntary screen and check their children each morning for any covid19 symptoms before they attend the childcare setting or school.
 7. We ask that all parents and guardians inform the manager of deputy manager of the childcare setting if they, their child or any other member of the household or any other person they had contact with has tested positive for covid19.
 8. We will notify the Public Health Agency and HSC Trust Early Years Team if at any time someone who has been in the childcare setting tests positive for covid19.

If a child becomes unwell or starts displaying covid19 symptoms while attending the setting we will:

- Contact parents and guardians immediately and seek medical assistance where appropriate.
- We will have a designated area where sick children can rest, be isolated and attended to by a limited number of trained staff. If direct care is needed while waiting for the child to be collected the staff will wear PPE – a mask, apron and gloves.
- Where necessary we will seek further advice on the child's symptoms for example by using the Covid19 NI APP for further information and advice.
- When a child is being isolated we will move them as far away from other staff and children as possible and ensure to have appropriate ventilation.
- If the child needs to use a bathroom while waiting to be collected we will ensure to use a different bathroom which will then be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before any other use of the facility.
- In an emergency we will not hesitate to call 999 if a child is seriously ill, or injured or their life is at risk. Following government advice we will not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or hospital.

If a member of staff in the childcare setting becomes unwell with any covid19 symptoms, they will be sent home immediately and advised to follow the covid19 advice for households with possible coronavirus infection.

If a member of staff has come in contact with a positive case if they are fully vaccinated (i.e. it is more than 14 days since they have received the second dose of an approved Covid-19 vaccine) they are no longer automatically required to self-isolate for 10 days if they are in close contact with someone who tests positive for Covid-19, and provided they do not have symptoms of Covid-19. Instead, they should get a PCR test on day two and day eight of the 10-day period.

If a staff member develops Covid-19 symptoms, whether vaccinated or not, they should immediately book a PCR test and self-isolate until they receive the result. If the test result is negative they are no longer required to self-isolate.

Anyone who tests positive for Covid-19 is required to self-isolate for 10 days from either the date of symptom onset or from when the test was taken if there were no symptoms.

Young people aged 5 to 17 who are not fully vaccinated, and are identified as a close contact of someone with Covid-19, should self-isolate and take a PCR test. If the PCR test result is negative they can end their self-isolation, and arrange for another PCR test eight days after the last known contact.

Should they develop symptoms at any time, they should self-isolate until they have a result from their PCR test. If the PCR test is positive, they should complete a full 10

days of self-isolation from the date of symptom onset. If the PCR test is negative, they can stop isolating.

Children under the age of 5 who are close contacts will be encouraged, but not required, to take a PCR test. They do not need to isolate unless they develop symptoms of Covid-19 or have a positive PCR result.

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

Where a child or staff member tests positive, the rest of their play pod within the childcare setting will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 10 days. The other household members of the play pod do not need to self-isolate unless the child they live with from that play pod subsequently develop symptoms or has a positive test.

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health Agency will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise our setting on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases the whole setting may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure.

Effective infection protection and control

In our childcare setting we will introduce a range of approaches to help stop the spread of infection

These can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, creates an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

These include:

- Ensuring all staff have access to online information/training on covid19, including how the illness is spread, how to prevent its spread, symptoms and when to seek medical assistance for a sick child or member of staff.
- Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the childcare setting.
- Cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered
- Ensuring good respiratory hygiene - promote the '**catch it, bin it, kill it**' approach
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products and also regularly cleaning other areas where infection could spread such as bathrooms.

- Minimising contact and mixing by altering, as much as possible, the environment (such as room layout) and timetables (such as staggered break times). We will also use bigger spaces and outdoor spaces as much as possible. We will ensure children only mix within their own play pod and will not mix with any children from other play pods to reduce the amount of contact children have with other children each day.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) including face coverings and face masks

Staff in childcare settings will not require PPE. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:

- Children whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their particular circumstances or individual care needs. In these situations they will continue to receive their care in the same way as they did pre covid19.
- If a child becomes unwell with symptoms of covid19 while in the setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home a face mask, apron and gloves should be worn by the staff members caring for the child.

Group sizes (Play pods)

It will be our priority to ensure as much as reasonably possible children:

- avoid contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of the setting
- minimising contact and mixing

We appreciate that it is still important to reduce the contact between people which is why if we take any trips outside of the setting and we will ensure we can do this in a safe way ensuring we have limited contact with other people outside of the setting. Children will be allowed to mix only within their own play pod in our setting and will stay away from other people and groups of different play pods while in the setting.

Our staff to child ratios within the setting will continue to apply as set out by the minimum standards.

Planning and organising

In our childminding setting we have thought deeply about how we will implement the new guidelines provided by the Government and how we will keep your children safe as well as ourselves.

We have undertaken the following:

- refreshed our risk assessment and other health and safety advice for children, young people and staff in light of recent government advice. We have identified protective measures (such as the things listed below).
- also ensure that all health and safety compliance checks have been undertaken before opening the setting
- organise children into groups (play pods), to minimise contact and mixing within the setting.
- We have organised the environment which allows children to sit and play at a safe distance where required.
- We have considered spending more time outside and developing play spaces where possible in the outdoors.
- We will introduce a stagger drop-off and collection time for parents to limit adult to adult contact and collection and drop off to be arranged at the front door to the setting to limit the amount of people entering the building.
- We have considered how to keep groups of children together throughout the day and to avoid mixing with other groups.
- Children will only share after school toys and resources within their own play pod to limit the sharing of resources. If children bring any toys or resources from home they will not be allowed to share these with any other children. Toys will be cleaned at the end of each day.
- Staff will wear appropriate protective equipment when preparing snack for the children and each child will be given their own individual snack, there will be no buffet service as this would mean children all touching the same foods and plates etc.

We will ensure that:

- children are always in the same groups each day, and different groups are not mixed during the day
- ensure that the same members of staff are assigned to each group
- ensure that wherever possible children use the same area of a setting throughout the day, with a thorough cleaning of the rooms at the end of the day.

For cleaning and hygiene in our childminding setting we will:

- ensure that sufficient hand washing facilities are available.

- clean surfaces that children and young people are touching, such as desks, chairs, doors, sinks, toilets, light switches, bannisters, more regularly than normal

Ensure that all adults and children:

- frequently wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly.
- clean their hands-on arrival at the setting, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing
- are encouraged not to touch their mouth, eyes, and nose
- use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it')
- consider how to encourage young children to learn and practise these habits through games, songs, and repetition
- ensure that bins for tissues are emptied throughout the day
- where possible, all spaces should be well ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows) or ventilation units
- prop doors open, where safe to do so (bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding), to limit use of door handles and aid ventilation
- by having proportionate supplies of soap, anti-bacterial gel and cleaning products if needed
- promote normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in an educational or childcare setting

Reduce mixing within childcare setting by:

- accessing rooms directly from outside where possible
- staggering movement in the setting - children and young people should clean their hands beforehand and enter in the groups they are already in; different groups should be kept apart as much as possible.
- ensuring that toilets do not become crowded by limiting the number of children or young people who use the toilet facilities at one time
- noting that some children and young people will need additional support to follow these measures (for example social stories to support them in understanding how to follow rules)

Use outside space:

- we will regularly use our outdoor space throughout the days as this provides better ventilation and more space for children to move around.

Reduce the use of shared resources:

- by limiting the amount of shared resources that are taken home and limit exchange of take-home resources between children, young people and childminder
- by seeking to prevent the sharing of stationery and other equipment where possible. Shared materials and surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected more frequently

As a childcare setting we will continue to follow the current guidance and regularly review and make changes to our policies, procedures and risk assessment in accordance with any changes in the guidance. We will ensure to keep parents, guardians and staff members up to date when any changes are made.