

Noah's Ark Harpenden Limited

NOAH'S ARK **Epidemic and Pandemic Policy**

Aim of Policy

This Policy defines and assists the operating arrangements in place within Noah's Ark 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 and new precautionary measures have been introduced and practices have been reflected upon.

Bubbles

Where we refer to Bubbles, the children may be part of a Bubble when numbers require. The reason for the Bubble is to create socially distanced groups within the School. The Bubbles won't mix. Your child will be part of a little team that will remain the same, with the same key workers as much as possible. Currently numbers mean we don't need to separate into bubbles but if the numbers of children increase, we will have to implement this.

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 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
- Ensuring cleanliness of the environment (especially frequently touched surfaces)
- Minimising general contact and mixing (creating bubbles of children and adults and limiting numbers)
- 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.

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- Providers may consider taking temperatures of children on arrival and risk assessing with health questionnaires for returning children.
- Extremely vulnerable children should continue to shield under government advice
- Families who attend at least two settings should choose only one for the remainder of the term to ensure their 'bubble' remains small.

Physical Distancing/grouping

- Children may be organised into small groups - this will also involve the outdoor area. Wherever possible these small groups or 'bubbles' should not mix during the day as best as possible. This is to minimise contact with others and mixing. Staff may exercise their own judgement during the day for the high standards of safety for all children.
- Children in small groups should have the same staff team caring for them wherever possible to limit the amount of people coming into contact with each other.
- Smaller amounts of children in the whole setting will be preferable. This can be achieved by:
 - A temporary cap on the amount of children in the setting at anyone time.
 - Temporarily limiting funded hours to only 15 hours per child, ensuring all children have access to some school time.
 - Grouping children to certain days, such as in groups of children moving to next school, this would help with transitions.
 - Prioritising children such as those who are vulnerable, those with special educational needs, those from households where both parents work esp keyworker parents (or work full time)
 - The take up on places may be small so there may be no need to change children's hours.
- Care routines including snack, nappy changing and toileting should be within the space allocated to each 'bubble' wherever possible.
- The use of communal internal spaces should be restricted as much as possible and outdoor spaces should be utilised as much as possible and used by 'bubbles' in different areas during the day.
- Sunscreen should be applied by the parents / carers before the child arrives at school. T shirts covering shoulders and leggings would be preferable to minimise how much top up of sunscreen the school staff will do.

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.
- At snack time and lunch time tables will be limited to a number of children and tables will be spaced apart.
- **Pre- School only** - Packed lunches are to be brought in and placed on the lunch trolley as usual. Parents are asked to provide easy to open pots for their child and cut up grapes, tomatoes, etc as usual so as to make the lunch session as simple as possible for the child.

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Staff

Attendance

- Staff should only attend school if they are symptom free, have completed the required isolation period or achieved a negative test result if applicable. All staff and their household are eligible for testing if they display symptoms.
- Providers will be taking the temperature of all staff on arrival and risk assessing with regular health questionnaires for all staff.
- Consideration should be given to limiting the number of staff in the school 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.
- **Jan 2021 – Staff asked to complete lateral flow testing twice weekly.**

Physical distancing/ grouping /safety

- Staff to be informed of measures in place and sign a disclaimer to state they have read and understood the Noah's Ark COVID 19 school policies and procedures.
- Staff are expected to adhere to the rules of the Tier they live in.
- Wherever possible and where applicable staff should remain with the small group of children, the 'bubble' of children who they are allocated to and not come into contact with other groups.
- Emergency revisions to the EYFS may have been implemented which provides some flexibility on ratios and qualifications to make this feasible.
- Staff have been advised by the government not to wear PPE such as facemasks during their day, but if they feel safer wearing PPE then they may make the personal decision to do so. They 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 will be achieved through a range of strategies including the staggering of breaks and subdivision of spaces allocated to team breaks where possible.
- Staff may be required to supervise areas including the outdoors to minimise their contact with surfaces etc. This includes potentially working from one particular table if table top toys are available. 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 for outside play, ensure the safety of the children is maintained.
- Only 2 members of staff in the kitchen at a time.
- 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 they enter their home and take a shower immediately to remove any germs they may have picked up.

Training

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- 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.
- 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.
- Families to be issued with staggered times to drop off/collect. Social distancing to be adhered to at all times.
- Parents and carers who bring their child/children on foot or via public transport will be asked to observe a one-way system, entering down the long path from the car park and exiting through the gate. **Pre-school only**
- Aim to minimise the 'pinch points' during the day and limit drop off and pick up to one parent per family.
- Where parents are waiting to collect their child, social distancing must be observed at all times.
- Consider allowing a parent to enter the school for the purpose of a settling in session if needed, if not doing so would cause a child distress, this could take place in the outdoor environment. The provider should consider measures to minimise contact between the parent and other children and staff members.
- If the child is too distressed perhaps a delayed start to their school entry may be preferred or half hour settling in sessions without their parent.
- **January 2021 - parents asked to wear a mask at drop off and pick up and advised that staff may do the same due to the new strain of Covid-19 being more contagious.**

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 school of their circumstances and if they plan to keep their child away, this helps school to conform to our Safeguarding Policy.
- Staff will sign out a child when they are collected.
- If a child has an accident, a staff member will inform the Parent on collection and sign on their behalf to acknowledge the accident.

Visitors

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- 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 school unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance).
- Where essential visits are required these should be made outside of the usual school 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 school alone, using their own transport or if possible, walk.
- If 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.
- Planned outings and group events will not currently take place.

Hygiene and Health & Safety

Hand Washing

- All children and staff must wash their hands upon arrival at Noah's Ark 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.

Cleaning

- An enhanced cleaning schedule must be implemented that includes furniture, surfaces, 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 during sessions and cleaned thoroughly every day after the session.
- A deep clean may be needed after a child has become ill.

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. Bins will be regularly emptied.
- 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.

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.

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- 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 (play dough, clay).
- Cut down on the available resources out in the school.
- Remove anything which cannot be easily wiped down or washed at the end of the day.

PPE

- Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in Early Years settings to protect against COVID- 19 transmission.
- Staff who are concerned or who have underlying health concerns, especially with the new strain of Covid-19 may choose to wear PPE.
- 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

- 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.
- Keep windows open where possible to ensure good levels of ventilation. If doors are opened ensure the children safety is maintained with securely shut gates.

Resources

- 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.
- 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.
- Equipment used by staff such as stationary, tablets etc. should be allocated to individual staff members where possible and cleaned regularly.
- There will be no children's library at this time.

Supplies Procurement & monitoring

- The 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.
- The school will not be able to operate without essential supplies required for ensuring infection control.
- 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 in accordance with relevant guidelines and separate to any other school washing.
- 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.

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 and testing guidance.

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- 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 after the child has been collected.
- 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 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.

Monitoring of this policy

This policy will be reviewed when Government guidance is updated by the setting manager/director. New Government legislation and policies will be incorporated appropriately as and when required or informed.

Review and Revision Tracking		
Date	Type	Name
May 2020	Creation	DAS/CLM
December 2020	Review	CLM
January 2021	Review	CLM