

# Guidance for Early Years Settings - COVID-19 Site Operating Procedures

These guidelines are intended to assist early years providers in implementing precautionary measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 disease in childcare settings. Providers should build on these considerations and guidelines to form Site Operating Procedures (SOP), suitable to their situation. These guidelines are based on Public Health England and Department for Education guidance for educational settings and their key workers.

The fundamental principle of this guidance is to ensure physical distancing between identified groups and to implement good hygiene practices. The design of settings as relatively small communities for day care on non-domestic premises and further subdivided rooms, greatly assists our ability to create physical distance between groups and cluster children into specific cohorts or 'bubbles'.

Focus	Area of consideration	Recommendations
Children	Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period should attend the setting.</li> <li>• Providers may consider taking temperatures of children on arrival and risk assessing with regular health questionnaires for returning children.</li> </ul>
	Physical distancing/ grouping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are usually organised into small groups or rooms within early years settings. Wherever possible these small groups or 'bubbles' should not mix during the day.</li> <li>• Care routines including provision of meals, nappy changing and toileting should be within the space allocated to each 'bubble' wherever possible.</li> <li>• The use of communal internal spaces should be restricted as much as possible.</li> <li>• Outdoor spaces should be used by different 'bubbles' at different times of the day.</li> <li>• Distancing of beds/cots should be facilitated wherever possible.</li> </ul>
	Wellbeing and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children should be supported in age appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe including regular hand washing and sneezing into a tissue</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

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Workforce	Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff should only attend the nursery if they are symptom free, have completed the required isolation period or achieved a negative test result.</li> <li>• Providers may consider taking temperature of staff on arrival and risk assessing with regular health questionnaires for returning staff.</li> </ul>
	Physical distancing/ grouping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wherever possible 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.</li> <li>• Emergency revisions to the EYFS have been implemented which provides some flexibility on ratios and qualifications to make this feasible.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Staff members should avoid physical contact with each other including handshakes, hugs etc.</li> <li>• Where possible, meetings and training sessions should be conducted through virtual conferencing.</li> </ul>
	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Parents	Physical distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only parents who are symptom free and or have completed the required isolation periods will be able to drop off or collect their child.</li> <li>• Aim to limit drop off and pick up to 1 parent per family and stagger the timings where possible.</li> <li>• Arrange drop off and pick up at the nursery entrance to avoid parents entering the nursery unnecessarily.</li> <li>• When parents are waiting to drop off or collect their child, physical distancing should be maintained in a safe area</li> <li>• Consider allowing parents to enter the nursery for the purpose of settling in sessions if not doing so would cause a child distress. The provider should consider measures to minimise contact between the parent and other children and staff members.</li> </ul>
	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Visitors	Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance to the setting should be restricted to children and staff as far as practically possible and visitors should not be permitted to the nursery unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance). Where essential visits are required these should be made outside of the usual nursery operational hours where possible.</li> </ul>

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Travel	Travel associated with setting operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wherever possible staff and parents should travel to the nursery alone, using their own transport.</li> <li>• If public transport is necessary, current guidance on the use of public transport must be followed.</li> <li>• Parents should be encouraged to ensure they do not leave travel accessories including buggies, car seats, scooters in the setting premises, but rather in external buggy areas if necessary.</li> <li>• Outings from the setting into the local community should be restricted unless the setting has no or very limited outside space in which case outings to open spaces which do not include mixing with members of the general public could be considered.</li> </ul>
Hygiene and Health & Safety	Hand Washing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children and staff must wash their hands upon arrival at the nursery.</li> <li>• Children and staff members should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently.</li> </ul>
	Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An enhanced cleaning schedule must be implemented that includes furniture, surfaces and children's toys and equipment.</li> <li>• Communal area, touch points and hand washing facilities must be cleaned and sanitised regularly.</li> </ul>
	Waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All waste must be disposed of in a hygienic and safe manner.</li> <li>• Tissues must be immediately disposed of.</li> </ul>
	Laundry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All items within the setting requiring laundering must be washed in line with NHS laundry guidelines.</li> <li>• Items such as towels, flannels and bedding must not be shared by children.</li> </ul>
	Risk assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All activity should be risk assessed and due consideration given to any adaptations to usual practice. 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 and the suspension of the sharing of food and utensils.</li> </ul>
	PPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 as normal for nappy changing and the administration of first aid.</li> </ul>

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Premises	Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where premises have been temporarily closed during the lockdown period or where they may need to temporarily close during future lockdowns appropriate Health &amp; Safety checks should be conducted prior to reopening including legionnaires checks.</li> <li>• Keep windows open where possible to ensure ventilation.</li> <li>• Avoid use of lifts other than where absolutely essential.</li> </ul>
	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children should not be permitted to bring items from home into the setting unless absolutely essential for their wellbeing. Where this is the case items should be appropriately cleaned upon arrival.</li> <li>• All resources required for play and learning experiences of children should be regularly washed and/or sterilised.</li> <li>• Equipment used by staff such as stationary, tablets etc. should be allocated to individual staff members where possible and cleaned regularly.</li> </ul>
Supplies	Procurement & monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The setting should ensure an adequate supply of essential supplies and contingency plans are in place to minimise the impact of any shortages of supplies. The setting will not be able to operate without essential supplies required for ensuring infection control.</li> <li>• 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. These items will be washed at a high temperature and separate to any other nursery washing.</li> <li>• In the 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.</li> </ul>
Responding to a suspected case		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 NHS guidance.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The area should be thoroughly cleaned, immediately if the area cannot be left unvisited, and if the area can be left unvisited then cleaned after 72 hours.</li> <li>• The person responsible for cleaning the area should wear appropriate PPE.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>