



## The Pier Head Preparatory Montessori School

### COVID-19 POLICY

At the Pier Head Prep school we believe It is important that everyone complies with the latest Government guidance on Coronavirus.

We have developed these Safe Operating Procedures based on guidance from the Department of Education and the National Institute for Health Protection specifically for Early Years. It is important that we adapt our everyday practices to ensure that we continue to offer the staff and children a safe environment. Hygiene and social distancing remain the two key elements of infection prevention and control. If any symptoms are displayed, families must be alert and self-isolate for the safety of everyone.

COVID-19 appears to affect young children less often and with less severity. Children's role in its transmission is unclear but it seems that it is not significant.

Compassionate leadership is at the heart of offering continued school care and we will do everything we can to be honest, open and to communicate with you. There will be a lot of anxieties and we acknowledge that it is okay to feel worried and that COVID-19 and the lockdown has had an impact on everyone.

Everyone involved in the day to day running of the school will receive appropriate instruction and training on how to operate under the terms of the Safe Operating Procedures. We aim to work in partnership with parents and trust that everyone understands and follows these Safe Operating Procedures.

The key principles of these procedures are:

1. Any child, staff member, parent or visitor with coronavirus symptoms must not attend school and must isolate at home
2. Increased cleaning processes are in place throughout and at the end of the day
3. Children and team members will be social distancing as far as possible
4. Children will each day stay in their set class-room with their key staff members to ensure continuity of staffing and children
5. Key family groups will be in place inside and outside
6. Arrival and departure may be staggered and children may be dropped off at separate entrances, where this is possible.
7. Parents will not come on site or visit the class rooms unless this is explicitly arranged with the Head Teacher e.g. in the event of a child being distressed
8. The process for settling in sessions will be managed away from the other children, outdoors if practical.

## **Attendance**

Children and employees are welcome to attend school but must not be displaying any coronavirus symptoms, the most common being a new, continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of taste and smell. There is some suggestion that mottled skin or sickness and diarrhoea can also be a symptom.

It is important that you seek medical advice if you are unsure.

It is important that children do not attend school if unwell for their own wellbeing and for the safety of others. Children will not be accepted to school if they have been given Calpol or any other medication that can mask fever symptoms, at parents discretion, after 4am on their day of attendance (after 9am for children with afternoon bookings).

Anyone who is experiencing any symptoms cannot return to school until they have completed the required isolation period, in line with government guidelines, and be symptom free or have achieved a negative test result (we politely request evidence of this to be sent to the school). Prompt exclusion is essential to preventing the spread of infection. Children and employees who are classed as clinically vulnerable should follow their own medical advice before attending nursery.

## **2.1 Drop off and collection of children**

Parents are asked to drop off and collect their children at designated entrances and not to enter the school. Whilst parents are waiting, it is important to maintain social distancing by keeping a distance of two metres apart. It is preferable if only one parent carries out drop off and collection.

Parents are requested to wear masks and handovers will continue to be predominantly outdoors.

Parents may be allocated a suggested time for arrival and drop off to ease pressure in the car park or waiting outside. Please approach the school slowly when driving as there will be parents and children waiting to enter. If you can walk to school, please do so.

## **2.2 Temperature and symptom monitoring**

Routine temperature testing is not recommended as a reliable method for identifying coronavirus.

Parents and employees should follow the NHS guidelines regarding isolation and testing criteria.

The Pier Head Prep School are very conscious that young children will get temperatures to help them to fight infections and colds. Snotty, red eyed, catarrh filled coughs are not thought to be symptomatic for COVID-19 and may not

indicate that a child needs to undergo a coronavirus test. There is evidence that ‘hay-fever type symptoms’ may be related to COVID-19 and we must all be diligent in monitoring this aspect. Staff members will monitor the children in their care and will make reasonable judgements on whether a family is advised to undergo testing. We ask that families do the same and monitor their children's wellness, making the decision if they need to isolate, undergo testing, or are well enough to attend a school setting. If a child has a dry, continuous cough or a persistent temperature (over 24 hours) accompanied by flu or cold symptoms they will still be asked to book a coronavirus test.

If your child is due vaccinations school will ask for evidence of this by sharing the child's red book to justify a child's temperature.

Children who have asthma or other breathing related difficulties should be known to key carers and the schools head teacher before they can attend school as usual with their medical plans in place.

If a child needs a routine medical appointment we are asking parents that wherever possible this is booked on a non school day or at the end of the child's session. If this is unavoidable the child will be allowed to return to school after the appointment, provided they are fit and well in themselves.

## **2.3 Travel to school**

It is better not to share transport and to travel by car, bike or walk. Face coverings have been advised by the Government for use on public transport.

## **2.4 Travel outside of local area**

If you travel internationally to a country not on the green list or to an area of the UK under local COVID restrictions, and are displaying symptoms, then you must be tested and

have a negative result before returning to school . This is to ensure every possible protection factor is in place for the staff and the children in our care.

We ask that you are aware of the restrictions in place of any area that you are visiting and follow government guidelines for any travel in and out of your local area.

If you have travelled to a country or area of the UK under local COVID restrictions you can opt in to pay for a private COVID-19 test.

If you are travelling from a destination not on the green or travel corridors list, do not have a job that qualifies you for a travel exemption or do not want to opt in to test to release, you will need to self-isolate for 10 full days after you were last in the destination not listed.

### **3 Implementing social distancing**

It is very difficult to avoid a level of physical interaction with young children and it is important to have their wellbeing at the centre of everything we do. If a child is in need of a hug, then it would not be fair to deny them this. To help with social distancing the children will be grouped in 'bubbles' with a practitioner. Social distancing will also apply to coat pegs, seating arrangements and sleeping.

#### **3.1 Playrooms and groups**

We aim to keep children in their groups which will be identified by their usual room name lower prep and pre-school, but will be further defined by outdoor play in order to continue with the small group approach. We would only merge groups if there was no other choice.

We are fortunate that we already have a system in place of key family groups and so this arrangement will not be unusual for children and will not interrupt their play.

## **3.2 Mealtimes**

- The children will need to bring in their own, named, drinking bottle and take it home each day to be washed.
- Drinks will be offered at 30 minute intervals instead of cups being at the children's level to avoid accidental sharing of cups.

## **3.3 Employees**

All employees will undergo regular induction and training on the Safe Operating Procedures, with emphasis on good hygiene practices and maintaining social distancing.

## **3.4 Fire drills and lockdown practice**

If we have to respond to a fire or emergency lockdown, we will continue to manage social distancing, as far as possible. The safety of the children and employees will always come first. We will still be carrying our fire and lockdown drills.

## **4 Wellbeing**

We know that this is a very unusual and worrying time for everyone. It is very important that at the forefront of this heightened awareness of safe operating procedures, we do not forget that care and consideration must be taken of the need to ensure that everyone within the school community feels safe and secure. We will try our best to create a normal school environment and hope that you will bear with us. We will concentrate on building secure attachments and we will continue observing and assessing the children, regularly updating Learning book. We will not be able to

carry out lengthy handovers. We want our team to spend time with the children, playing and building their relationships.

We would always speak with you immediately if we had any concerns. If your child is expressing any concerns or worries, it is important that you inform the key person or Head Teacher.

### **1. Settling in sessions/transitions**

Parents may enter the school for settling-in sessions but wherever possible these will happen outdoors. The Head Teacher will give further guidance on the day. It is important that social distancing continues to be maintained. The parents will not be able to spend extended time in the children's rooms in order to minimise any risk of infection.

We will aim to organise groups of children who are due to transition so they can transition together. However, some children who were due to transition might need the reassurance of the family group they were part of in order to feel safe and secure and parents might prefer them to stay within a particular age group.

## **5. Contractors and visitors**

Any contractors to the school will be reminded of National Institute for Health Protection guidance prior to entering the building. All visitors to the school must sign in and share their details to assist with NHS Track and Trace.

## **6. Reducing the spread of the virus**

It is recognised that good hygiene and cleaning practices will significantly reduce the spread and transmission of the virus as well as everyone being alert to the symptoms.

Doors and windows will be opened as much as possible.

## **6.1 Cleaning**

An enhanced cleaning schedule will be implemented throughout and at the end of the day. Communal areas, door handles and shared facilities e.g. iPads, must be regularly cleaned. All staff will be responsible for recording these cleaning schedules.

The rate of hand washing must be significantly increased. Everyone, including children, must wash their hands on arrival at school. Sanitiser is only to be used by adults without access to wash basins (i.e. parents who need to use a doorbell). There will be regular opportunities for hand washing throughout the day.

## **6.2 Use of Tissues**

The children will be supported in age-appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves and others safe and this includes sneezing into a tissue (or their arm if immediate) and then to dispose of the tissue.

## **6.3 Toileting**

The children will be taken to the toilets and supervised. Hand washing signs will be displayed to ensure hand washing is thorough and the practitioners will talk to the children about why we are washing our hands.

## **6.4 Clothing**

All employees and children should wear clean clothing every day. If you have travelled on public transport, you must change your clothing on arrival at school. Children should bring one bag with changes of clothing to last their weekly booking pattern and take it home with them at the end of the week.



## **6.5 Risk assessments**

The COVID risk assessments will reflect the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

## **6.6 Items from home**

If your child requires a comforter e.g. soft toy or blanket, please bring it in a bag and then take home at the end of the day and wash it. We would prefer no toys or comforters to be brought into nursery but do understand that this could cause distress.

## **6.8 Resources at School**

Toys and resources that are difficult to clean will be kept for play with only one bubble group. The children will only share toys and activities within their groups. We will aim to sanitise items at the end of each day.

## **7 Responding to a person displaying symptoms of COVID-19**

If a child is suspected of displaying coronavirus symptoms whilst attending the school, they should be collected as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with NHS guidance. The child must have a PCR test before they return.

We do not accept LFT for children with symptoms.

Whilst waiting to be collected, they will be isolated from others in a designated area. An employee will stay with them and will wear PPE.

If the child becomes very unwell, we will follow our normal emergency procedures and call [999](tel:999).

The isolation area will be cleaned once the child has been collected.

## **7.2 An employee who displays symptoms**

In the event of an employee developing coronavirus symptoms whilst at work, they will leave work immediately and isolate at home in line with NHS guidance. They will be required to have a PCR test before they return. We do not accept LFT for staff members with symptoms.

## **7.3 PPE Equipment**

Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in nurseries to protect against COVID-19 transmission. Hand washing, effective cleaning and social distancing are the most effective measures. Gloves and aprons will be used for nappy changing and first aid. Aprons will be worn at mealtimes.

## **7.4 Reporting, testing and tracing**

Everyone is now eligible for a COVID-19 test, should they display coronavirus symptoms.

Any suspected or confirmed case must be reported to the School as soon as possible. If a positive result is confirmed, the practitioners and children associated with that group/bubble must self-isolate for 10 days before returning to school, regardless of whether they have had a negative test result themselves. Positive tests will be reported to the National Institute for Health Protection, the Local Authority and Ofsted by the school.

The Pier Head Prep school is also responsible for contacting the National Institute for Health Protection if a case is confirmed or if a symptomatic person is admitted to hospital, a possible case refuses testing, there are a cluster of possible cases/unexpected increase in absenteeism or a suspected case has a definite link to a confirmed case.

If there is reasonable evidence that a positive diagnosis was caused by exposure at work, this will be reported to the National Institute of Health Protection.

If someone in your household, or someone you have close contact with, is contacted by track and trace or is told they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, you do not need to be tested. If they test positive, then you will also need to self-isolate for 10 days even if you do not test positive yourself. You should only book a test yourself if you develop symptoms.

The Government's tracing app is a way of helping to protect everyone.

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This is an ongoing policy

