



Dolphins Pre-school Covid-19 Action Plan



Updated 17.8.21 v.9

Every setting is different. Settings may use their professional judgement, and choose to follow approaches depending on their particular circumstances, but at all times will need to take account of relevant public health guidance to maximise safety for those in the environment.

This does not supersede any legal obligations relating to health and safety, employment or equalities and it is important that businesses or employers continue to comply with existing obligations, including those relating to individuals with protected characteristics.

To comply with insurance we must assess whether it is safe to open the setting. If so, we must comply with all Ofsted registration requirements, have risk assessments in place and adhere to government guidelines, including those issued on effective infection protection and control and shielding. We are also required to continually check that the children and staff members are not demonstrating any symptoms of Covid-19 and continue to review the situation in light of any additional information released by the Government.

Further information on the Covid-19 framework for education and childcare settings can be found [here](#).

Other important Covid-19 guidance for schools can be found [here](#).

Children and staff with medical conditions

There may be certain medical conditions where people with those conditions are at higher risk of becoming serious ill with Covid-19. The <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-coronavirus-covid-19#learning-at-home> details who this guidance applies to.

Early Years Alliance member policyholders providing childcare must follow Government and NHS guidelines with regard to assessing underlying health conditions of a) the children in their care and b) staff working in their setting environment.

1. Preparing the premises

Health and safety check of the building

A health and safety check of the building has been completed. Water checks are carried out by BHCC sub-contractors at regular intervals.

Health and safety for children, staff, parents and carers and any other visitors has been revised in light of coronavirus.

Parents/carers will be permitted access to the building (East Scooter/Buggy Store) when deemed essential.

Parents will use the field / East Gate at key drop off & collection times observing social distancing (a one-way system will be in operation and parents encouraged to wear face masks when inside the premises) and discouraged from lingering longer than absolutely necessary.

Risk assessments

Activities have been risk assessed in light of coronavirus, in conjunction with relevant staff where applicable, and due consideration given to how usual practice may need to be adapted.

Cleaning and hygiene

Keeping children and staff safe is our utmost priority. Guidance sets out the public health advice that early years settings must follow to minimise the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission. It also includes the process that settings should follow if anyone develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while attending. This guidance has been developed with advice from Public Health England (PHE).

The public health advice makes up a PHE-endorsed 'system of controls', building on the hierarchy of protective measures that have been in use throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. When implemented in line with a revised risk assessment, these measures create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced for children and staff.

The 'system of controls' provides a set of principles that, when followed, will effectively minimise risks. All elements of the 'system of controls' are essential. The way different settings implement some of the requirements will differ based on individual circumstances.

There cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach where the system of controls describes every scenario. Setting leaders are best placed to understand the needs of the setting and community, and to make informed judgments about how to balance delivering high quality care and education with the measures needed to manage risk. The 'system of controls' provides a set of principles to help them do this and, when followed, they will effectively minimise risks.

Frequently touched surfaces, equipment, door handles, and toilets, used during the day, will be cleaned regularly. In addition, it may be necessary for certain resources to be quarantined.

Space management

In accordance with the size and layout of the setting, the room will be arranged with consideration given to how floor space, rooms and outdoor space can be organised to try and ensure physical distancing between staff and between children, considering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age-based space requirements.

Providers must meet the following indoor space requirements:

- children under 2 years need 3.5 m² per child
- 2 year olds need 2.5 m² per child
- children aged 3 to 5 years need 2.3 m² per child

In certain circumstances area dividers / floor markers may be used to keep children in different parts of the room with communal spaces.

In order to facilitate cleaning, removal of any unnecessary items from learning environments will take place where there is space to store them elsewhere. Public health advice is to remove toys that are hard to clean, such as those with intricate parts. It may be necessary to quarantine certain items.

Children will be required to continue to bring snack and packed lunch along with water all clearly labelled with their name.

Contractors and visitors will be restricted as far as possible with physical distancing and hygiene measures communicated to such individuals upon arrival at the site.

2. Preparing to implement practical measures to reduce risk

Measures that have been implemented to reduce the risk of transmission in the setting and correspond to [government guidelines](#).

Unlike older children and adults, children in the early years cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff.

A hierarchy of measures set out in the guidance can be found within our Covid-19 sickness procedure. These include:

- ensuring parents/carers keep children with any symptoms at home
- ensuring staff who are symptomatic do not attend work
- frequent hand cleaning and hygiene practices
- cleaning of settings
- promoting distancing where possible

Keeping children and staff together in groups

Early years settings are not required to keep children in small, consistent groups within the setting.

Physical distancing

It is not expected that children and staff will keep 2 metres apart. However, we aim to minimise close contact when practical to do so.

We also aim to:

- adjusting learning environments (e.g. tables, chairs, learning zones) where possible.
- maximise learning opportunities and time spent outdoors
- minimise, where practical, sharing of resources.

Snack and lunch will be planned to ensure groups of children remain together and distanced where possible.

Staff meetings/training will be conducted observing distancing and staff will remain at a safe distance from each other during breaks. Transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor or when moving to a different part of the building, is considered low risk.

Handwashing and respiratory hygiene

Sufficient handwashing facilities are available for both staff and children. Running water and soap will be used. Where this is not possible sanitiser may be used under strict supervision.

All staff and children will be required to wash hands according to guidance on hand cleaning

- a) upon entering the setting
- b) regularly throughout the day
- c) after sneezing or coughing
- d) before and after eating

Adults will supervise, especially if using hand sanitiser, and continually reinforce how to do this safely and effectively. A good supply of disposable tissues are available within the setting to implement 'catch it, bin it, kill it' complete with lidded bin operated by a foot pedal. These will be emptied regularly. Assistance will be given to children who have trouble cleaning hands independently. Paper towels (checked frequently) are in use within the bathrooms as opposed to hand dryers

Ventilation will be maximised using natural ventilation (windows) / ventilation unit installed within the property. Doors propped open, where safe to do so.

Cleanliness habits will be reinforced through games, songs, visuals, adult support and repetition.

Enhanced cleaning

Surfaces that children and staff touch will be cleaned more regularly than usual by putting in place an enhanced cleaning schedule using disinfection as appropriate.

Toys that have been mouthed will be disinfected promptly. Shared items and surfaces cleaned and disinfected regularly.

Items that are laundered within the setting will be washed in line with guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.

There already exists clear procedures for maintaining stringent cleaning processes for food preparation areas etc.

Our policy relating to not bringing items and toys from home will be strictly enforced.

Reducing face-to-face contact with and between parents and carers

- a) Contact between parents/carers when dropping off/picking up will be limited.
- b) A one-way system has been established
- c) Staggered drop-off and collection times are already in operation and will continue. Face masks will be encouraged by parents/carers when within the premises.
- d) For children with anxiety issues we shall try to work on a range of methods when dropping off including possible use of telephone and video calls.
- e) Parents/carers will be discouraged from waiting unnecessarily.
- f) When incidents occur parents will be notified directly and the date and time will be recorded.
- g) Tapestry/email/telephone will be used to communicate where possible.

Other measures

Vents and doors will be kept open when possible to increase ventilation (there is already a comprehensive ventilation system in operation 24/7 within the premises) and outdoor areas used as much as possible. Visitors to the setting will be limited to only those judged as essential.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

PPE, beyond normal requirements, is not a requirement even if staff are not always able to maintain distance of 2 metres from others. A dedicated PPE kit will be reserved for when a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained from anyone displaying coronavirus symptoms. Staff will be encouraged to wear face PPE (over and above requirements) when interacting with parents / visitors.

Taking temperatures

It is not considered essential to take children's temperatures every morning or throughout the day. There is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in a childcare setting. Nonetheless, we shall be monitoring temperatures of staff and children twice a day and as well as actively looking for other indicators of Covid-19.

Ensuring we are prepared

Considerable time has been spent ensuring the setting is operationally prepared to implement these measures. We are working with suppliers of essential products to ensure they are in place as well as contingency in the event of shortages in supplies.

3. Reviewing staff for availability to work in the setting

Staff displaying coronavirus symptoms should follow our Covid-19 sickness procedure

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

An audit to determine the availability of staff to work has been carried out in conjunction with the official government guidance.

Staff availability and qualification levels on staff to child ratios and on other relevant provisions in the statutory framework for the EYFS, has been reviewed.

This audit will be updated on a regular basis.

4. Protocol for responding to a suspected case of coronavirus and ensuring setting is prepared

A detailed Covid-19 sickness procedure has been devised and written detailing protocols to be followed when responding to a suspected case of coronavirus. Please refer to this for full details.

5. Communicating with staff

Staff have been kept fully informed of Covid-19 plans with key documents circulated to ensure they are aware of and understand measures brought in to reduce the transmission of coronavirus as part of their roles and responsibilities.

Processes and procedures are to be continually reviewed and staff encouraged to ask questions / raise concerns in advance.

Staff who have coronavirus symptoms should **not** attend the setting under any circumstances. If they develop coronavirus symptoms they are entitled to a test and encouraged to organise one in this scenario following government guidance on getting tested.

Staff must abide by infection control procedures e.g.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878677/PHE_11606_Putting_on_PPE_062_revised_8_April.pdf

Staff will be required to continue to identify and support any vulnerable children and parents that return to settings, for example, by signposting them to appropriate local services such as health visitors, mental health services, and domestic or substance abuse services, and school nurses as applicable.

A staff support network has been established since the outset of the crisis to facilitate discussion, support and feedback.

6. Communicating with parents and carers

We have communicated our plans with parents/carers and made them aware of measures put in place to reduce risk of transmission of coronavirus, how this impacts them and their responsibilities in supporting this.

Copies of key Covid-19 documents, including sickness procedures, have been shared via our website to make it possible for those with English as an additional language to translate easily.

7. Identification of numbers of children returning to the setting

We have been actively working with parents/carers, and with the likes of BHCC, DfE, PH, Ofsted. This has been done in conjunction with official government guidance.

8. Planning of setting's groups to reduce contact between children and staff

Audits of staff and assessment of demand for places for children who will be attending settings will be used to plan and ensure staff to child ratios set out in the EYFS framework are adhered to.

9. Identify safeguarding, special educational needs and disability (SEND), child wellbeing and welfare requirements

Taking account of children's individual needs and circumstances is seen as key.

The coronavirus outbreak may have caused significant mental health or wellbeing difficulties for some children. Staff will be alert to harms that may have been hidden or missed while they have not been attending settings. Consideration of the mental health, pastoral and wider health and wellbeing support children may require, including with bereavement, and how to support them to transition into the setting after a long period of absence have been taken into consideration.

A range of communication channels have been established, to liaise with parents/carers as well as identify specific support for children and how children's needs may have changed to prepare for their return to the setting.

Effective child protection arrangements are already in place along with plans to support high needs groups, including children with SEND, vulnerable children and disadvantaged children when the setting reopens. The setting will refer to government guidance on supporting vulnerable children when planning appropriately.

It should be noted that the operation of external agencies that support children with SEND or with behaviour / other issues (BHISS), including EAL (EMAS), may be adversely affected. As a result, plans may need to be continually revised according to circumstance.

Changes to the routines in a setting may prove more challenging for some children with SEND. Staff will be required to consult with the SENCo on how best to plan for such children within the setting in consultation with the parents/carers.

Attendance of vulnerable children is encouraged and a range of support measures have been offered according to their needs and their individual family circumstances. In cases where children considered vulnerable do not attend the provision as expected, it will be necessary to follow up with the parent/carer in the usual way to establish the reasons for absence. We will continue to work with local authorities, school nurses and health visitors where relevant, to monitor the welfare of vulnerable children who are not attending provision, along with any other children they might wish to keep in touch with for safeguarding purposes.

The safeguarding responsibilities of settings have not changed, and regulatory action including visits to settings which are triggered by safeguarding continue.

10. Planning what children should learn and how to adapt the EYFS

Initially priorities, at this time, are helping young children to adapt to Covid-19 routines and supporting children to settle into the setting. Continuing to support early language and communication skills is also seen as essential along with encouraging exercise mindful of those with limited opportunity to exert themselves physically.

Every effort will be made to continue providing an environment that invites learning across all 7 areas as far as is practicable during this time.

Activities such as stories and games may be used to help children to socialise and resettle into familiar everyday routines.

Children will be encouraged to learn in age-appropriate ways about how they can keep themselves safe, including regular handwashing and using tissues. Consideration will be given to how to encourage children to learn and practise these habits through activities and repetition.

New approaches may be used from time to time to minimise the sharing of resources which will be subject to cleaning/quarantine. Malleable resources may be restricted for periods due to increased risk.

Consideration will be given to which resources can be used safely and in which circumstances along with items it might be more practical to limit.

Outdoor space will be used as much as possible. All groups of children will be given equal opportunities for outdoor learning.

Resources to help children to learn about coronavirus and how to keep themselves and others safe

- [Professional association for children and early years \(PACEY\): supporting children in your setting](#)
- [Dr Dog explains coronavirus](#)
- [2 metres apart activity \(PDF, 2MB\)](#)
- [Our hand washing song \(PDF, 958KB\)](#)
- [Bright Horizons: Talking to Children about COVID-19 \(novel coronavirus\)](#)