Dolphins Pre-school
Covid-19 Action Plan

Updated 20.6.20

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.

More information on the implementation of protective measures for providers considering re-opening is available in the new Department for Education guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings.

Other important information can be found here:

- Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak
- Actions for educational and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020
- Opening schools for more children and young people: initial planning framework for schools in England

Children and staff with medical conditions

There are two categories of medical conditions where people with those conditions are at higher risk of becoming serious ill with Covid-19: these categories are **clinically extremely vulnerable** (i.e. high risk) and **clinically vulnerable** (i.e. moderate risk).

Information on who is classed as clinically extremely vulnerable and who is classed as clinically vulnerable is available here.

All 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.

The new government guidance Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings states that staff and children with who are clinically extremely vulnerable should not be working in or attending your setting.

If the children attending or staff working within your setting premises have medical conditions that are not included on the **clinically extremely vulnerable** list (including children and staff who are **clinically vulnerable** (i.e. moderate risk), then reasonable precautions should be taken to decide whether the child can attend the setting whilst receiving adequate care or the staff member can continue to work in the setting environment, without compromising their underlying health conditions.

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

Parents/carers will no longer be permitted access to the building (exception is the East Scooter/Buggy Store) other than in an emergency

Parents will use the field / gate at key drop off & collection times observing social distancing 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

Hand washing will be managed within the context of the Action Plan 'Covid-19 Day'.

We shall be following guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings, and also the detail set out in Section 3

All frequently touched surfaces, equipment, door handles, and toilets, used during the day, will be cleaned frequently.

Space management

Bubbles will be established on each day to keep groups of children together throughout the day. Further information is set out in section 2 of this guidance.

In accordance with the size and layout of the setting, the room will be re-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 groups of 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 m^2 per child
- 2 year olds need 2.5 m^2 per child
- children aged 3 to 5 years need 2.3 m^2 per child

Area dividers and floor markers may be used to keep children in different parts of the room with communal spaces managed to limit the mixing between groups as far as possible.

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 all soft toys, and any toys that are hard to clean, such as those with intricate parts. Where practicable soft furnishings will also be removed.

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

Contractors and visitors will be restricted essential tasks only 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 implement to reduce the risk of transmission in the setting align to Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings.
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 protective measures 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
- limiting contact and mixing

Keeping children and staff together in groups
Bubbles will be formed and kept to a maximum of 15 children, whilst adhering to EYFS ratios. These will be carefully worked out to maximise distancing.

Physical distancing between groups
It is not expected that children and staff within a group will keep 2 metres apart, however we aim to reduce, as far as possible, contact between groups of children and staff by distancing groups.
We aim to ensure:

- physical distancing between groups of children and staff where possible
- that individual groups use the same area of a setting throughout the day where possible
- that sharing of resources is minimised
- that resources that are shared can be easily cleaned between different groups' use

Snack and lunch will be planned to ensure bubbles of children remain together.

Staff meetings/training will be conducted virtually and staff should remain at a safe distance from each other during breaks. Brief 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. Where possible running water and soap will be used. Where this is not possible alcohol hand rub/sanitiser may be used under strict supervision.

All staff and children will be required to wash hands

a) upon entering the setting
b) regularly throughout the day
c) before and after eating
d) when they leave the setting

Adults responsible for a specific bubble will be required to supervise when doing this, especially if using hand rub/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 throughout the day.

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.

Items that are laundered within the setting will be washed in line with guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings and not shared by children between washes.

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 of children will be limited by restricting to a single parent/carer per family.
b) Staggered drop-off and collection times are already in operation and will continue.
c) Parents/carers will not be allowed into the setting unless it is essential. Children will be dropped off at the gates from where they will also be collected.
d) For children with anxiety issues we shall try to work on a range of methods when dropping off including use of telephone and video calls.
e) Parents/carers will be discouraged from waiting. Where this is not viable then the fence will be used for the purpose of physical distancing.
f) When accidents occur parents will be contacted directly and the date and time will be recorded.
g) Tapestry will be used to communicate where possible.

Other measures
Windows will be kept open as far as possible to increase ventilation and outdoor areas used as much as possible. Visitors to the setting will be limited to only those providing essential support/services

Personal protective equipment (PPE)
PPE, beyond normal requirements, is not needed 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 any child displaying coronavirus symptoms. Further information on what this means for Early Years settings is provided in section 4 of this guidance.

Taking temperatures
It is not considered essential to take children's temperatures every morning or throughout the day. Public Health England's guidance is that routine testing of an individual's temperature is not a reliable method for identifying coronavirus. There is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in a childcare setting.

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, or that has displayed symptoms in the previous 7 days, or lives with someone who has displayed symptoms in the previous 14 days, should not attend work unless they have tested negative for coronavirus.

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

They and their household members should follow the advice for households with possible coronavirus infection.

An audit to determine the availability of staff to work has been carried out in conjunction with the official government guidance on shielding. People who are clinically extremely vulnerable (those with serious underlying health conditions which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus and have been advised by their clinician or through a letter) are advised to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe.

If a staff member is clinically extremely vulnerable, they are advised not to attend the setting. If a staff member lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, it is advised that they follow guidance on people who are shielding and living with other people.

Clinically vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions as set out in the staying at home and away from others (social distancing) guidance have been advised to take extra care in observing social distancing and should work from home where possible. This includes pregnant women.

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 in conjunction with government guidance on temporary changes to requirements in the EYFS during the coronavirus outbreak, which sets out changes to qualification requirements to be included in staff to child ratios and to paediatric first aid requirements.

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 plans for the wider opening of the setting with key documents circulated to ensure they are aware of and understand new 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, or who have someone in their household who does, 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 for the wider opening of the setting with parents/carers. When we are in a position to consider re-opening they will be made aware of measures put in place to reduce risk of transmission of coronavirus, how this impacts them and their responsibilities in supporting this.

In addition, a copy of Covid-19 sickness procedures will be available on the 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

A survey has been circulated to parents/carers to establish Identify those likely to be returning to, or joining, the setting from when we re-open. We have been actively working with parents/carers, and with the likes of BHCC. This has been done in conjunction with official government guidance on shielding.

Where children are unable to sustain safe social distancing and hygiene measures, and live in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and has chosen to shield, those children will not be able to attend Dolphins Pre-school for the time being.

To minimise contact between groups of children and staff, children are being asked to attend just one setting wherever possible with parents and carers encouraged to minimise, as far as possible, the number of education and childcare settings their child attends.

In the event that demand for places is higher than the setting's 'Covid-19 capacity' at the point of return (when measures to allow physical distancing between groups are in place) a temporary cap on numbers of children attending the setting may be introduced.

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

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

Professional judgement will be used when planning bubble groups. Each bubble will be a maximum of 15 children.

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 to successful return. 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.

Parents and carers are being urged, via a range of communication channels, to liaise so that it is possible to 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 or other issues, including EAL (EMAS), may be adversely affected. As a result, plans may need to be continually revised according to circumstance.

Readjustment to the routines in a setting may prove more challenging for some children with SEND, particularly those who have been attending a different setting if their usual setting has been closed. 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. See Ofsted's response to coronavirus for more information.

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

Initially priorities, at this time, are helping young children to adapt to their new routines and supporting children to settle back into the setting, especially where there have been staffing changes. 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.

Reasonable endeavours will be made to deliver the EYFS learning and development requirements as far as possible in the current circumstances, as set out in guidance on the temporary changes to the EYFS requirements in light of coronavirus. 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. Suggested resources to help children to learn about coronavirus and how to keep themselves and others safe are included below.

New approaches will be used to minimise the sharing of resources between groups. Any resources used will be cleaned before and after use by different groups. Malleable resources, such as play dough, will not be shared between groups and public health advice is that, as sand pits cannot be thoroughly cleaned between uses, they should not be used at this time.

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

Outdoor space will be used as much as possible. All groups of children will be given equal opportunities for outdoor learning whilst ensuring outdoor equipment and toys are appropriately cleaned between different groups.

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)