

Covid-19 Risk Assessment Dolphins Pre-School

This “top-down” overview risk assessment was drawn up in response to the Government’s 11 May 2020 (updated 12 May) Publication “implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings”. It was reviewed in response to the downgrading (from level four to level three) of the National Covid-19 Alert. It has been reviewed further following a rise in both the National Covid-19 Alert (from level three to level four on 1 October 2020) and Brighton & Hove Alert (yellow to amber on 6 October 2020) as well as subsequent moves into Lockdown (1 November 2020) and the announcement by the PM moving the country to alert level 5 in January 2021 resulting in a further period of lockdown. Further comprehensive reviews have been conducted following the return of schools on 8 March 2021 and again on 17 August 2021 ahead of resumption in September 2021.

[Re-statement from our Risk Documents – Likelihood x Severity]

In broad terms, there are two major risks to be addressed. The first risk is that the Covid 19 virus is (unwittingly) brought into the Dolphins Pre-School by one or more infected individuals (children, parents or other carers, staff members or volunteers). The second risk is that once the infected individual is in the setting, the Coronavirus is transmitted and consequently others in the setting also become infected.

Notwithstanding the “high scientific confidence” that Covid 19 has less severe effects on children, we have assigned the severity of contracting the disease as a 5 rating.

Our preventative measures to mitigate risk may be broadly divided into reducing the probability of:

- A. Infected individuals entering the premises**
- B. Direct (person-to-person) transmission of the virus within the premises**
- C. Indirect (via touching contaminated surfaces) transmission of the virus within the premises**

A Infected individuals entering the premises

All parents have access to the most recent Coronavirus infection guidance available on the gov.uk site and Parent Partner communications. This should ensure that parents are fully aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and that they should self-isolate and that no child from a household with symptoms should be brought to the Dolphins. However, given the prevalence of the disease in the community, weaknesses with the Government’s test-track & trace programme, and vaccination programme, it remains possible that an asymptomatic infected individual could enter the setting regardless of our protective measures.

B Direct person-to-person transmission

All other things being equal, the probability of direct infection will be reduced by having fewer individuals in the setting at any one time as will be the case. New drop-off and entry protocols (detailed below) will reduce the need for parents / carers to enter the setting thus limiting the number of adults in the setting to mostly staff members.

Although the 2-metre social distance cannot realistically be applied to young children, we have taken into consideration how our available floor space could accommodate such spacing. From a total floor area of 117 square metres, around half of this is taken up by tables & chairs and free flow accessible toys & equipment units.

Apart from the main room, there are three other child accessible areas – the children’s toilet, the coat and personal belongings cloakroom area and the lunchbox corridor. To reduce person-to-person direct contact in these potential “cluster” areas, children will be supervised by staff. There will be a multitude of visits to the children’s toilet for frequent hand-washing purposes.

The Dolphins setting is open plan and free flow with children free to move between all areas indoors and outdoors. The room will be set up as usual, but children will be encouraged to space around the building and grounds with various activities on offer. For Circle Time, story time and other large group activities, we will aim to distance where possible.

Use of the outdoors patio and garden will be maximised as will natural ventilation from doors, windows and the building itself which uniquely possesses mechanical systems for changing the air.

Toys & resources involved will be quarantined/cleaned on a frequent basis.

Weather permitting, children will consume lunch out-of-doors.

For assistance with toileting (such as bottom wiping), children will be actively encouraged to take care of their own personal hygiene. However, from experience, most children need assistance with toileting and other hygiene matters. We will continue to display the “Catch it; bin it; kill it” signage and bins will be emptied more frequently. Additional hand sanitisers will be strategically placed around the main room. Close contact during nappy changing is inevitable but PPE will continue to be worn by staff performing this activity.

In the usual course of their play, children will inevitably have falls or suffer other scrapes and mishaps which, as well as First Aid and accident book recording, will necessitate comforting and cuddling by a member of staff. The collecting parent/carer will be required to sign the accident record.

Revised drop off and entry protocols

The east entry (car park) door which was previously the main entrance and exit for parents will no longer be used other than for accessing the bike / buggy store and any exceptional arrivals/departures. A revised entrance procedure via the patio east gate will be used. Staggered drop off times (bolt-on and normal start times) will continue. To minimise adult-to-adult contact, only one parent should accompany the child or siblings where possible. Rather than gathering at the east patio entrance gate, parents and children will assemble socially distanced using the perimeter fence adjoining Nevill Recreation Ground, maintain social distancing between them. This will be enhanced via a one-way system. Parents will be discouraged from lingering and asked to depart the setting promptly while maintaining social distance. Masks will be encouraged for adults visiting the grounds / premises.

Two members of staff will be positioned at the main entrance to welcome and receive children. One of these staff members will monitor children for signs of Covid-19 and dispense hand sanitiser and record temperatures. The other staff member will undertake registration. There, other members of staff will welcome the child and assist them with name-tag collection for registration and coats and personal belongings peg.

Revised pick-up and collection protocol

Similar to the Covid-19 entry protocol, parents will collect their children via the east patio gate, maintaining social distancing and the systems described above.

C Indirect transmission of the virus

Prior to opening, the setting has undergone a deep-clean and unnecessary resources have been placed into storage.

Our rule on precluding toys and comforters being brought into the setting from home will be strictly adhered to; the usual relaxation of this rule during child settling-in sessions will be no longer apply.

Children's artwork, which was previously placed in each child's individual tray for taking home as the end of the day, will now remain at the setting in quarantine for a period of one week before being permitted home. Whenever possible, photos will be posted on Tapestry.

Parents will be advised that lunchboxes, food containers and drink/water bottles should be cleaned each day before being brought into the setting. These must be clearly labelled.

D1 Someone becoming unwell in the setting

Should any child/adult become unwell during their attendance at Dolphins and exhibit symptoms unrelated to Covid-19 then sickness procedures will be followed.

D2 Implications of someone becoming unwell (infected by Covid 19) in the setting

Under this scenario the child/adult, their household, and all direct contacts will be required to follow current government guidelines. In the event of this adversely affecting staff members, it could impact upon staffing levels and, consequently, our ability to operate.

D3 Implication of opening with severely reduced numbers of children

Correct ratios of staff are still be required to operate the pre-school. The consequence of reduction in pupil numbers could greatly reduced income which may result in non-viability depending upon government help and support available.