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**Epidemic and Pandemic Policy**

**(Covid 19)**

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| **Date** | **Adopted by Authorised Signature** | **Review Date** |
| 08/06/2020 | Carrie Gadsby (Chair) | Ongoing (at least annually, 8 June 2021) |
| 26/08/2020 | Carrie Gadsby (Chair) | Ongoing (at least annually, 26 August 2021) |
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**Statement of Intent**

Pangbourne Valley Playgroup intends to use this policy to provide precautionary measures to minimise transmission risks of disease in the setting during an epidemic or pandemic. It also states ideas for continuity of business if allowed.

Legislation and leading authorities which have guided and influenced this policy are:

Coronavirus Act 2020, Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Government Briefings, Public Health England (PHE) and World Health Organisation (WHO). Advice from but not limited to, The Secretary of State, The Chief Medical Officer, Local Authority (LA) and Department for Education (DfE). The policy also has regard to Ofsted and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance where appropriate.

**Aim of Policy**

This Policy defines and assists the operating arrangements in place within the playgroup that assures compliance to the Government and leading bodies’ requirements with relation to the outbreak of a pandemic such as Covid19. This information builds upon our current procedures for areas such as Safeguarding, Child Protection and Equality and Diversity, however new practices may emerge as the situation continues. The policy and considerations may evolve and be built upon as the situation deepens and new precautionary measures have been introduced and practices have been reflected upon.

**Method**

As early years providers we ensure to offer a continuum of very high standards of practice of childcare and education. The fundamental principles to be outlined in this policy are set out to ensure physical distancing is enabled and implement good hygiene practices as well as avoiding coming into contact with infected children and adults or anyone displaying symptoms. It states the protective measures put in place for children, parents and staff as best as possible to ensure the risk of transmission is reduced. We will continue to follow our other policies as long as they do not conflict with this policy and be guided by the EYFS as best as we can. The main areas we will be considering are:

* Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell
* Maintaining personal and respiratory hygiene (handwashing, catch it, kill it, bin it)
* Ensuring cleanliness of the environment (especially frequently touched surfaces)
* The use of Protective and Personal Equipment (PPE)
* Testing

**Focus/ Areas of Consideration / Recommendations**

**Children**

*Attendance*

* Only children who are symptom free can attend the setting
* Parents maybe asked if their children/families are well and fit to attend
* Outside of playgroup a maximum 2 families or 6 people from separate families are allowed to meet and parents are expected to act according to government guidelines
* Opening hours have been changed to 9.15am until 2.55pm
* Children can attend more than one setting, please inform staff of other settings that your child attends

*Physical Distancing/grouping*

* Sunscreen should be applied by the parents / carers before the child arrives at the playgroup. Spare clothes need to be provided and be weather friendly (including hats). Rainy day clothes should also be provided my parents including wellies.
* Children will not be expected to keep the 2 metre distance during play
* Adults will be expected to social distance

*Wellbeing and education*

* Children should be supported in age appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe including regular hand washing, coughing into an elbow, using a tissue and adopting a catch it, kill it, bin it regime.
* 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.
* EYFS framework will continue to be delivered through play and adult led activities.
* Snack to be provided by parents eg piece of fruit. Lunch provided by parents in a Tupperware like container or wipeable bag with an ice pack, a labelled water bottle to also be provided by parents. If required to be filled up throughout day this will be done (water only). Fruit and vegetables to be cut up for example grapes in half length ways.

**Workforce**

*Attendance*

* Staff should only attend playgroup if they are symptom free. All staff and their household are eligible for testing if they display symptoms.
* Staff hours, days they work and length of day may change in order to meet childcare demands and considerations within this policy.

*Physical distancing/ grouping /safety*

* Staff will complete a risk assessment before opening to address any risks from the virus, ensure sensible measures are in place to control risks.
* Staff to be informed of measures in place and sign a disclaimer to state they have read and understood the playgroup policies and procedures.
* Emergency revisions to the EYFS may have been implemented which provides some flexibility on ratios and qualifications to make this feasible.
* Upon a child becoming ill they will need to be picked up as soon as possible. If possible one parent should remain local to ensure that children can be collected quickly.
* PPE will be used at the usual times such as intimate care and wear disposable gloves and apron if completing one to one care and if supporting an ill child a face mask and visor should also be worn if a 2 meter distance cannot be maintained. A face mask will only be warn if a child is ill and Covid-19 is suspected and there is a risk to the staff member who may get droplets in the face I.e. Coughing.
* Our quarantine area will be behind a translucent curtain by the entrance of playgroup
* After dealing with an ill child who displayed symptoms the staff member should continue to wear PPE and clean the affected area with disinfectant.
* All PPE should be removed and disposed of following current government guidelines; the staff member should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds.
* The staff member who supported the unwell child does not need to go home unless they are developing symptoms themselves.
* Staff will be responsible to ensure appropriate cleaning takes place and enough ventilation is in the room such as opening windows. If doors are open ensure the safety of the children is maintained.
* Staff members should avoid physical contact with each other including handshakes, hugs etc. Staff to wear fresh, clean clothes for each session.

*Training*

* Where possible, meetings and training sessions should be conducted through virtual conferencing.
* 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.
* Online training may be available to allow their training levels to be maintained if appropriate.

**Parents**

*Physical distancing*

* Only parents who are symptom free and or have completed the required isolation periods will be able to drop off or collect their child.
* Limit drop off and pick up to one parent per family where possible.
* Bubbles have been drawn out near entrance to ensure a 2 metre distance and children will be dropped off at gate with a kiss and goodbye technique.
* When parents are waiting to drop off or collect their child, physical distancing should be maintained in a safe area sticking to government social distancing policies.
* If the child is too distressed at drop off and come into the playgroup grounds, staff are unable to break 2 meter ruling to approach parent to take child into playgroup, as such, the child will not be able to attend setting that day.

*Communications*

* 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.
* Parents can communicate with staff via email or playgroup phone if they wish to discuss anything.

**Visitors**

* Attendance to the setting should be restricted to only children and staff as far as practically possible and visitors should not be permitted to the playgroup unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance).
* Where essential visits are required these should be made outside of the usual playgroup operational hours where possible. Any show arounds will be arranged on a day when playgroup is closed to children.
* As far as possible parents and carers should not enter the premises.

**Travel**

* Wherever possible staff and parents should travel to playgroup alone, using their own transport or if possible walk.
* If public transport is necessary, current guidance on the use of public transport must be followed.
* Parents should be encouraged to ensure they do not leave travel accessories including buggies, car seats, scooters in the setting premises or grounds.

**Hygiene and Health & Safety**

*Hand Washing*

* All children and staff must wash their hands upon arrival at the nursery for at least 20 seconds.
* Children and staff members should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently, this includes before and after eating food, after visiting the toilet or playing outdoors, after sneezing, blowing their nose or coughing into their hand and dealing with unwell people.
* Bodily fluid spills should follow the correct procedures as normal.

*Cleaning*

* An enhanced cleaning schedule will be implemented that includes furniture, surfaces and children’s toys and equipment and all staff are responsible in their area of work. Toys that cannot be easily cleaned have been removed from the setting or will be used in rotation allowing 72 hours between use.
* Communal area, touch points and hand washing facilities will be cleaned and sanitised regularly and cleaned thoroughly at the end of each day that we are open. We will follow government guidance on cleaning.
* A deep clean will be carried out should a child or staff member have a confirmed case of COVID-19.
* We will perform a weekly deep clean on a day that playgroup is closed to children.

*Waste disposal*

* All waste must be disposed of in a hygienic and safe manner following government guidelines.
* Tissues must be immediately disposed of and placed in a bin (purple one).
* Bodily fluids must be double bagged and disposed of in large bin outside playgroup if COVID-19 is suspected.
* Green paper towels used to clean surfaces in a different bin with a lid.

*Risk assessment*

* The setting and all activity have been risk assessed prior to opening to address the risks from the virus 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 eg sand.
* Cut down on the available resources out in the playgroup.
* Remove anything which cannot be easily wiped down or washed at the end of the day.
* Play food, play cutlery and crockery etc. disinfected with Milton every day. Children will be spoken to about the expectations of toys eg putting them in their mouths.

*PPE*

* 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 and disposed of as normal for nappy changing, one to one care and the administration of first aid.
* If a child shows symptoms, staff should wear a face mask, visor, disposable gloves and apron if a 2-meter distance cannot be maintained at all times. Face mask and visor will only be used if a child is ill and has suspected Covid-19 to protect staff from droplets i.e. coughing. PPE should be disposed of following government guidelines.
* Some staff members may be wearing PPE based on their personal requirements.

*Premises Building*

* Where premises have been temporarily closed during the lockdown period or where they may need to temporarily close during future lockdowns appropriate Health & Safety checks should be conducted prior to reopening including legionnaires checks.
* Windows will be kept open to achieve good levels of ventilation.
* Gate locked at all times so no visitors or parents can enter. Doorbell will be placed by gate to alert staff someone is there.

*Resources*

* Children should not be permitted to bring items from home into the setting unless absolutely essential for their wellbeing.
* All resources required for play and learning experiences of children should be regularly washed and/or sterilized. Any resources which are difficult to clean should be removed or stored for 72 hours after use.
* Equipment used by staff such as stationary, tablets etc. should be allocated to individual staff members where possible and cleaned regularly.

*Supplies Procurement & monitoring*

* The playgroup willensure an adequate supply of essential supplies and contingency plans such as additional suppliers are in place to minimise the impact of any shortages of supplies.
* The playgroup will not be able to operate without essential supplies required for ensuring infection control.
* 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 more will be ordered.
* Milk supplied and is delivered to playgroup before anyone arrives. Milk bottles will be disinfected before bringing into setting.

*Responding to a suspected case*

* 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/get tested in line with the current NHS guidance.
* Whilst waiting for the child to be collected they should be isolated from others in a previously identified room or area. An area in the cloak room is prepared for any possible cases, a curtain will be used to section off an area this can be removed and cleaned after child has gone home. If possible, a window should be opened for ventilation.
* Suitable PPE for this staff member such as the addition of face mask, visor disposable gloves and apron may be required
* The area should be thoroughly cleaned before using again.
* The person responsible for cleaning ideally should be the person dealing with the unwell child and should continue to wear their PPE. This should then be disposed of according to current government guidelines.
* 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. They should also follow current testing advice for themselves and their household.
* Children can now be tested if they are showing symptoms of covid-19, upon being tested we ask you share the results with PVPG as soon as possible. A positive test would result in all children and staff within the playgroup self-isolating for 14 days and testing should symptoms develop. If you require more information, a poster will be displayed at the PVPG gate or ask a member of staff.

**Monitoring of this policy**

*This policy will be reviewed annually by the setting manager/Chair, new government legislation and policies will be incorporated appropriately as and when required or informed.*