

First Steps Playgroup Policy for dealing with COVID-19 (revised 27/08/2021)

Information about COVID-19

- 1. Preventing the spread of Infection**
- 2. Guidance on dealing with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 at First Step**
- 3. Guidance on cleaning First Steps after a case of COVID-19 (suspected or confirmed)**
- 4. Guidance to assist Professionals**

Information about the virus

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City China in January 2020. Incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 and 10 days. This means that if a person remains well 10 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, it is unlikely that they have been infected.

The following symptoms may develop in the 10 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- Cough
- Fever
- Loss of or changed sense of smell.

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term health conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. There is no evidence that children are more affected than other age groups. This list is not exclusive. How COVID-19 is spread. From what we know about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person. Droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes (termed respiratory secretions) containing the virus are most likely to be the most important means of transmission.

There are 2 routes by which people could become infected:

Secretions can be directly transferred into the mouths or noses of people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or could be inhaled into the lungs.

It is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface or object that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching a door knob or shaking hands then touching own face).

Preventing the spread of infection

The child or member of staff must not attend playgroup if they have symptoms of:

- 1) a high temperature of 37.8 or above.
- 2) a new continuous cough.
- 3) a loss or change to sense of smell or taste.

The child or member of staff should get a PCR COVID - 19 test & should not return to playgroup until they get their result. <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

When the child or staff member gets a COVID- 19 test and the result is negative they may return to the playgroup (if the child staff member feels well enough)

If the COVID 19 test result is positive The child or staff member must stay at home for 10 days.

Other members of the household do not need to isolate if they have been fully vaccinated (with the second vaccine being received 14 days prior to the close contact of the positive case) or are under 18 years and six months. Instead they will be contacted by NHS Track and Trace with further information.

In the vast majority of cases, our parents and the setting will be in agreement that a child with symptoms should not attend the setting, given the potential risk to others. However, if a parent/carer insists on a child attending the setting, we will refuse a Childs entry if in our reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other children and staff from the possible infection of COVID-19. This decision would be thoroughly considered in light of all the circumstances and public health advice.

Since Dec 2020 there is a vaccine to help prevent serious illness, hospitalisations and death of COVID-19. All eligible adults over 18 in the UK have been offered a vaccine. There are general principles to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including: washing your hands often with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser if hand washing facilities are not available. This is particularly important after taking public transport covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. Catch it, Bin it, Kill it. People who feel unwell should stay at home and should not attend work or any education or childcare setting.

Lateral Flow Device testing for staff

First Steps is engaging in the asymptomatic rapid test initiative using the home lateral flow device (LFD). We acknowledge this is optional, staff are encouraged to carry out a test twice a week as a precautionary measure.

We have a collection point in the office where staff can pick up their test kits weekly.

Recording and evidencing the tests distribution and whether positive or negative will be carried out by Alison Blackery at the setting. All staff need to use the government system to inform them of their positive or negative test result.

In the event of a positive result, a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test must be booked to confirm the result. A negative result using a LFD doesn't need to be followed up by a PCR. If you have two void test results you must get a PCR test

Children, students, staff and visitors should wash their hands: before leaving home and on arrival at playgroup, after using the toilet, after breaks and sporting activities, before food preparation, before eating any food, including snacks, before leaving playgroup use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands avoid close contact with people who are unwell clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

If you are worried about your symptoms or those of a child or colleague, please call NHS 111. Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment see further information on the Public Health England Blog and the NHS UK website, Face masks will not be used in the setting for children or staff as they are not recommended in early years settings unless you are dealing with a suspected/confirmed case of COVID -19 or you are having to travel on public transport then they must be used.

Cleaning Routines:

Daily cleaning routines have been increased to keep the risk of infection from surfaces and toys as low as possible. All frequently used hard surfaces will be cleaned twice daily with an antibacterial cleaning detergent, this includes all door handles, number pads on doors, door release buttons, light switches, keyboards/mouse, telephones, office desks, printers, phone and money safe, banisters.

Hand Washing Routines:

To ensure the staff, children, parents and visitors are washing their hands in line with the current guidelines the following has now been put in place: On arrival at the playgroup all adults will go to the bathroom and wash their hands. Parents must assist the children to sanitise their hands on arrival and as the children leave the setting. Staff must wash their own hands before supporting a child to wash theirs. During the day children and staff will wash their hands after going to the toilet or having their nappy changed, before meals or snacks, and when arriving back from a walk and after playing outside. Playgroup sing the washing hands song and watch it on YouTube clips throughout the day to encourage children to wash their hands with soap and water, and for at least twenty seconds. Children's guides on hand washing are in all bathrooms. Staff must wash their hands before preparing or serving food even if wearing gloves.

Guidance on dealing with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Playgroup

Call NHS 111, or 999 in an emergency (if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk), and if appropriate, explain which country they have returned from in the last 10 days. This can be done on their behalf if this is easier. Staff and children who become unwell are advised not to go to their GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital. Whilst you wait for advice from NHS 111 or an ambulance to arrive, sit in the reception which is at least 2 metres away from other people. The door to the big room will be shut and a window open for ventilation. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the bin in this area. Tissues are available., should they cough and sneeze they are encouraged to do this into the tissue. The area of the unwell person needs to be deep cleaned once they leave.

If they need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should Use a separate bathroom if available, the bathroom used by the unwell person needs to be deep cleaned once they leave. Make sure that children and young people know to tell a member of staff if they feel unwell. If a child has the COVID-19 symptoms the staff member caring for the child will wear gloves, apron and full face shields for protection if child sneezes or coughs on them due to the nature of their age and understanding not being developed enough to keep the staff member safe without PPE.

What to do if a case of COVID-19 is suspected in Playgroup

Anyone who has been in contact with the suspected case can be tested for COVID-19. The setting doesn't need to be closed or to send learners or staff home unless they develop symptoms themselves. Therefore, there is no action that staff members need to take apart from cleaning specific areas and disposing of waste. Once the results arrive, those who test negative for COVID-19 will be advised that they can return to playgroup. if they feel well enough to do so.

What to do if a case of COVID-19 is confirmed in playgroup and what to do if children or staff in playgroup have been in close contact with the confirmed case of COVID-19 who was symptomatic while attending the playgroup

Any close contacts of the positive case do not need to isolate if they have been fully vaccinated (with the second vaccine being received 14 days prior to the close contact of the positive case) or are under 18 years and six months. Instead they will be contacted by NHS Track and Trace with further information. Anyone else not meeting this criteria will need to isolate for 10 days.

First Steps will inform all parents and stakeholders of the case.

First Steps will contact and inform Ofsted via: <https://www.report-childcare-incident.service.gov.uk/serious-incident/childcare/update-incident/>

Our local authority childcare@leic.gov.uk

If the child is vulnerable and has a positive case, their social worker will be informed.

First Steps will inform the DFE dedicated advice service introduced by Public Health England, delivered by the NHS business support on 0800 0468687 option 1 to discuss the case. The DFE Advice Service or Health Protection Team will work with First Steps and relevant staff and carry out a rapid risk assessment to identify & confirm who has been in close contact with the Positive case. In some cases the Advice service will seek further advice and will escalate the call to the local Public health protection team

The DFE advice service or PHE local health protection team if escalated will work with First Steps and guide the setting through the actions they need to take.

The DFE Advice service or the Health Protection Team may also be in contact with the

patient directly to advise on isolation and identifying other contacts and will be in touch with any contacts of the patient to provide them with appropriate advice. Advice on cleaning of communal areas such as playrooms and toilets will be given by the DFE Advice Team or Health Protection Team.

In rare cases, closure of the childcare or education setting will be unnecessary, but this will be a local decision based on various factors such as establishment size and pupil mixing.

Please refer to our Contingency plan outlined in our risk assessment August 2021, on how to manage an outbreak of COVID -19 either in the setting or the local area.

How to isolate an adult or child who is displaying symptoms or believes they have been exposed to COVID -19

If an adult becomes unwell and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19: If they become unwell in the workplace the unwell person should go home and follow the self isolation guidance. If they are very unwell they will go to our reception area which is 2 meters away from the big room. The door will be closed and a window will be open to allow ventilation.

The individual who is unwell should call NHS 111 from their mobile, or 999 if an emergency (if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk) and outline their current symptoms. If the person affected is not able for any reason to call NHS 111 themselves, then a staff member will call on their behalf. Whilst they wait for advice from NHS 111 or an ambulance to arrive, they should remain at least 2 metres from other people. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in a bag, then throw the tissue in the bin. If they don't have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.

The area of the unwell person needs to be deep cleaned once they leave. If they need to go to the toilet whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should use a separate toilet, if available. The bathroom used by the unwell person needs to be deep cleaned once they leave.

If a child becomes unwell and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19: The child

must be isolated in the same manner as an adult; however a member of staff remain with them. The adult must wear protective gloves, disposable apron and a face mask & shield. To ensure the child and staff members safety the child will be sat in a chair, which could be strapped into a buggy if suitable, in order to maintain their distance from the adult supporting them.

The child's parent would be called to collect the child immediately, 111 will also be called for advice and if required an ambulance will be called. The child should be off the playgroup premises within one hour of becoming unwell. After the child or staff member has left the room used for isolation will need to be deep cleaned, including any objects/items touched.

Guidance on cleaning First Steps after a case of COVID-19 (suspected or confirmed)

Coronavirus symptoms are similar to a flu-like illness and include cough, fever, or shortness of breath. Once symptomatic, all surfaces that the suspected case has come into contact with must be cleaned using disposable cloths and household detergents, according to our current recommended workplace legislation and practice.

These include:

All surfaces & objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids all potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected. If a person becomes ill in a shared space, these should be cleaned as detailed above.

Disposing of waste in playgroup including tissues, if children, students or staff become unwell with suspected COVID-19

All waste that has been in contact with the individual, including used tissues, and masks if used, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It should be put in a safe place and marked for storage until the result is available. If the individual tests negative, this can be put in the normal waste. Should the individual test positive, the playgroup will dispose of the waste after 72 hours have passed or if the health protection team advise otherwise.

Fee Payments - If First Steps is required to close due to COVID-19, on the advice of the Government, Department for Education or Public Health England, then no fees will be charged for the duration of the closure. In the event that particular children are still entitled to attend (e.g. key worker / vulnerable children), any individuals who choose to access the service will be charged only for those sessions attended.

If schools are required to close under government guidelines, but early years settings are permitted to remain open, then any parent who voluntarily opts NOT to send their child(ren) will receive a 50% discount off the usual session fees. Snack costs will NOT be charged.

No fees will be charged for any absence due to a positive coronavirus case at First Steps, whether a child or staff member.

For any other COVID-19 related absence, fees will be charged in full.

This policy may be reviewed at any time and individual cases may be treated differently at the Manager's or Committee's discretion.

Guidance to support professionals is regularly being updated or published. Up-to-date advice can be found through the following links:

Coronavirus (COVID-19): latest information and advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Guidance for educational settings

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>

Guidance for employers and business <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/worker-support>

<https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> Public Health England - GOV.UK

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

This policy was adopted at a meeting of First Steps Playgroup

Held on:

Date to be reviewed:

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Name of signatory

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/Manager)