St James’ Pre-School

**79 Epidemic and Pandemic Policy (Covid 19)**

**Statement of Intent**

St James’ Pre-School policy and proposed control measures to support minimising the possibility of transmission and infection risks within the setting of Covid-19 or any other associated disease or virus to staff, parents, children and visitors.

Legislation and leading authorities which have guided and influenced this policy are: Coronavirus Act 202, 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 Pre-School 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 and if the situation deepens and new precautionary measures have been introduced and practices had been reflected upon.

**Method**

As early years providers we ensure to offer 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 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)
* Minimising general contact and mixing (creating bubbles and limiting numbers)
* The use of Protective and Personal Equipment (PPE) where necessary
* Testing

**Children**

*Attendance*

* Only children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period should attend the setting.
* Providers may consider taking temperatures of children on arrival and risk assessing with regular health questionnaires for returning children.
* Liaising with parents to ensure that there have been no changes to health within the family
* Families who attend more than one setting should choose only one for the remainder of the term to ensure their ‘bubble’ remains small.

*Physical Distancing/grouping*

* Children will be organised into small groups within the setting, this will also involve the outdoor area. Wherever possible these small groups or ‘bubbles’ should not mix during the day. This is to minimise contact with others and mixing. Staff may exercise their own judgement during the day for the high standards of safety for all children.
* Children in small groups should have the same staff team caring for them wherever possible to limit the amount of people coming into contact with each other.
* Smaller amounts of children in the whole setting may be advised or preferable. If we are full most days this could be achieved by, but not limited to:
* A temporary cap on the number of children in the setting at any one time.
* Only allowing the older children or those moving to Primary school to attend.
* Grouping children to certain days
* Prioritising children such as those who are vulnerable, those with special educational needs.
* The take up on places may be small so there may be no need to change children’s hours.
* Care routines including provision of snack, nappy changing and toileting should be within the space allocated to each ‘bubble’ wherever possible.
* The use of communal internal spaces should be restricted as much as possible and outdoor spaces should be utilised as much as possible.
* Sunscreen should be applied by parents/carers before the child arrives at the Pre-School. Clothing covering legs and shoulders is preferable to minimise the need for staff to ‘top up’ sunscreen.
* Children should wear fresh, clean clothes for each session.

*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 Covid19 and staff need to ensure they are aware of children’s attachments and their need for emotional support at this time. If children become distressed due to the need for social distancing or change to routine, they will be comforted with cuddles and cared for with sensitivity and understanding.
* EYFS framework will continue to be delivered through play and adult led activities.
* To prevent cross contamination, disposable tableware will be used for snack and drinks throughout the morning. If any Pre-School cutlery, plates and cups are used – these will be washed in the dishwasher.

**Staff**

*Attendance*

* Staff should only attend Pre-School if they are symptom free, have completed the required isolation period or achieved a negative test result. All staff are eligible for testing if they display symptoms. Where the staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation. If the staff member tests positive, the rest of their immediate group within the setting, should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days.
* Providers may consider taking temperature of staff on arrival and risk assessing with regular health questionnaires for returning staff.
* Consideration should be given to limiting the number of staff in Pre-School at any one time to only those required to care for the expected occupancy levels on any given day.
* Staff hours, days they work and length of day may change in order to meet considerations within this policy.

*Physical distancing/grouping/safety*

* Before opening, a risk assessment will be completed to address any risks from the virus. This will ensure sensible measures are in place to control risks.
* Wherever possible staff should remain with the small group of children, the ‘bubble’ of children who they are allocated to and not come into contact with other groups.
* Emergency revisions to the EYFS may have been implemented which provides some flexibility on ratios and qualifications to make this feasible.
* Staff have been advised by the government not to wear PPE such as facemasks, but should continue to wear PPE 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 eye protection should also be worn if a 2 metre distance cannot be maintained.
* 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.
* Social distancing must be maintained as much as possible during the session.
* Staff may be required to be in charge of specific areas including outdoors to minimise their contact with surfaces etc. This includes potentially working from one particular table if table top toys are available, for example. Staff will be responsible to ensure appropriate cleaning takes place. If doors are open for ventilation, 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.
* Advise staff to remove their work clothes before they enter their home and take a shower immediately to remove any germs they may have picked up.
* All staff will be signposted to 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. Parents will not be allowed in the setting unless absolutely essential.
* Aim to minimise the ‘pinch points’ during the morning and limit drop off and pick up to one parent per family.
* Offer staggered drop off and collection timings where possible to avoid a queue of families waiting to enter Pre-School.
* When parents are waiting to drop off or collect their child, physical distancing should be maintained observing government social distancing policies.
* Consider allowing some parents to enter Pre-School for the purpose of a settling in session if not doing so would cause a child distress. Measures should be taken to minimise contact between the parent and other children and staff members.

*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 should inform Pre-School of their circumstances and if they plan to keep their child away, this helps Pre-School conform to our Safeguarding policy.

**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 Pre-School unless essential.

**Travel**

* Wherever possible staff and parents should travel to Pre-School alone using their own transport of 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 buggies, car seats, scooters etc., in the setting premises or grounds.
* Outings from the Pre-School into the local community should be restricted to ensure mixing with members of the general public does not happen.

**Hygiene and Health and Safety**

*Handwashing*

* On arrival at Pre-School, all children and staff must wash their hands 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 using the bathroom 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 must be implemented that includes furniture, surfaces and toys and equipment and all staff are responsible for their area of work.
* Communal areas, touch points and hand washing facilities must be cleaned and sanitised regularly and cleaned thoroughly at the end of the session.

*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 with a bag, lid and foot pedal.
* Bodily fluids must be bagged and disposed of in a bin with a bag, lid and foot pedal.

*Risk assessment*

* The setting and all activity should be risk assessed before opening or going ahead to address the risks from the virus and due consideration given to any adaptations to usual practice. Sensible measures should be put in place and policies and procedures followed.
* It is expected that would include, but not be limited to, the suspension of learning experiences involving materials which are not easily washable such as malleable materials (dough, clay)
* Cut down on the available resources in Pre-School.
* Remove anything which cannot be easily wiped down or cleaned at the end of the day.
* Play food, play cutlery and crockery etc., should be removed or anything else which may be ‘mouthed’ by children.
* Baking, food play and finger painting should be avoided.

*PPE*

* Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in early years settings to protect against COVID19 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, disposable gloves, eye protection and apron if a 2 metre distance cannot be maintained at all times. PPE should be disposed of following government guidelines.

*Resources*

* Children should not be permitted to bring items from home into the setting unless absolutely essential for their wellbeing. Anything that is brought in from home should remain in a bag.
* All resources required for play and learning experiences of children should be regularly washed and/or sterilised. Any resources which are difficult to clean should be removed.

*Supplies Procurement and monitoring*

* The Pre-School will not be able to operate without essential supplies required for ensuring infection control and so should ensure that an adequate supply of stock is available and if necessary, contingency plans such as additional suppliers are in place to minimise the impact of any shortages.
* 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.

*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 in line with the current NHS guidance. All children will have access to a test if they display symptoms and parents will be advised to arrange this. If the child tests negative, they can return to the setting and household members can end their self-isolation. If the child tests positive, the rest of their immediate group within the setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days.
* Whilst waiting for the child to be collected they should be isolated from others in a previously identified room or area. If possible, provide ventilation.
* The staff member responsible for the child during this time should be a staff member from their ‘bubble’. The provider may consider suitable PPE for this staff member such as a face mask, disposable gloves, eye protection and apron.
* The area should be thoroughly cleaned immediately.
* 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 Pre-School, 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.

**Actions indicated and resulting from the statement of intent will be implemented appropriately by all staff members under the supervision of the managers of the setting and periodically reviewed in line with government guidance should there be updates in procedures or guidelines.**

**Should the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and children be compromised by a failure to implement the appropriate procedures or identification of the possible spread of infection due to a local outbreak of the virus, the setting manager with the agreement of the Trustees shall close the Pre-School with immediate effect.**

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| This policy was adopted on | 1.6.20 |
| Signed on behalf of the pre-school | D Nichols |
| Policy reviewed and amended on | Reviewed 15.6.20 and ongoing as guidance dictates |