

## First Steps risk assessment during the Covid-19 outbreak

### Systems of control from 1 September 2020

#### (following the Government guidance for Early Years)

### Social Distancing

Government guidance on social distancing to prevent spread of the coronavirus means that people must stay at a distance of **at least** 2 metres from anyone who is not a member of their household.

It is recognised by the government that it is very difficult to keep strictly to social distancing rules when working with very young children. The following measures will ensure that risk of infection is kept to a minimum within the setting.

We are resuming as a free flow setting. Large group times will not take place. Children will be called from the big room at the end of the morning or afternoon session, coats and book bag collected from reception area and let out at the front door accompanied by staff at the big room door and front door.

Ratios remaining 1 adult : 4 children 2 yrs  
1 adult : 8 children 3 yrs plus

Due to additional health and safety measures our adult ratio will be higher.

Two members of staff in each room through out the sessions.( Previously shielded staff will need to shield again now we are in tier 4 following the government guidance) One other member of staff will be the floater accompanying the children to wash hands, go to the toilet, nappy change. They will clean frequently used/touched areas and replenish drinking water and cups. Staff must socially distance from each other as much as possible, there will be times when it is not safe or physically possible to do so. Staff duty rotas will be given.

The small room have a portable sink to use for hand washing other than if the children or staff need to use the bathroom, this prevents overcrowding in the bathroom.

Good communication is vital between staff, using the walkie talkies, if the toilets are in use to prevent overcrowding.

Snack is to be eaten in stages in the big room. No more than 8 at a time in the eating area. Times will be staggered to avoid congestion in the bathroom area and around tables. Regular communication is essential via walkie talkies.

Lunch time will be a maximum of 8 children around one table which will be spaced two metres apart for social distancing. The children will wash hands in small groups.

The manager and floater will greet the parents and children in the car park near to the main door to the reception area.

Social distancing markers in and outside of the car park will be clearly marked at 2 metres apart. This prevents the likelihood of close contact and prolonged times of parents congregating in the car park to generally chat. Cars will not be permitted to park in the car park, during session times (with the exception of an emergency).

Only the main gate will be opened in order to control the flow of parents exiting/entering the car park. The gate will be closed by 10am.

The safer methods of transporting children to and from the setting, if not walking, is to cycle or use the car. Public transport is to be avoided where possible because of risk of the infection spreading as people are in close contact. A facial covering to protect others is strongly advised by the government and must be worn correctly.(see last para of this document)

At the beginning of every session, the manager and floater will approach each family to take each child's temperature before they enter the building and take any necessary information such as accidents/injuries occurred outside of the setting or medication information if it needs administering during the session. This will involve passing on paperwork and close contact to use a thermometer.

Parents will not enter the building unless the manager deems it absolutely necessary eg. for confidential issues. Otherwise lengthy discussions can take place by telephone call.

Staff meetings will continue weekly and will take place in the big room where staff's seating arrangement will maintain the 2 metres distance and windows be open.

Committee meetings will take place via group 'chat' at home.

The Old School Hall meetings are to be held in a large space, outside where possible, keeping a socially distanced space of 2 metres.

Staff photographs for the prospectus and other promotional material will only be taken individually to prevent unnecessary grouping.

Virtual online tours of the setting are provided for potential new starters instead of actual tour.

## **Infection control**

## **The working environment**

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable must not return to work as from 26th December 2020 as Leicestershire have moved into tier 4. All other staff will return to work following government guidance effective from 26th December 2020.

Risk is thoroughly assessed where staff having other work outside of playgroup either self employed or employed, ensuring strict safety measures are being upheld within their working practices.

Parents and carers who have been on holiday since 18 August 2020 must inform the manager and state where the holiday was. If the holiday destination requires 10 days isolation when returning home following government guidance and hasn't already taken place, the manager will decline access to the setting until the 10 day isolation has taken place.

Each member of staff and any visitors must record their own temperature on entering the setting for the first time on that particular day. Separate disposable cones to be used on the machine for each person. Cleaning the thermometer with a baby wipe in between uses prevents spread of infection. 20 second thorough hand washing must take place each time an adult is entering or leaving the building at any time of the day.

As part of the Test and Trace procedure, all visitors to the setting will complete a form giving their name, telephone number, time and date of attending the setting. This allows contact to be made should a case have occurred during the time they were in the setting and they must self isolate had they been in close contact to the person infected.

Now that the number of children allowed into the setting has increased another thermometer has been purchased. The manager and floater will take the temperature of each child before they enter.

Parents/carers are required to wear face coverings when dropping off or collecting their children. The manager and mobile person will be wearing face coverings when having all contact with the parents and carers. Each member of staff have their own designated shield.

People exempt from having to wear a mask include:

- people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate

There are two staged starting and finishing times to ensure effective and safe entry and exit for the children. 8.45 am and 9am. 3.15pm and 3.30pm.

All staff are to be in the big room at 8.45 am. A member of staff will be allocated to assist the children to sanitize their hands on entering the reception area and put their coats and bags in the labelled cupboard or on the labelled peg. They will be positioned to minimize contact with another child's coat or bag.

At 9am staff allocated to the small room will open the small room to allow free flow as the second group of children arrive. A staff member from the big room will assist those children to hang up bags and coats etc in the reception area.

The Welcome Song will take place at 9.15 am. Staff will lead this in the room they are working in with the children who are in the room at that particular time to keep grouping of the children in small numbers. It will consist of: hello song, basic talk about boundaries and happy birthday if relevant. NO HAND HOLDING.

Children must not have access to fancy dress, soft furnishings or soft toys. These will temporarily be in storage as these cannot be effectively cleaned daily..

Sleeping children can be placed in their buggies or on the two bean bags as these can be easily washed and bleached. The mattress must not be used as it is not fully washable after use.

All previously easily accessible toys and equipment have been removed and put into storage away from the children's reach so that the amount of items touched is greatly reduced.

A minimal amount of activities for each area must be provided and must be washable or disposable. Activities can be changed each day in line with next steps and the child's interests as the equipment/toys will have been thoroughly washed and bleached.

Large equipment will stay in the big room as there is to be no other users of the Old School Hall during this first phase of opening. This prevents any spread of infection to our equipment.

Sand mud and water play should consist of individual pots/bowls/controlled area for each child to use and adult supervision to prevent sharing.

Playdough will be stored in individual named pots so that it can be played with by one child only then thrown away at the end of the week. Four children are allowed to play at the playdough table at any one time provided that undivided supervision is given by an adult.

Likewise individual trays of cornflour is allowed if strictly monitored by an adult at all times to prevent sharing, then thrown away after use on the same day.

Tooth brushing will not take place.

Staff are not sharing pens. There is plenty for each member of staff to have their own with them at all times.

First Aid procedures must take place in the usual way. Distancing is not necessary however the practitioner must thoroughly wash their hands for 20 seconds following the procedure.

There is a jug of water provided in each room with cups. These will also be given to the children in the same way. When the mobile person does her mid morning and mid afternoon cleaning, the used cups will be taken to the kitchen area. This prevents other children drinking or touching a drink that is not theirs. Used cups will be stored out of children's reach and then taken for washing.

The staff and children will be in rooms with opened windows and be accessing the outdoors to minimise the risk of spreading the coronavirus.

To prevent unnecessary grouping of the children, snack is to take place in staged sittings between 10am and 10.30am in the big room, 8 children at any one time.

Snack food will have been washed and prepared onto individual plates, one for each child to prevent spread of infection by them touching food that another child may pick up.

Lunchtime is in one sitting at 12.30 and all tables will be set out at a 2m distance from the others.

One member of staff will be responsible for escorting the children to the bathroom, main exit door at collection time or reception area if not well. A daily rota will show which staff are responsible for doing this.

### **Hygiene**

Visual instructions on exactly the correct technique for washing hands is displayed at all sinks. Water and soap must be used each time and paper towels to dry hands.

Staff must wash their hands immediately on entering the building whether visiting, starting their shift, returning from an appointment or a lunch break. The correct 20 second technique must be used. They must wash hands using the same method before leaving the setting.

On arrival to the building all children will be sanitizing their hands and a member of staff allocated to those children will assist them to ensure the correct technique is being used.

When returning from outdoor play, both children and staff must wash their hands thoroughly using the 20 second technique.

Before snack time and lunch times, both children and staff must wash their hands thoroughly using the 20 second technique. After eating, sanitizing gel must be used to clean hands.

Before going home, children's hands must be cleaned using the sanitizer.

Staff are to promote hand washing and other infection control measures via age appropriate games, videos and songs with the children to give them a better understanding of the importance. This provides additional support for children with delayed development.

Any adult or child that sneezes or coughs must use a tissue or inside of their elbow to 'catch it,' bin the tissue, and then thoroughly wash their hands or use the sanitizer gel. Following the public health slogan "catch it, bin it, kill it" slogan. Bins and tissues are in all locations indoors and outdoors.

The alcohol sanitizer and baby wipes is provided in each area but hand washing with soap is still the preferred method.

Cleaning of switches on lights and heaters must be bleach cleaned at the end of each session. Floors in the toilets, big room and small room must be bleach mopped at the end of each session. (Staff will be notified of days the big room and toilets don't need to be done as the Old School Hall cleaner will be doing them. )

During every session all regularly used surfaces, electronic devices, door handles, flush handles, taps, soap nozzles, sinks, towel dispensers are to be washed with warm water and detergent (washing up liquid) mid morning and mid afternoon. It is not safe to use bleach in the presence of the children. The mobile person will do this task and take any used drinking cups belonging to playgroup to be washed and replenish if clean ones needed.

At the end of each session when the children have gone home, all surfaces, door handles, bathrooms, equipment and toys, indoors and outdoors, that have been touched are to be thoroughly bleach cleaned.

Staff are to wash their uniforms at home at the temperatures recommended on the manufacturers' labels following a day at work and maintain their usual high standard of hygiene.

It is not necessary to wear **any** PPE during a normal working day unless staff have face to face contact with or are escorting the child/children to and from their parents/carers outside at the beginning and end of each session in which case face coverings or face shields must be worn. Full PPE must be worn when cleaning, dealing with a dirty nappy, vomit, blood, or a child displaying symptoms of COVID-19 . Regular hand washing however is required.

Staff must wash their hands after caring for any ill child regardless of symptoms.

Dirty linen is safe to be cleaned weekly on a 90 degree wash by staff willing to do so, on a rota basis, unless it has been in contact with a child or member of staff displaying COVID-19 symptoms. In which case it would be securely double bagged and removed from the building for 72 hours clearly labeled and dated.

If a negative result laundry can be washed immediately

If a positive result the laundry must be washed after the 72 hour period.

### **Adults or children displaying COVID-19 symptoms**

Adults (staff members) and children displaying COVID-19 symptoms of a high temperature (37.8 degrees celsius or above), loss of or change to their ability to taste or smell or a dry continuous cough, must be sent home immediately and the adult affected or child's parents advised to follow the *COVID-19; guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance*.

They must self isolate for 10 days, (the 10 days is counted from the first day of symptoms) members of their household must self isolate for 10 days. Every adult or child attending a childcare setting has access to testing and one must be booked immediately if symptoms are displayed.

Tests are booked either by using the NHS website or ordered via NHS119. Adults must assist children younger than 11 years old if using a home testing kit.

Playgroup must be notified immediately of the result after testing.

Playgroup and parents will engage in the NHS Test and Trace process providing information if the symptomatic child or adult tests positive of who they have had close contact with. Those who have been in close contact must then self isolate for 10 days.

Close contact with an infected person meaning:

Direct close contact- less than a metre, being coughed on, talking to, or skin to skin, for prolonged periods.

Proximity contact within 1-2m for more than 15 mins

Travelling in a small vehicle with an infected person

Where an adult or child tests negative, they may return to the setting and members of their household end their self isolation if they feel well. It may be they have another cold or flu virus in which case it is advisable to stay at home.

If the adult or child tests positive, the manager will work closely with the local health protection team when making a rapid risk assessment. Children and adults who were in close contact with that person on the day symptoms were displayed must stay at/go home to self isolate for 10 days. Unless they show symptoms, it is not necessary for members of their household to self isolate.

The person testing positive must self isolate for at least 10 days after the onset of their symptoms. They must self isolate longer if their temperature has not returned to normal. They should then return if they no longer have symptoms, other than a cough or anosmia (loss of taste or smell) as this can last several weeks after the infection has gone.

If a person began their 10 day isolation period and develops symptoms, they must isolate for 10 days from the day they develop symptoms.

As part of the national test and trace programme, swift action must be taken when notification is received that someone who has attended the setting has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). The manager will contact the dedicated advice service introduced by Public Health England (PHE). Helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case. The team of advisers give advice on what action is needed based on the latest public health advice. They will conduct a rapid investigation to advise the manager on further measures necessary. Infection prevention and control must be observed to avoid the whole setting requiring closure.

The manager will issue a template letter of advice provided from the local health protection team to parents, carers and staff.

In the event of a positive result, the manager will contact and provide details to:

The Local Authority Leicestershire County Council  
OFSTED

Specialists working with vulnerable and SEND children will be contacted by the manager if those children need to isolate due to COVID 19 contact or COVID 19 or illness.

The manager will not hesitate to close the whole setting if she felt there was any risk to the health of children or staff regardless of PHE advice.

During the flu vaccination season, if an adult or child has developed a high temperature within 48 hours of having the vaccination, it is likely to be a recognized side effect from that vaccine therefore they do not need to isolate unless further symptoms begin..

After 48 hours of the vaccination the adult or child would need to isolate based on NHS information for COVID 19.

### **Actions when a child is waiting for parents to collect**

The child must be isolated therefore will be taken by a member of staff to the reception area on the sofa away from others. They will wait on the sofa with their coat and bags.

The manager's office is nearby so there is another adult for support and keeps the correct adult:child ratio.

A window will be opened for ventilation.

Full PPE (personal protective equipment) **must** be worn by the member of staff caring for the child gloves, apron, mask, goggles and face shield. This will be fully accessible to the member of staff so that they can put it on quickly. Stored in Managers office cupboard in reception area.

The PPE gives protection and safeguards the adult caring, from any infection likely to be passed on directly or indirectly from droplets formed by spit, crying, sneezing, coughs and talking.

The member of staff sits a a 2 metre distance if able to. This may not be possible with a young child or a child with additional needs.

The bathroom is also accessible. The child must use either the disabled toilet or the boys toilet and it be closed off to prevent other users until it has been thoroughly cleaned.

If the child becomes seriously unwell or injured, call 999.

### **Once child/adult leaves**

After the child leaves, the area they have touched, sat on or used must be cleaned with detergent. It will be bleached at the end of the session to prevent the passing on of any infection. Clean PPE must be worn for cleaning to prevent transferal of infection.

Disposable PPE, cloths and any other waste used to clean must be bagged and tied when full, then placed into a second rubbish bag and tied. This waste must be dated and marked "for 72 hour storage" away from the children. Outside at the side of the toilet wall where children do not go to.

If an adult displaying symptoms has left the building it is unlikely a member of staff has had to care for them however cleaning cloths used to clean areas they have used, following their departure must be double bagged and labelled in the same way as above.

IF AN ADULT OR CHILD CONFIRMS A NEGATIVE RESULT WASTE THEN GOES INTO THE COMMUNAL WASTE

IF A POSITIVE RESULT IS GIVEN ONLY PUT IN THE COMMUNAL WASTE **AFTER** THE 72 HOUR PERIOD TO REDUCE SPREAD OF INFECTION

Storing for 72 hours saves unnecessary waste movements and will minimise risk to waste operatives.

Face shields must be thoroughly washed with detergent and the sink area used, washed with detergent to eliminate spread of infection in the splashed droplets.

The person that cared for the child must thoroughly wash their hands for 20 seconds after having done the disposal and cleaning of the areas.

The person caring for the child is to continue to work. They do not need to go home unless they display symptoms themselves or the child they cared for tests positive. It is safe to wash uniforms at the end of the day, at home, according to the manufacturers instructions and be washed with other peoples' clothing.

### **How to use PPE**

When PPE is used it is essential to use it correctly. Hands must be washed before and after putting it on in order to reduce self contamination.

Face masks must:

Cover both the nose and mouth

Not be allowed to dangle around the neck or be moved from the mouth while talking

Not be touched once put on except when carefully removing before disposal

Be changed when they become moist or damaged

Be worn once then discarded-hands must be cleaned after disposal

### **Removal of face coverings on arrival to setting**

Face covering must be put on and removed by touching only the sides of the mask not the front.

Adults or children arriving at the setting wearing non disposable face coverings must remove them and place them in a plastic bag that the wearer has brought with them.

They must wash their hands for 20 seconds. If a child needs help to remove it, the adult that assisted them must also thoroughly wash their hands.

Disposable face coverings are to be disposed of in the normal domestic waste bin as they would only be allowed in the setting if they were non symptomatic.

### **ADDITIONAL SAFETY PRECAUTION**

As an extra safety precaution to keep all children, staff and families safe at First Steps, the manager will ask that staff and children who are in the same household as children having to isolate for 10 days due to COVID 19 outbreaks in their bubbles at local schools, to remain at home for the 10 days specified by the school.

## Wellbeing

Identifying that everyone will be concerned about health, finance, mental state, upheaval of routines, not just their own but of family and friends.

The manager keeps contact regularly with staff and parents to offer support where possible.

Staff will be vigilant to identify and act on any safeguarding concerns as COVID 19 outbreak and lockdown may have changed and had an effect the child and their family's circumstances.

The manager clearly communicates and signposts the different support groups available to parents, carers and staff.

## **CLEANING AREAS WHERE THERE IS FOOD**

### Food preparation area

Staff preparing food has a food hygiene certificate

They follow and mark off daily the checklist for opening and closing the kitchen area which is kept in the kitchen area above the sinks.

### Dining Area

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When setting up in the mornings, after each sitting of snack time and each sitting of lunch time, the tables are washed with water and detergent.

Tables used are designated for dining without the need for table cloths and are bleach washed at the end of each session.

When the children are not using the tables for eating wipe able table coverings are used so that toys can be put on there minimizing the risk of spreading infection. These are washed during the session with water and detergent then by using bleach in hot water when the children have left.

The floor area is swept regularly during the session, after snack and lunch times and mopped with bleach and hot water at the end of the session when there are no children.

This risk assessment will be reviewed by Alison and Elaine on a monthly basis and each time government guidance updates or our systems of control change.

Elaine Belcher

Health & Safety Officer  
02/01/21

Review date 1/02/21