

Statement of intent

This policy outlines the procedures that will be followed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This will involve us promoting the health, safety and welfare of all children, parents and carers, staff and visitors during this time.

We will closely monitor and implement information from Public Health England, the Department of Education, Surrey County Council and all Government guidance, ensuring we are acting upon the most up to date information and workplace best practices concerning the spread and containment of COVID-19.

Aim

By implementing sector specific and Government guidance we aim to:

- protect children, parents and carers, staff and visitors from encountering COVID-19;
- maintain the required staff ratios as stated by Government guidance;
- meet the welfare and care needs of the children when attending the setting;
- recognise and support children who may have had disruptions to their routines and had challenging experiences during the closure period;
- actively communicate new/additional health and safety procedures to parents and carers and staff in light of the pandemic;
- support children and families to return to the setting following a partial or temporary closure; and
- continually monitor the risks of keeping the setting open.

Partial or total closure

During the pandemic the Government may decide to temporarily close all childcare settings. In this instance we may need to close or partially close in line with prevailing Government guidance.

Where the setting has been temporarily closed or partially closed, we will communicate our plans for the wider opening of the setting via email to all parents and carers, ensuring they are aware of all new measures and procedures.

Risk assessment

We will undertake a detailed risk assessment at each stage of return or every six weeks whichever occurs the soonest. The assessment will directly address the risks highlighted by the sector specific and Government guidance so that sensible measures can be put in place to control the risks for children, parents and carers, staff and visitors.

Grouping children

We appreciate that unlike older children, those under the age of five are likely to find it difficult to maintain the 2 metre physical distancing away from each other and staff. We will therefore implement physical distancing between groups of children and staff as far as possible. Small consistent groups of children, which we will refer to as 'bubbles', will be kept together in the same area throughout the day, and apart from other groups.

We will use our professional judgement when planning for groups of children and refer in the first instance to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) ratio requirements. We will aim for a maximum of 8 children per group and refer to the risk assessment to ensure the safe care of children can be maintained at all times.

Our priority will be to help young children to adapt to their new routines and support them to settle back in to the setting. As set out in the Government guidance we will use reasonable endeavours to deliver all areas of the EYFS by continuing to provide an environment that is stimulating, engaging and exciting.

Space management

We will consider how floor space, rooms and outdoor space can be organised to ensure physical distancing between staff and between groups of children, whilst maintaining the EYFS space requirements. The Manager and staff will exercise professional judgement in ensuring the highest standards of safety are maintained.

We will plan how our outdoor space can be used to make sure all groups of children are given equal opportunities for outdoor learning and play.

Hygiene - children, parents and carers and staff

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 either by direct transmission e.g. close contact with those sneezing and coughing or indirect transmission e.g. touching contaminated surfaces, we will focus on the following actions and approaches. When implemented they will create an inherently safer system where the risk of transmission of infection will be substantially reduced. These include:

- Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell. Those who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, will be asked not to attend the setting.
- All children, parents and carers and staff washing or sanitising their hands on entering the setting.
- Thorough hand washing for 20 seconds with running water and soap, drying them thoroughly or using alcohol hand rub or sanitiser to all parts of the hands.
- All Children will have their temperature recorded upon before entering the premises.
- Using only disposable hand towels when drying hands.
- Encouraging good respiratory hygiene such as coughing or sneezing into their elbow when a tissue cannot be reached.
- Reminding and expecting everyone to wash their hands after sneezing or coughing.
- Advising all adults and children to avoid touching their eyes, nose and face.
- Using the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach when using tissues.
- Frequently replenishing tissue stations, using lidded tissue bins and emptying throughout the day.
- Cleaning high touch surfaces frequently using recommended products.
- Establishing clear procedures for maintaining stringent cleaning processes for food preparation areas.

Whilst every measure will be taken to make sure children have minimal contact with others, children of the early years age group will inevitably want to hug and touch their friends through play or when needing comfort from an adult. It is important that we adhere to best practice hygiene policies throughout the day.

Hygiene - environment and resources

We will continually monitor how play equipment is used and minimise the sharing of resources between groups in the following ways:

- All resources will be thoroughly cleaned before and after use by different groups.
- Malleable resources, such as playdough will not be shared between groups.
- Sandpits will be covered and closed as cleaning is not possible.
- All soft furnishing and soft toys will be removed.
- Toys that are hard to clean due to their intricate parts such as Sticklebricks and Lego will be removed during this time.

Where possible all areas of the setting will be naturally ventilated.

Frequently touched surfaces such as doors, sinks, toilets, light switches, will be cleaned every two hours using recommended cleaning products.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Surrey Hills Forest School Ltd will follow Government guidance on the use of PPE. We do not require staff to wear face masks or gloves. The exception to this will be in response to a suspected case of COVID-19 (see Responding to a case of COVID-19 on page 4).

Staff involved in intimate care routines will continue to use appropriate PPE such as gloves and aprons.

Staff qualifications and ratios

We will consider the impact of staff availability and their qualification levels when calculating staff to child ratios. A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) will be available during operational hours.

We will do our utmost to keep staffing arrangements consistent by assigning the same staff to each group where possible. These will stay the same during the day and subsequent days.

Staff

During this unprecedented time, it is important for staff to feel safe and confident in the workplace and to support families and one another. Staff will be encouraged to:

- avoid contact with colleagues, parents and carers and visitors and follow the social distancing guidelines of being 2 meters (6ft) apart.
- be a positive role model regarding hygiene and personal conduct around others.
- remain calm and manage the situation thoughtfully and respectfully if an adult or child displays COVID-19 in the setting
- be mindful of others experiences during the lockdown which may include loss of a family member or financial hardship.
- share new ideas and suggestions which may improve the challenges being faced.
- adopt a 'glass half full' rather than 'half empty' attitude.

Staff will be permitted to bring one small bag and if necessary a coat. No other items will be permitted in the setting. They will be asked to take their breaks outside or in naturally ventilated rooms.

Where possible, staff meetings and training sessions will be conducted virtually.

Food, drink and snacks

All children will be asked to bring their own filled named water bottle, which will be available to the appropriate children at all times throughout the day. The water bottle will remain within reaching distance of each 'bubble' group for ease.

Children will be to wash their hands before eating. Snacks will be provided as usual and prepared by a member of staff who has followed the recommended hygiene practices. Children will eat their snack and where appropriate in their 'bubble'. Parents and carers will be asked to pack their child's lunch in a container/lunchbox which can be wiped. Once all the children have arrived within each bubble the member of staff will wipe all the lunchboxes with a recommended product.

Communication with parents and carers

To maintain social distancing guidelines we will, where it is practically possible, communicate with parents and carers via email or telephone.

Due to the unprecedented nature of a pandemic we are keen to resolve any concerns promptly and in a sensitive manner. Please email concerns to Lee Davis at lee@surreyhillsforestschoo.co.uk

If you feel your concern has not been dealt with appropriately, please refer to Surrey Hills Forest School Complaints Policy.

Entering and leaving the setting

The following procedures will be implemented for the dropping off and collection of children:

- To reduce the number of people entering the setting, all parents and carers will be met at the main door by a member of staff. We will work closely with parents and carers of anxious children to consider how drop off's and collection can be best managed whilst maintaining physical distancing.
- All staff and children will be required to wash their hands upon entering and leaving the setting.
- To reduce contact between parents and carers we will limit drop off and pick up to one parent or carer per family and stagger timings if necessary.
- Parents and carers will be asked to provide the minimum requirement of clothing for the weather forecast for that day only.
- Parents and carers must adhere to the physical distancing markings placed outside the setting.
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to reduce any unnecessary travel on public transport where possible.
- Children will be collected from the wooden gate at the entrance to the setting.

Visitors

External visitors to the setting will be restricted and only have access when strictly necessary, for example if providing an essential service or support for a child's health and wellbeing.

Responding to a suspected case of COVID-19

Should a member of a household present with COVID-19 symptoms, parents and carers have a duty of care to inform the setting at their first available opportunity and without unreasonable delay.

It is imperative that parents do not send unwell children to the setting. If a child is displaying a temperature of 37.8 degrees or above, has a new cough, looks generally unwell or is displaying any other signs associated with COVID-19 then the child will be excluded for a period of 14 days for self-isolation. If it is confirmed your child has COVID-19 you will be given a date for when your child can return to the setting.

If a staff member begins to display COVID-19 symptoms while in the setting, they will be sent home immediately and asked to follow Government guidance. If a child displays symptoms, the child's parents or carers will be contacted and asked to collect their child swiftly. Whilst the child is waiting to be collected they will be separated from other children and isolated with one member of staff. A facemask will be worn by the supervising adult. If contact with a child is necessary, gloves and an apron will also be worn.

Once the child or member of staff has left the setting, we will follow the Government guidance make sure areas have been thoroughly disinfected and any PPE and other waste is disposed of safely.

Policy Review

As part of Surrey Hills Forest School monitoring of COVID-19 this policy will be subject to periodic review.

Signed:

Date:

Policy Review Date: