

# Little Fingers Pre-school

## COVID-19 Safe Operating Procedures

These guidelines are based on Public Health England and Department for Education guidance for educational settings and their key workers.

The fundamental principle of these procedures is to ensure physical distancing between identified groups and to implement good hygiene practices.

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### 1 Introduction

It is important that everyone complies with the latest Government guidance on Coronavirus.

We have developed these Safe Operating Procedures based on guidance from the Department for Education and the National Institute for Health Protection specifically for Early Years. It is important that we adapt our everyday practices to ensure that we continue to offer the staff and children a safe environment.

Hygiene and social distancing remain the two key elements of infection prevention and control. If any symptoms are displayed, families must be alert and self-isolate for the safety of everyone.

COVID-19 appears to affect young children less often and with less severity. Children's role in its transmission is unclear but it seems that it is not significant.

Compassionate leadership is at the heart of offering continued pre-school care and we will do everything we can to be honest, open and to communicate with you. There will be a lot of anxieties and we acknowledge that it is OK to feel worried and that COVID-19 and the lockdown has had an impact on everyone.

Everyone involved in the day to day running of the nurseries will receive appropriate instruction and training on how to operate under the terms of the Safe Operating Procedures.

We aim to work in partnership with parents and trust that everyone understands and follows these Safe Operating Procedures.

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1. Any pupil, staff member, parent/guardian/carer or visitor with COVID-19 symptoms must not attend pre-school and must isolate at home
2. Increased cleaning processes are in place, throughout and at the end of the day
3. Although we do not expect children to social distance, parents/guardians/carers will adhere to guidance external to the pre-school
4. As we are a small group, the children and the pre-school employees are considered to be a "bubble"
5. Arrival and departure procedures are in place. Parents/guardians/carers will remain in their cars or wait on the pavement on the opposite side of the road to the setting and wait to be called over by the member of staff on duty, where children will be handed over
6. Parents/guardians/carers to remain on the bottom step and encourage child/ren to walk up to the gate to the member of staff on duty

7. Only one parent/guardian/carer (to include a grandparent or a nanny employed by the family) will be permitted to drop off and collect children
8. Parents/guardians/carers may form a bubble with one other household for the purpose of informal childcare
9. Parents/guardians/carers will not come on site or visit the pre-school unless this is explicitly arranged with the Pre-school Manager e.g. in the event of a child being distressed
10. The process for settling in sessions will be managed away from the other children and outside where possible
11. Parents/guardians/carers will wear face coverings during drop off and collection at pre-school and duty staff will wear a face shield and/or a face covering
12. Once in the setting, children will be supported to wash their hands before greeting their friends and other staff

## **2 Attendance**

Children and employees are welcome to attend pre-school but must not be displaying any coronavirus symptoms, the most common being a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of taste and smell. There is some suggestion that mottled skin or sickness and diarrhoea can also be a symptom.

- It is important that you seek medical advice if you are unsure.
- It is important that children do not attend pre-school if unwell for their own wellbeing and for the safety of others. Children will not be accepted to pre-school if they have been given Calpol or any other medication that can mask fever symptoms, at parents discretion, after 4am on their day of attendance (after 10am for children joining the afternoon sessions).

If anyone is experiencing any symptoms, they cannot return to pre-school until they have completed the required isolation period and be symptom free or have achieved a negative test result (we politely request evidence of this to be sent to the pre-school). Prompt exclusion is essential to preventing the spread of infection. Children and employees who are classed as clinically vulnerable should follow their medical advice before attending pre-school.

It is preferable that your child only attends one setting to avoid mixing with different groups of children/staff. If it is unavoidable, we will ask to see copies of the other settings risk assessments and policies/procedures. Please speak with the Pre-school Manager.

### **2.1 Drop off and collection of children**

If you can walk to pre-school, please do so and avoid public transport where possible.

When dropping off and collecting children, parents/guardians/carers are asked to remain in their cars or wait on the opposite side of the road and wait to be called over by the member of staff on duty. Whilst parents are waiting, it is important to maintain social distancing by keeping a distance of two metres apart. It is preferable for one parent/guardian/carer to carry out drop off and collection. Parents/guardians/carers are requested to wear face coverings and the staff on duty will wear a face shield and/or a face covering. Handovers will continue to be outside, at the entrance gate.

Handovers are limited, to not only ensure the safety of the children waiting in cars or on the roadside but to also to reduce staff contact with parents/guardians/carers. Should you have an important issue to discuss or require additional information about your child, please email [manager.lfpreschool@btinternet.com](mailto:manager.lfpreschool@btinternet.com) or telephone the pre-school (01264) 737735.

If your child has had an accident whilst at the pre-school, you will be contacted by the Pre-school Manager with details of what has happened. You will then be emailed a copy of all the documentation, as we will not be asking parents to sign forms.

We advise parents/guardians/carers to allow additional time at drop-off and collection, due to these additional measures.

## **2.2 Temperature and symptom monitoring**

Routine temperature testing is not recommended as a reliable method for identifying COVID-19. Parents/guardians/carers and employees should follow the NHS guidelines regarding isolation and testing criteria.

Little Fingers Pre-school are very conscious that we are in the colder, winter months and that young children will get temperatures to help them to fight cold and flu symptoms. Snotty, red eyed, catarrh filled coughs are not thought to be symptomatic for COVID-19 and may not indicate that a child needs to undergo a test for COVID-19. Staff members will monitor the children in their care and will make reasonable judgements on whether a family is advised to undergo testing. We ask that families do the same and monitor their children's wellness, making the decision if they need to isolate, undergo testing, or are well enough to attend the pre-school. If a child has a dry cough or persistent temperature (over 24 hours) accompanied by flu or cold symptoms they will still be asked to book a test for COVID-19.

If your child is due vaccinations Little Fingers Pre-school will ask for evidence of this by sharing the child's red book to justify a child's temperature.

Children who have asthma or other breathing related difficulties should be known to pre-school staff and can attend pre-school as usual, with their medical plans in place.

If a child needs a routine medical appointment, we are asking parents/guardians/carers that wherever possible this is booked on a non pre-school day or at the end of the child's session. If this is unavoidable, the child will be allowed to return to pre-school after the appointment, provided they are fit and well in themselves.

## **2.3 Travel to pre-school**

Latest Government guidance states that parents/guardians/carers are able to form a childcare bubble with one other household for the purpose of informal childcare for children aged 14 years and under.

Please avoid using public transport where possible. Face coverings have been advised by the Government for use on public transport.

## **2.4 Travel outside of local area**

If you/your child travel internationally to a country not on the travel corridors list or to an area of the UK under local COVID restrictions, and are displaying symptoms, then you must be tested and have a negative result before returning to pre-school. This is to ensure every possible protection factor is in place for the staff and the children in our care. While we understand the practicality of this may seem difficult for some we will continue to put the safety of everyone first and this is a precautionary measure that we have chosen to have in place.

We ask that you are aware of the restrictions in place of any area that you are visiting and follow government guidelines for any travel in and out of your local area.

If you have travelled to a country or area of the UK under local COVID restrictions you can opt in to pay for a private COVID-19 test.

If you are travelling from a destination not on the travel corridors list, do not have a job that qualifies you for a travel exemption or do not want to opt in to test to release, you will need to self-isolate for 10 full days after you were last in a destination not on the travel corridors list.

## **3 Implementing social distancing**

It is very difficult to avoid a level of physical interaction with young children and it is important to have their wellbeing at the centre of everything we do. If a child is in need of a hug, then it would not be fair to deny them this.

### **3.1 Main room and outside area**

The practitioners will organise designated areas, indoors and outdoors, for the children. Children will have access to the full range of activities that are considered safe at this time.

### **3.2 Mealtimes**

- As always, children will eat at the tables.
- The practitioners will serve the children.
- Food will not be eaten out of shared containers.
- The children will need to bring in their own, named, water bottle and take it home each day to be washed, as well as a named wipeable lunch box.
- Children's water bottles will be offered throughout the day instead of cups being at the children's level to avoid accidental sharing of cups.

### **3.3 Employees**

All employees will undergo regular induction and training on the Safe Operating Procedures, with emphasis on good hygiene practices and maintaining social distancing.

### **3.4 Fire drills and lockdown practice**

If we have to respond to a fire or emergency lockdown, we will continue to manage social distancing, as far as possible. The safety of the children and employees will always come first. We will still be carrying our fire and lockdown drills.

## **4 Wellbeing**

We know that this is a very unusual and worrying time for everyone. It is very important that at the forefront of this heightened awareness of safe operating procedures, we do not forget that care and consideration must be taken of the need to ensure that everyone within the pre-school community feels safe and secure. We are doing our best to create a normal pre-school environment and hope that you will bear with us.

We will concentrate on building secure attachments and we will continue observing and assessing the children, regularly updating Tapestry. We will not be able to carry out lengthy handovers. We want our staff to spend time with the children, playing and building their relationships.

We would always speak with you immediately if we had any concerns. If your child is expressing any concerns or worries, it is important that you inform your child's key carer or the Pre-school Manager.

## **5 Visitors**

### **5.1 Settling in sessions**

Parents/guardians/carers may enter the pre-school for the purpose of settling-in sessions, if not doing so would cause a child distress. These will take place outside where possible, in order to minimise any risk of infection. The Pre-school Manager will give further guidance on the day. It is important that social distancing continues to be maintained.

### **5.2 Visitors**

Visitors to the pre-school will not be encouraged unless it involves a safeguarding issue that cannot be resolved by telephone. Interviews or meetings will be conducted via video conference. Parent's evenings will still be organised but will be conducted over the telephone.

### **5.3 Pre-school show-rounds**

Prospective parents/guardians/carers should make use of the pre-school website for information relating to the ethos and the organisation of Little Fingers Pre-school. There is a video showing the pre-school and also the activities that take place. The Pre-school Manager will be able to give you all the information you require.

#### **5.4 Contractors**

Any contractual work and/or emergencies will be carried out after pre-school hours, where possible. Any contractors to the pre-school will be reminded of National Institute for Health Protection guidance prior to entering the building.

## **6 Health, Hygiene and Safety**

### **6.1 Reducing the spread of the virus**

It is recognised that good hygiene and cleaning practices will significantly reduce the spread and transmission of the virus as well as everyone being alert to the symptoms. Doors and windows will be opened as much as possible.

### **6.2 Cleaning**

An enhanced cleaning schedule will be implemented throughout and at the end of the day. Communal areas, door handles and shared facilities e.g. iPads, must be regularly cleaned. The Pre-school Manager will be responsible for recording these cleaning schedules.

The rate of hand washing must be significantly increased. Everyone, including children, must wash their hands on arrival at pre-school. If wash basins are not available, sanitiser will be available.

There will be regular opportunities for hand washing throughout the day. The children will be supported when washing their hands.

### **6.3 Use of tissues**

The children will be supported in age-appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves and others safe and this includes sneezing into a tissue (or their arm if immediate) and then to dispose of the tissue.

### **6.4 Toileting**

The children will be taken to the toilets and supervised. Hand washing signs will be displayed to ensure hand washing is thorough and the practitioners will talk to the children about why we are washing our hands.

### **6.5 Clothing**

All employees and children should wear clean clothing every day. If you have travelled on public transport, you must change your clothing on arrival at pre-school. Children should bring one bag with two changes of clothing (and nappies) and leave the bag at the setting. Staff will advise and return the bag when the spare clothes have been used.

### **6.6 Risk assessments**

All risk assessments will reflect the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Certain activities will be adapted or removed to reflect this risk e.g. sand play.

### **6.7 Items from home**

If your child requires a comforter e.g. soft toy or blanket, please bring it in a bag and then take home at the end of the day and wash it. We would prefer no toys or comforters to be brought into pre-school but do understand that this could cause distress. We would encourage your child to have a 'pre-school comforter' that is left at the setting.

### **6.8 Resources at Little Fingers Pre-school**

Toys and resources that are difficult to clean will be removed, including cushions and soft toys. We will aim to sanitise items at the end of each day.

## **7 Responding to a person displaying symptoms of COVID-19**

### **7.1 A child**

If a child is suspected of displaying coronavirus symptoms whilst attending the pre-school, they should be collected as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with NHS guidance, currently ten days. The child must be tested before they return.

Whilst waiting to be collected, they will be isolated from others in a designated area, behind a closed door in a well ventilated area or at least 2 meters away from others. An employee will stay with them and will wear PPE (disposable gloves, apron and face covering and face shield). Parents/guardians/carers will be expected to arrive within 30 minutes of being contacted.

If the child becomes very unwell, we will follow our normal emergency procedures and call 999.

The isolation area will be cleaned once the child has been collected.

## **7.2 An employee who displays symptoms**

In the event of an employee developing coronavirus symptoms whilst at work, they will leave work immediately and isolate at home in line with NHS guidance - currently ten days. They will be required to have a test before they return.

## **7.3 PPE Equipment**

Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in pre-schools to protect against COVID-19 transmission. Hand washing, effective cleaning and social distancing are the most effective measures. Gloves and aprons will be used for nappy changing and first aid.

## **7.4 Reporting, testing and tracing**

Everyone is now eligible for a COVID-19 test, should they display coronavirus symptoms.

Any suspected or confirmed case must be reported to the Pre-school Manager as soon as possible and parents/guardians/carers will be informed. If a positive result is confirmed, the staff and children must self-isolate for ten days before returning to pre-school.

If we are informed of a confirmed case of COVID-19 by NHS Test & Trace, staff, parents/guardian/carer of a child, or our local Public Health England Health Protection Team (PHE HPT), we must immediately contact PHE HPT for advice [www.gov.uk/health-protection-team](http://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team) .

PHE Hampshire and Isle of Wight Health Protection Team (South East)  
Fareham Borough Council Civic Offices, Civic Way, Fareham PO16 7AZ.  
Phone: 0344 225 3861 (option 1 to 4 depending on area)

- All parents/guardians/carers and staff will be e-mailed regarding a suspected (child or employee only)/confirmed case of COVID-19.
- The advice may be to fully close the building resulting in the setting not being open to children. If this is the case, we must inform Ofsted.
- Depending on the outcome, PHE HPT and our Local Authority may establish an Outbreak Control Team to help support and manage the situation.
- Given the size of our setting, we anticipate that the proximity of the space means that we are likely to be required to close for 10 days and everyone to self-isolate in line with Government guidance.

The Pre-school Manager is responsible for contacting PHE HPT if a case is confirmed or if a symptomatic person is admitted to hospital, a possible case refuses testing, there are a cluster of possible cases/unexpected increase in absenteeism or a suspected case has a definite link to a confirmed case.

If there is reasonable evidence that a positive diagnosis was caused by exposure at work, this will be reported to the PHE HPT.

If someone in your household, or someone you have close contact with, is contacted by NHS Track and Trace and told they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, you need to be tested. If they test positive, then you will also need to self-isolate for ten days even if you do not test positive yourself.

The Government's tracing app is a way of helping to protect everyone.

### 7.5 Lateral Flow Testing - Staff

From 21st March, all staff are asked to self-test twice a week, using the Lateral Flow Tests, supplied by the NHS. Staff must not attend pre-school with immediate effect and for at least 10 days from the day after their test date, if they did not have any symptoms but had a positive test. Staff with a positive LFD test result will also need to arrange a lab-based polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm the result, if the LFD test was done at home. The pre-school's SOP will apply.

## 8 Further guidance

- [www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19)
- [www.go.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020](http://www.go.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020)
- [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-smptoms](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-smptoms)
- [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/what-to-do-if-you-or-someone-you-live-with-has-coronavirus-symptoms](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/what-to-do-if-you-or-someone-you-live-with-has-coronavirus-symptoms)
- [www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test)
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020>

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**Next Review Date:** 12/04/2021 (*or before if necessary*)