

Pandemic Policy

Statement of Intent

Infectious diseases are common amongst nursery, pre-school or school children and these settings often present as an ideal situation for diseases to spread. In order to control the spread of infection we need to exclude sick children with infectious illness from the pre-school. It is also our policy that sick children need to be at home in order to recover from sickness where they are more comfortable this includes both infectious and non infectious illness. Pre-school life can be demanding and the environment is not conducive to supporting children's recovery. We regularly seek information from the Environmental Health Department and the World Health Authority to ensure that we keep up to date with the latest recommendations.

Method

- Parents should be encouraged to ensure that their child receives all appropriate routine vaccinations when they are due, unless there are true medical and/or personal reasons why they should not. It is important to note that failure to have a child immunised may put other vulnerable children at risk. These include children that are too young to have been immunised or who have other medical conditions that prevent them from being immunised.
- A child who has acquired an infectious disease may show general signs of illness. This can include shivering attacks or feeling cold, headache, vomiting, sore throat or just vaguely feeling unwell. Such symptoms, when a particular infectious disease is prevalent, should make the teacher (and parent) suspicious.
- In these circumstances, parents should be contacted so that they can collect the child with a view to consulting their General Practitioner, if necessary. In the meantime, the child should be kept separate from other children, warm and comfortable. If symptoms appear very serious or distressing, staff should call an ambulance to ensure immediate assessment &/or treatment for the child.
- The pre-school will keep an up to date record of their children's immunisation status, recorded on the enrolment form.
- Parents are required to keep the preschool fully informed of any changes to children's health.
- Parents are notified if there is an infectious disease, such as chicken pox.
- Ofsted is notified of any pandemic, infectious diseases that a qualified medical person considers notifiable

Hygiene

Our daily routines encourage the children to learn about personal hygiene.

- We have a daily cleaning routine for the setting which includes classrooms, kitchen, rest area, toilets and nappy changing areas.
- We have a schedule for cleaning resources and equipment, dressing-up clothes and furnishings.

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- The toilet area has a high standard of hygiene including hand washing and drying facilities and the disposal of nappies.
- Staff regularly use anti bacterial hand gel and wash their hands using hot water and anti bacterial soap
- We implement good hygiene practices by:
 - cleaning tables between activities
 - checking toilets regularly
 - wearing protective clothing - such as aprons and disposable gloves - as appropriate
 - providing sets of clean clothes for children
 - providing tissues and wipes as necessary

Action to take in an outbreak

An outbreak can be defined as “two or more linked cases of the same illness or when the number of cases of the same illness unaccountably exceeds the expected number.”

Outbreaks of infectious disease may occur from time to time in nurseries, pre-schools and schools. Their importance depends on several factors: -

- the severity of the disease
- the number of children affected
- the mode of transmission
- the amount of anxiety they generate in parents and staff
- Whether any specific action is necessary to stop further cases (e.g. immunisation, improving food-handling practices).

How do we know there may be an outbreak?

There are several ways in which nurseries, pre-schools and schools may become aware that they have an outbreak of an infectious disease.

- Several children may be ill in nursery, pre-school or school with the same illness
- There may be a sudden increase in the number of absentees
- Parents may advise the nursery, pre-school or school that their children are suffering from an infectious disease.
- The local Health Protection Unit staff or community nurse may contact the pre-school.

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What to do if an outbreak occurs

If the Pre-school Manager thinks there may be an outbreak he or she should discuss the matter with the Pre-school Director, and report the situation to, the community nurse at the local PCT or the local Health Protection Unit.

It is helpful for the initial assessment of the situation if the Pre-school Manager can find out:

- How many children and staff are ill?
- What are the symptoms?
- When did each child and staff fall ill i.e. when did symptoms first start?

Role of the Community Infection Control Nurse (CICN) part of Essex Health Protection Unit

- The CICN will assess the situation and decide what, if any, further action is necessary either to investigate the source of the outbreak or to stop further spread.
- The pre-school should make every attempt to provide the information requested by the CICN, EHP, Local HPU.
- The pre-school manager should encourage staff, parents and children to comply with requests for specimens, and to follow guidance for control of spread of diseases.
- The local authority registration & inspection unit should be notified. It may be that during such a situation certain play activities e.g. water and sand play, may need to be suspended as they may be a potential for the transmission of infection.
- If the CICN is unavailable the local Health Protection Unit should be contacted, who will advise on the appropriate action needed.

PHE East of England Health Protection Team,
Second Floor Goodman House, Station approach Harlow,
Essex,
CM20 2ET

EastofEnglandHPT@phe.gov.uk; phe.EoEHPT@nhs.net

Phone: [0300 303 8537 option 1](tel:03003038537)

Role of Environmental Health

- If an outbreak of food poisoning is suspected, the Environmental Health Department will be asked to investigate. In certain circumstances, the Environmental Health Practitioner (EHP) may also assist in the assessment and control of outbreaks of diarrhoea and/or vomiting not thought to be due to food poisoning (e.g. dysentery).

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Role of Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education)

- Where necessary the Ofsted help desk on 0300 123 1231 should be contacted, who will advise of any actions to be taken and of how to contact the local Child Care Regulator.

Nursery or school registration & inspection unit

- The local authority early years team should also be contacted.

Other action

- Where necessary the CICN will visit the nursery or school and will offer further advice on information for parents and steps that may need to be taken by both the organisation and parents to prevent further cases. Where appropriate the CICN will speak to groups of staff or parents to answer their questions and concerns.
- For certain infectious diseases (e.g. some cases of meningitis) the CICN or local Health Protection Unit may deem it necessary for letters to be sent home to all parents. Arrangements for this will be made through the Preschool Leader.

Cleaning in outbreaks

- Additional environmental cleaning may be required in outbreaks. If the CICN considers there is a need for extra cleaning this will be discussed with the Preschool Leader at the time and special advice will be given.
- After an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis or norovirus, it is best practice to have carpets steam cleaned by a contractor with specialised equipment.

Swine Flu

- If you or your family have travelled to Mexico or the regions affected in the USA during the epidemic or may have come into contact with swine flu, please inform the pre-school.
- If children are ill with flu-like symptoms, please contact the doctor before allowing them to come to preschool.

Preschool Closure

- If the Government authorities decide the situation has reached the stage that schools are required to close, that decision will be devolved to local authorities and if the virus spreads and reaches Essex they *may* make the decision to shut schools in the area affected.
- This will not be a decision taken lightly and we will be very much guided by the professional advice we receive
- If we have to close a message will be posted on the website or parents will be notified by telephone. If we have to close during school hours we will contact all parents of children in school that day by telephone to arrange collection
- Closure as a result of the local authorities' instruction will **NOT** result in a refund in fees
- We will remain closed until such time as we receive instruction that it is safe to open again.

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Staff

- If we have to close due to infection in Essex, and not related directly to our setting, staff will be required to work their normal hours, making use of this time for planning and cleaning the pre-school.
- In the case that the pre-school is closed as a result of infection related directly to the setting, staff will be on paid leave until such time as we are given clearance to re-open.
- In the case that the school is closed for more than 2 weeks, staff will be on paid leave until such time that the pre-school re-opens.

The following procedures and documentation in relation to this policy are:

Preschool Policies

- Health & Safety

Guidance

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017

- Health 3.44

Health Protection Agency (HPA)

- Infection Prevention and Communicable Disease Control for Early Years March 2019

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