Riverside Preschool Kindergarten

COVID-19 Policy

(Updated March 2021)

Policy statement

To return to the setting in the safest way possible; to ensure minimum risk to children and staffs’ health and emotional well-being. We will follow the current guidelines from the Department for Education, KCC and the Early Years Alliance to effectively achieve this. This policy is subject to change in accordance with authority guidelines.

Risk assessment

Riverside Preschool complies to the Health & Safety law which require us to assess risks and to put proportionate control measures into place. We have COVID-19 risk assessments in place to ensure the safety and well-being of children and staff. We will review our risk assessments regularly and update them when necessary e.g., when new guidance is provided.

Staff with underlying health conditions

Government guidance advises staff who are **clinically extremely vulnerable** to not attend the workplace. This would apply to any member of staff who have received a letter from the NHS or their GP. Any staff who are classed as CEV, will be supported by preschool management at this time.

Those living with someone who is CEV can still attend work where home working is not possible and they should ensure they maintain good prevention practice in the workplace and home settings.

CEV individuals will be advised by the government in advance of any extension or end date with regards to shielding guidance. CEV people have been prioritised for vaccination but should still continue to shield even after they have been vaccinated.

Clinically Vulnerable Staff

CV staff can continue to attend early years settings and the setting must follow the ‘system of controls’ to minimise the risks of transmission. (The system of controls can be found further down in this policy.)

Staff who live with those who are clinically vulnerable can attend the workplace but should ensure they maintain good prevention practice in the setting and at home.

Adults should maintain a 2-metre distance from others. Where this is not possible, they should avoid close face-to-face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of others. While the risk of transmission between young children and adults is low, adults should continue to take care to socially distance from other adults.

Pregnant staff are considered as clinically vulnerable and will follow specific guidance for pregnant employees. A risk assessment will be put into place for them.

**Staff shortages due to sickness, self-isolation or quarantine**

* We will work with the local authority to identify how appropriate provision can be put into place while keeping staffing arrangements as consistent as possible.
* Where necessary, we will pool staff with another setting or take on qualified and DBS checked staff from other educational settings which have been closed or invite registered childminders to work with us at the setting.
* Wherever possible, we will ensure staffing arrangements are consistent on a weekly basis, rather than a daily basis, in order to limit contacts.
* Volunteers are able to work at the setting as usual, following safety checks and risk assessment.
* Students who are studying for their level 2 and 3 qualifications, are still welcome to work within the setting.

Children who are self-isolating or shielding

Clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) children identified through a letter from the NHS or specialist doctor are found to not be at increased risk of serious outcomes from coronavirus and children are gradually being removed from the shielding patient list (SPL) as appropriate, following review with a clinician.

Children who have been confirmed as CEV are advised to shield and stay at home as much as possible until further notice. They are advised not to attend preschool while shielding advice applies nationally.

Children who live with someone who is CEV, but who are not themselves CEV, can still attend the setting and should ensure they maintain good prevention practice in the setting and at home.

System of Controls - Summary

Public Health England’s advice is used within government guidance. PHE have endorsed a ‘System of Controls’ which provide a set of principles that, when followed, will effectively ‘create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced’:

1. To minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who are displaying coronavirus symptoms – a new and persistent cough, high temperature and/or loss of taste and smell, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the preschool (see further notes below).
2. We will ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances e.g., face-to-face contact with parents/carers.
3. We will ensure that hands are cleaned thoroughly and more often than usual, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and running water or with hand sanitiser.

Children’s hands will be cleaned upon arrival to setting, before and after eating, after using a tissue, after visiting the toilet and before home-time.

1. We will ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach. Children will be assisted with this and tissues and bins will always be available to staff and children.
2. We will continue with our enhanced cleaning routine where frequently touched areas will be cleaned regularly and all toys and equipment are cleaned at the end of each session. Unnecessary resources will be removed from the main setting and stored away safely. Porous resources and furnishings will not be in use for the time being. This includes carpets, dressing up clothes, soft toys, cushions, blankets, dough, sand tray etc, therefore enabling all resources and equipment are easy to keep clean. Toys which are difficult to clean effectively will also be stored away.
3. Parents are advised that children should still only attend one setting at this time. Parents will remain socially distanced when dropping off/collecting their child.
4. Occupied spaces will be kept well ventilated.

In specific circumstances:

1. Staff will only wear PPE if childrens’ care routinely requires it e.g., for nappy changing. PPE will also be worn if a child or adult becomes unwell. In this case, gloves, a mask, an apron and eye protection should be worn by the supervising adult. Face masks are not required by the children and staff will only wear face shields and/or masks if they need to speak directly to parents.
2. We will promote and engage in asymptomatic testing, where available.

Response to any infection

10) We will promote and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process. All staff members are aware of this process and how to contact our local Public Health England health protection team if necessary.

11)We will manage and report any confirmed cases of coronavirus within our setting community.

12)We will follow our local health protection team’s advice on containing any outbreak should it occur.

Other protective measures

* There is no longer the need for ‘bubbles’ within early years settings. Therefore, all children will be together as one group with the appropriate staff ratios.
* Parents/carers will not be permitted to come into the setting to reduce the risk of spreading the virus between adults. Children will be dropped off and collected by their parents/carers at the main door, one at a time. The carpark will operate a one-way system. The carpark will be entered from the left-hand side and signs and 2m markers will indicate where parents will queue to maintain 2m distancing within the car park area. They will then bring their child to a waiting staff member at the door, one at a time. Parents will exit the carpark via the right-hand side. The same routine will be used at home time too.
* Parents are asked to wear a face mask/covering when waiting outside of preschool.
* When attendance numbers are high, we will stagger the start and finish of session times for the older and the younger groups of children to allow for effective social distancing of parents in the carpark area. Parents should avoid bringing siblings to the carpark area, unless they can ensure they will be able to queue safely with their parent and maintain social distancing with them.
* Visitors will be discouraged from entering the preschool and will instead conduct virtual meetings wherever possible.
* Children and staff will not have to remain 2m apart inside the setting.
* Staff will discreetly test the childrens’ temperatures every morning in the foyer as they arrive. If they are found to have a high temperature, they will be collected immediately by their parents.
* One parent/carer to drop off/pick up their child if possible.
* Staff will wear face masks when talking to parents outside of the preschool. If they are exempt from wearing a face mask, a face shield/visor shall be worn instead.
* Windows and doors will be opened to be provide natural ventilation where and when it is safe to do so while maintaining a comfortable temperature by:
* opening high level windows in colder weather in preference to low level to reduce draughts,
* increasing the ventilation while spaces are unoccupied
* providing flexibility to allow additional, suitable indoor clothing
* rearranging furniture where possible to avoid direct draughts
* heating will be used as necessary to ensure comfort levels are maintained in occupied spaces.
* The outdoor space will used for outside education where possible as this can limit transmission and more easily allow for distance between children and staff.
* Suitable activities will be carried out with children’s safety in mind and with suitable resources available.
* Focus will primarily fall on childrens’ emotional well-being.
* Staff and children are asked to only bring essential items into session to minimise the risk of transmission to/from home. For the time being, children’s craft will remain at the setting and correspondence to parents will be via email, telephone, our website or Facebook page.

When an individual develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or has a positive test

Children and staff must not come into preschool if:

* they have one or more COVID-19 symptoms,
* a member of their household (including someone in their support bubble or childcare bubble if they have one) has COVID-19 symptoms.
* they are required to quarantine having recently visited countries outside of the Common Travel Area.
* they have had a positive test

They must not attend preschool with immediate effect and for at least 10 days from the day after:

* the start of their symptoms
* the test date, if they did not have any symptoms but had a positive test (whether this was a lateral flow Device (LFD) or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test).

The isolation period includes the day the symptoms started and the next 10 full days. Parents and staff are advised to follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. Parents and staff are advised to arrange to have a test to see if they have COVID-19.

Other members of their household, including support or childcare bubbles, should also self-isolate. The isolation period includes the day the symptoms started for the first person in their household, or the day their test was taken if they did not have any symptoms and the next 10 days. If a member of the household starts to display symptoms while self-isolating, they will need to restart the 10-day isolation period and book a test.

If they have tested positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they must restart the 10-day isolation period from the day they developed symptoms.

Children and staff who have tested positive for coronavirus may return to preschool after they have finished their isolation period and their symptoms have gone or if they continue to have only a residual cough or loss of taste or smell. If they still have a high temperature after 10 days or are otherwise unwell, they are advised to stay at home and seek medical advice.

All staff and children at early years settings will have access to tests if they display symptoms of the virus. Tests can be booked online on the ‘NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus (COVID-19)’ website, or by phoning NHS 119.

All children can be tested if they have symptoms. This includes children under 5 years of age.

If a child becomes unwell during session

* If a child falls ill during the session, they will be moved to a suitable room, with a closed door and windows open for ventilation, where they will be supervised until they are collected by their parent or carer.
* Staff members who become unwell with COVID-19 symptoms will be sent home straight away to self-isolate and advised to book a test.
* 999 will be called if the child or member of staff is seriously ill.
* The supervising member of staff should wear PPE of eye protection, gloves, disposable apron and face mask when caring for an ill child. They will wash their hands thoroughly after caring for the child but is able to remain on site unless they themselves begin to feel unwell or the child is later tested positive for coronavirus.
* The area will be cleaned thoroughly with normal household disinfectant once the child has gone home. Used cleaning materials and PPE, will be double-bagged and stored securely for 72 hours and then disposed of with normal household waste.
* If the ill child uses the toilet while waiting for collection, the area will also be cleaned thoroughly afterwards and before another child uses it.
* Public Health England will be notified of suspected and confirmed cases.

When an individual has had close contact with someone with coronavirus symptoms

Any member of staff who has provided close contact to someone with symptoms regardless of whether they are wearing PPE, and all other members of staff or children who have been in close contact with that person, do not need to go home to self-isolate unless:

* the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive.
* they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should self-isolate immediately and arrange to have a test)
* they are requested to do so by the NHS Test & Trace or the Public Health England (PHE) advice service
* they have tested positive with an LFD test as part of a community or worker programme.

Policy date: Updated on 6.3.20

Date to be reviewed: Ongoing

Signed: Anne Harris Preschool Manager

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