

# **Little Elms Montessori Nursery Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policy**

Little Elms Montessori Nursery, Elm Court Community Centre, 363 Potters Bar, Herts, EN6 2EN

## **Contents page**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Attendance**
  - 2.1 Drop-off and collection of children**
  - 2.2 Temperature and symptom monitoring**
  - 2.3 Travel to nursery**
- 3. Implementing social distancing measures**
  - 3.1 Classrooms**
  - 3.2 Mealtimes**
  - 3.3 Employees**
  - 3.4 Fire drills and lockdown practice**
- 4. Wellbeing**
- 5. Visitors**
  - 5.1 Settling in**
  - 5.2 Visitors**
  - 5.3 Contractors**
- 6. Health, Hygiene and Safety**
  - 6.1 Reducing the spread of the virus**
  - 6.2 Cleaning**
  - 6.3 Use of tissues**
  - 6.4 Toileting**
  - 6.5 Clothing / Uniform**
  - 6.6 Risk Assessments**
  - 6.7 Items from home**
  - 6.8 Resources at Nursery**
- 7. Responding to a person displaying symptoms of COVID-19**
  - 7.1 A child**
  - 7.2 An employee who displays symptoms**
  - 7.3 PPE Equipment**
  - 7.4 Reporting, testing and tracing**
- 8. Complaints procedure**
- 9. Further guidance**

## 1. Introduction

It is important that everyone complies with the latest Government guidance on Coronavirus (Covid-19). Please be aware updates will follow, as and when necessary and changes can be made to our procedures to follow all government guideline updates.

Little Elms have developed these Safe Operating Procedures based on guidance from the Department of Education and Public Health England 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 this reopening 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 Little Elms will receive appropriate instruction and training on how to operate under the terms of the Safe Operating Procedures.

There is always a risk when children come into a childcare setting, but we are doing everything possible to minimise this risk. We are constantly updating our procedures to take account of any changes in government or local authority guidelines.

Little Elms aim to work in partnership with parents and trust that everyone understands and follows these Safe Operating Procedures. During this Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic where there is any conflict between any other current policy and this policy, this Coronavirus (Covid-19) Policy will supersede such policy until further notice.

## 2. Attendance

- Children and employees are welcome to attend nursery 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.
- It is important that you seek medical advice if you are unsure.
- It is important that children do not attend nursery if unwell for their own wellbeing and for the safety of others.
- If anyone is experiencing any symptoms they cannot return to nursery until they have completed the required isolation period and be symptom free or have achieved a negative test result (proof will be required). 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 nursery.
- It is preferable that your child only attends one setting to avoid mixing with different groups of children. Please speak with the Naile or Nicky if this is going to be a problem or to make them aware that this is the case.

Parents/carers – the nursery must be advised of the reason for absence and which of the following categories it falls under:

1. Shielding for self or family (please note that this refers to pupils who have been advised to shield by a relevant medical professional)

2. Self-isolating (when you stay at home because you have or might have coronavirus (COVID-19).
3. Illness- suspected or confirmed COVID-19
4. Illness- not suspected or confirmed COVID-19
5. Other- please provide details

**Parents/carers should contact the nursery by 8am to inform us of absence.**

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

- Parents and carers are asked to drop off and collect their children at designated drop off points. Whilst parents are waiting, it is important to maintain social distancing by keeping a distance of 2 metres apart and to follow any one-way system put in place. It is preferable if only one parent or carer does the drop off and collection.
- Please approach the nursery slowly when driving as there may be parents and children waiting to enter. If you can walk to nursery, please do so.
- Children will be assigned to a classroom 'bubble' based on the room they are in and their class teacher will be responsible for collecting and delivering that child back to their parents and carers. You will have a limited handover time, unless there is an important issue to discuss, as other parents and carers may be waiting.
- Communication books will be checked if you would like to give any messages to teachers, please leave them in book bags. You can also email the nursery or write a note to hand to the manager on arrival. We need to be informed of any pick up changes via phone or emailed to the nursery with passwords.

## **2.2 Temperature and symptom monitoring**

- Routine temperature testing is not recommended as a reliable method for identifying coronavirus. Parents and employees should follow the NHS guidelines and, in particular, evidence of a high temperature and/or new continuous cough or loss of taste and smell.
- Although not a 100% reliable method alone for testing for coronavirus, children may need to be screened when they enter the nursery and temperature taken by a member of staff. If your child's temperature is higher than average we may suggest you take them home. You will then need to seek medical advice. If we do not think your child looks well enough to come into the setting at drop off we may ask to take their temperature as a precaution.

## **2.3 Travel to nursery**

- It is better not to share transport and to travel by car, bike or walk. Face coverings have been advised by the Government for use on public transport.

## **3 Implementing social distancing measures**

- 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 this. Although, the Government have recently stated that children in early years settings are not expected to socially distance, we will still implement social distancing where possible, such as by keeping children grouped in small groups (a bubble) and distancing seating arrangements.
- The nursery is currently one bubble, class sizes have been reduced to maximum of 8-10 children in each class at one time, while adhering to EYFS ratios.

## **3.1 Classrooms**

- The staff at Little Elms will organise designated areas, indoors and outdoors, for the children in their bubbles. Children will have access to the full range of activities that are considered safe at this time.
- There will be outdoor zones for each class for forestry and outdoor learning.

### **3.2 Mealtimes**

- As always, children will eat in their classrooms.
- Snack will no longer be served by the nursery and children are asked to bring their own prepared snack in a lunch bag to minimise contamination.
- No food will be eaten out of shared platters or containers.
- The children will need to bring in their own, named, drinking cup and take it home to be washed.
- Drinks will be offered at 30 minute intervals or when the child requests it, instead of cups being at the children's level to avoid accidental sharing of cups.
- Children with allergies and compulsory medication will need to discuss with the managers, to make sure all forms are complete or updated.

### **3.3 Employees**

- All employees at Little Elms have had a return-to-work induction and training on the new Safe Operating Procedures, with emphasis on good hygiene practices and maintaining social distancing.

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

- If Little Elms has 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.

## **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 nursery community feels safe and secure. We will try our best to create a normal nursery environment and hope that you will bear with us.
- We will be concentrating on fostering those secure attachments and, whilst we will be constantly observing, assessing and planning for the children, we will not be able to carry out lengthy handovers but 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 the keyperson/Nursery Managers.

## **5 Visitors**

- All visitors will be reminded to not enter the building if they are displaying symptoms or if they have come into contact with anyone who has. Before any appointments or visits the following questions must be answered:
  1. Are you displaying any symptoms of COVID?
  2. Have you been in contact with anyone displaying symptoms of COVID or been abroad in the last 10 days?
  3. Contact details to be provided when making an appointment.

Visitors are asked not to bring children while being shown around and to also wear a Facemask. Visitors to be called a day before their appointment to confirm it is safe for them to come in. No one apart from the teacher/manager and children will enter the classroom bubbles. Afternoon appointments will be booked where possible.

### **5.1 Settling in**

- Parents and carers may enter the nursery classroom for the purpose of a child's first settling-in session, if not doing so would cause a child distress. The Manager will give further guidance on the day. It is important that social distancing continues to be maintained and you will be asked to wear PPE. You will also be asked if you, your child or your family are displaying any symptoms, have been asked to self-isolate, have come into contact with anyone with symptoms or have been abroad in the last 10 days.

## **5.2 Visitors and meetings**

- Visitors to the nursery classrooms will not be encouraged unless it involves a safeguarding issue that cannot be resolved by telephone.
- Interviews or meetings will be conducted via video calls until further notice.
- Nursery show-round visitors will not enter the classrooms and will be asked to wear PPE. Visitors will also be asked if you, your child or your family are displaying any symptoms, have been asked to self-isolate, have come into contact with anyone with symptoms or have been abroad in the last 10 days.
- If you need to discuss anything with the teachers/managers, please call the office or manager mobiles and you will be advised further. You can also email us to inform us of any changes, for example pick up, questions etc.
- Payments that cannot be made online can be given in a sealed envelope at drop off. The details needed are child's name, payment details (what it's for) and please note NO CHANGE will be given so please put in the correct amount.

## **5.3 Contractors**

- Any contractors to the nursery will be reminded of Public Health England guidance prior to entering the building. We will work with the centre to manage this.

## **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. Windows will be opened as much as possible.

### **6.2 Cleaning**

- Clear guidelines on how Little Elms will be managing hand washing will be available to all parents, carers and staff.
- Little Elms will put in place an enhanced cleaning schedule with disinfectant for touch points, such as, toys, books, doors, sinks, toilets, light switches, cleaned regularly throughout session.
- Regular handwashing and supervision of young children to ensure they wash their hands for 20 seconds more often than usual with soap and water
- Children will at minimum wash their hands:
  - before entering the classroom at the beginning of their session
  - after outside breaks
  - before meals and snack times
  - after using the toilet
  - at the end of the day before they go home.
- Waterproof dressings will be used to cover any existing wounds or lesions.
- Immediate cleaning of spillages of blood and other bodily fluids.
- Any items that come into contact with mouths such as cups, bottles and straws will not be shared.
- Ensure that there are clear procedures for maintaining stringent cleaning processes for food preparation areas, dining areas and table coverings
- Items and toys from home should only be brought into the setting if absolutely essential (such as comforters) and, where this is the case, items should be appropriately cleaned on arrival

### **6.3 Use of tissues**

- A good supply of disposable tissues throughout the setting to implement 'catch it, bin it, kill it' – in provided bins in all classrooms which will be emptied daily.
- 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 teachers will talk to the children about why we are washing our hands.
- Toilets and nappy changing areas will be cleaned after each bubbles use.
- 2 children at a time to be taken only.

#### **6.5 Clothing / Uniform**

- All employees and children should wear clean clothing every day. If you have travelled on public transport, it is advised that you change your clothing on arrival at nursery.
- Children should bring one bag with changes of clothing and to be left on their peg.
- Smock uniform is not essential at the moment, but please bear in mind how messy children's clothing can get without it. If worn the smock must be washed after each session.
- Outdoor trousers will only be used if the field is very muddy, they will then need to be cleaned that day.
- Book bags to be bought in and left in allocated class boxes in the corridor/linkway.

#### **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. large group Forestry sessions – this will now be carried out with individual class bubble groups instead.
- The re-opening risk assessment will be shared with Parents/carers, staff and the centre.

#### **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 nursery but do understand that this could cause distress.

#### **6.8 Resources at Nursery**

- Toys and resources that are difficult to clean will be removed, including cushions and soft toys. The children will only share toys and activities within their groups. We will aim to sanitise items at the end of each day.
- For the time being we will be postponing the use of book bags to minimise contamination until further notice.

### **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 Little Elms, they should be collected as soon as possible and isolate at home for 10 days in line with NHS guidance. The child must be tested before they return. Only if a child tests negative can they return to the setting, otherwise they must isolate for 10 days.
- Whilst waiting to be collected, they will be isolated from others in a designated area. An employee will stay with them and will wear PPE.
- 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 as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with NHS guidance. The area will be disinfected thoroughly. 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 nurseries 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.

- Children do not require any face covering whilst at nursery. Staff have the option to wear visors or facemasks if they wish to. Visitors will be required to wear facemasks.

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

- All teachers, children and young people eligible to attend education and childcare settings, and members of their households, will have access to testing if they display symptoms of Coronavirus (Covid-19). This will enable them to get back to nursery, and their parents or carers to get back to work, if the test proves to be negative. Parents will have a number of routes to access testing for them and their children.
- Any suspected or confirmed case must be reported to the Nursery Manager as soon as possible. If a positive result is confirmed, the practitioners and children associated with that group/bubble must self-isolate for 10 days before returning to nursery. Positive tests will be reported to Public Health England and Ofsted by the Nursery Manager.
- If there is reasonable evidence that a positive diagnosis was caused by exposure at work, this will be reported to RIDOR.
- The Government's tracing app is a way of helping to protect everyone

#### **8. Complaints procedure**

Please refer to our **Making a Complaint Policy** which is displayed on our noticeboards. If you need a copy sent to you please email the nursery.

#### **9. Further guidance**

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>