



Saturday 29th August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

September 2020: Operating during Covid-19

I write to you to share updated plans for operating during Covid-19 from September 2020. We realise that guidance changes frequently, and so, remind you that all is subject to change based on government announcements and changes in policy.

Below you will find details of new local lockdown tier system and how it effects early years, as well as information based on the 'systems of control' we are working within. In addition to this, where areas of guidance are specific, I have included information directly from the DFE to give further clarity in the areas which will be of more impact.

Information has been taken from:

- ★ *'Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak' DFE Guidance*
- ★ *'Protective measures for holiday and afterschool clubs, and other out of school settings during the coronavirus outbreak' DFE Guidance*
- ★ *'Coronavirus: implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings' DFE Guidance*
- ★ *'Early Years Alliance' correspondence*
- ★ *'COVID-19: review of disparities in risks and outcomes report' PHE Guidance*
- ★ *'COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection' PHE Guidance*
- ★ *'Reopening June 2020: Information for Staff, Parents and Carers' Creative Stars Letter to parents*
- ★ *'Coronavirus (Covid 19): travel corridors' DFT Guidance.*

The Department for Education has published new guidance on local lockdowns for early years providers, schools and colleges. The guidance states that *"in local areas where restrictions have been implemented for certain sectors ... education and childcare will usually remain fully open to all"*.

It outlines four levels, or 'Tiers', of local lockdown restrictions, ranging from Tier 1 (the most relaxed) to Tier 4 (the most restrictive). The tier of local lockdown enforced in a particular area will depend on the level of local outbreak.

Under Tiers 1 - 3, **early years providers will be able to remain open to all children**. Only under Tier 4 would settings be asked to close to all but key worker children and vulnerable children. Essentially, this means that when an area is placed into local lockdown, it is unlikely that early years providers will be asked to (partially) close, and this will only happen in limited circumstances, if deemed absolutely necessary.

Bubbles:

From 20 July, early years settings were no longer required to keep children in small, consistent groups within settings but can return to normal group sizes. As we are such a small nursery, we are now operating as one smaller bubble. We have made the decision to reduce the number of children in attendance throughout the Autumn term to give us more room and space indoors; as it is unlikely, we will be able to spend full days outdoors during this time.

When at tables, children will sit in a spacious manner with no more than 4 at the table at one time.



'System of Controls'

The public health advice makes up a PHE-endorsed 'system of controls', building on the hierarchy of protective measures that have been in use throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. These measures create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced for children and staff.

Some people with particular characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), as set out in the *COVID-19: review of disparities in risks and outcomes report*. As we are aware that people from the BAME community are at higher risk, we have decided to continue opening 4 days per week only until at least January 2021. **We will review this in December 2020** and inform parents if we plan to go back to opening Monday to Friday. We employ staff of an older age, and so, we further need to protect them whilst doing their jobs as this puts them at greater risk. In considering reopening, we risk assessed our environment and working arrangements. In short, we have reduced staff hours of work onsite to allow for staff to be less exposed to risk of infection; more rested making them more able to fight possible infection and healthier coming into work.

The System of Controls are a set of 10 actions early years settings should adhere to (**written in green**). Bullet points 1 – 6 being based around prevention; and 7 – 10 based around the response to any infection.

Numbers 1 to 4 must be in place in all settings, all the time. Number 5 must be properly considered, and settings must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances. Number 6 applies in all specific circumstances. Numbers 7 to 10 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

Prevention

- 1. minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend settings.**
- 2. clean hands thoroughly more often than usual** - Children will be washing faces as well as hands when entering the nursery, as usual before and after lunch, and at the end of the day before leaving the nursery. We will continue encouraging children to wash hands throughout the day and directing them to do so as and when needed. We will use two of the portable hand washing stations indoors and 2 in the outdoor area to further help reduce the spread of infection and promote hand washing.
- 3. ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach**
- 4. introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach**
- 5. minimise contact between groups where possible** – we have reduced our overall group size so that we can operate as one group with babies mainly being based in their room
- 6. where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) – onsite for all staff and given to staff for travel purposes. In the event of a possible Covid-19 case, staff will use PPE when handling the child.**

Response to any infection:

- 7. engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.** Staff, parents and carers will need to be ready and willing to:
 - ★ Book a test if they are displaying symptoms. Staff and children must not come into the setting if they have symptoms and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them in the setting. All children can be tested, including children under 5.
 - ★ provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace



- ★ Self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms.

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to internet. Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to testing.

We ask parents, carers and staff to inform us immediately of the results of the test. Please bear in mind the following if you have to have a test or your child / children have a test:

- ★ **if someone tests negative, and they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating.** They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is best to avoid contact with other people until they are well. Other members of their household can also stop self-isolating.
- ★ if someone tests positive, they should follow [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#) and should continue to self-isolate for **at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to the setting only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell or taste.** This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. **The at least 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill.** If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

8. manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the setting community: Settings must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). We will contact the local health protection team and liaise with them in a swift manner. This team will also contact settings directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the setting – as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

The local health protection team will work with settings to carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

The local health protection team will work with settings in this situation to guide them through the actions they need to take. Based on the advice from the local health protection team, **settings should send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious.**

Household members of those who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the child or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period, they should follow [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#). They should get a test, and:

- ★ **if the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop the coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days**
- ★ if the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and should isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14-day isolation period). Their household should self-isolate for at least 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#).



It is especially important that we stay in communication throughout this time. Although drop off and collection of children will be for a shorter duration, we still want communication to take place. You can also call and/or email if you have any queries or concerns; or if you want to let us know anything throughout the day.

It is crucial that we operate with transparency regarding contact with and exposure to coronavirus. We are aware that some parents are working in high risk roles and many are key workers. If you or anybody within your household has symptoms of coronavirus, we expect you and your child / children to stay at home in line with government expectations and to let us know as soon as possible. The same is expected of staff.

- 9. contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice
- 10. notify Ofsted.

Additional safeguarding practice

Suspension of extra Curricula Activities:

Sessions in settings that use external providers, which are not directly required for children's health and wellbeing, should be suspended. As this has been stated, we have made the decision to stop extra-curricular activities from external providers until at least January 2021.

Outdoor Area:

We will keep the barriers erected on the lawn area to ensure the general public do not use this area. Although we will not be able to be based outdoors as often, we will monitor the weather throughout the day and go out as and when possible.

The recent storms caused movement of our gazebo and we have now erected it at the top of the lawn near the green enclosed area. We have removed panels to allow for winds to travel through and will continue to use this as a dry area for outdoor play. We will be assigning every child to a wet suit to go on top of outdoor clothing. These will be washed weekly and I ask that children's coats, gloves and hats are washed on a weekly basis too. We will also look through wellington boots onsite and aim to provide each child with a pair of wellies throughout the Autumn and winter. This should enable us to remain outdoors more so.

Drop off and Collections:

Social distancing is still crucial in ensuring we can continue providing this service and legislation now states that parents should remain offsite. As a result, we ask that all parents and carers remain outside of the lawn barriers when dropping off and collecting children. We will take your child's temperature before coming onsite and periodically throughout the day.

Drop off and collections should be swift; and I ask that parents call when approaching so that a member of staff can prepare your child / children to go home. To further safeguard I ask that items from home do not come onsite throughout this time. This includes toys, bags, planners, books etc.

We will request nappies and wipes as and when required and where applicable. Please leave a bulk of nappies and wipes for your child to limit the amount of times items are received onsite from home. Similarly, spare clothes should be brought in in the same fashion, leaving a bulk onsite to go in your child's box. We have ordered more spare clothes for nursery to further assist us throughout this time.

Visitors Onsite:

We aim to have very limited access to the public. Any works to the building or people needing access (utility checks, fire safety checks etc) will be arranged, where possible, on Fridays.



Daily Provision:

The daily routine will be similar but less resources will be on offer each day. Activities will still be taking place in small group sessions. Water play will be available with soapy water, but we will not be offering sand play. Play dough will now be available but children will have their own labelled pots to use.

Sleep Arrangements:

Children will be spaced further apart when sleeping and all sleep mats and cots will be cleaned daily as well as bedding being changed daily.

Brushing of Teeth

Children will not be brushing teeth onsite for the foreseeable future. This has been suggested by PHE to stop the spread of infection. We have had this in place since March 2020 as a safety precaution.

Clothing:

Upon arrival, all children will put on a Creative Stars T-Shirt. The T-Shirt will then be removed when the child is leaving nursery. This is, again, to reduce the spread of germs between home and nursery.

Use of Public Transport:

All staff are avoiding use of public transport during this time. We ask that parents also do this where possible and inform us if your child has travelled on public transport.

Emergency Closure

Our emergency closure policy still applies. You will be contacted in the usual fashion via telephone and email if we need to close the nursery; with parents being expected onsite within an hour. If your child presents with any symptoms of coronavirus, we expect that the child is collected as soon as possible to ensure other children and staff are put at minimal risk. This should be straight away, where possible.

Travel to and from quarantined countries

Switzerland, Jamaica and the Czech Republic are the latest countries to be removed from England's list of travel corridors. The UK government said the move was needed to keep UK infection rates down. English travellers are currently able to visit a select number of countries without facing a 14-day quarantine. Please check the list of countries before travelling and notify us if you are travelling. We expect all parents and carers to adhere to these rules and to quarantine when necessary.

I thank you in advance for reading our plans for operating during Covid-19. It will be a community effort to keep all of those at Creative Stars safe. Communication is essential. If it is found that a parent or carer has knowingly put Creative Stars, or any members of the Creative Stars community at risk, their childcare place will be terminated immediately.

We are operating in the seasons where cold and flu are rampant. Please do not send your children into nursery if they are unwell.

Wishing you all the best throughout this time. Please stay as safe as you possibly can and communicate any concerns or information around Covid-19 swiftly.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs. Dawn Day

Managing Director