



Operating in a Covid-19 Environment Policy

This policy works in conjunction with our Health & Safety Policy.

Statement of intent

Crofton Early Learners believes that the health and safety of children is of paramount importance. We make our setting a safe and healthy place for children, parents and staff.

Aim

We aim to make children, parents and staff aware of health and safety issues and to minimise the hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment.

Key Messages & Actions Basic principles

Following basic principles and Government guidance can help keep children and staff safe at preschool and help stop the spread of this disease. To this end:

- Sick children and staff should not come to preschool. Remember that symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough or fever can be similar to those of the flu, or the common cold, which are a lot more common. If your child is sick, keep them home from school and notify the school of your child's absence and symptoms.
- Households with sick residents must not send their children into preschool and follow isolation guidelines.
- Avoid contact with anyone with symptoms
- If families/staff develop symptoms of COVID-19 or live with someone who does, they will still need to self-isolate for 14 days.
- Attendance to the setting will be restricted to children and staff as far as practically possible and visitors will not be permitted to the preschool unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance). Where essential visits are required these will be made outside of the usual preschool operational hours where possible.

ILLNESS AND INFECTION CONTROL

How we will use reasonable endeavours to work to ensure the highest safety standards:

We will:

- question parents/cares about family health prior to child entry;
- take children's temperatures using an infra-red thermometer on entry to the building (any child showing a temperature of 37° or above will not be admitted);
- ask adults to remain outside the premises;
- ask that bags are only brought in where they contain nappy changing equipment;
- not provide storage for buggies etc;
- work towards reducing transmission risk by ensuring children and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups whilst maintain staff:child ratios. We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff;
- work towards ensuring staff model distancing;

- supervise young children to ensure they wash their hands more often than usual, thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered;
- remove soft toys, dressing up clothing and any resources which would instantly encourage children to put in their mouths or on their bodies;
- provide alternatives to eg the book corner which might encourage children to sit closely to one another;
- clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces more often than usual using standard cleaning products;
- sterilise bins;
- enforce frequent hand washing with safe water and soap and, at a minimum, daily disinfection and cleaning of school surfaces;
- provide water, sanitation and waste management facilities and follow environmental cleaning and decontamination procedures;
- use reasonable endeavours to ensure children do not share cups, eating utensils, food or drinks with others;
- provide PPE for staff undertaking intimate care or care for sick children;
- provide separate, closed off space for children who become sick on site;
- notify parents daily by posters outside if anyone in the setting develops the virus;
- leave children's artwork etc on tables outside for collection by parents/carers where weather conditions allow;
- use outdoor provision to help with minimising infection spread, health and well being and promoting children's development;
- use reasonable endeavours to promote social distancing (a term applied to certain actions that are taken to slow down the spread of a highly contagious disease, including limiting large groups of people coming together) amongst parents and with children as much as is possible, by:
 - Using the preschool playground for entry to the premises and mark out distanced waiting areas;
 - When possible, use reasonable endeavours to create spaces around tables for children to be at least one metre apart;
 - Take steps towards teaching and model creating space and avoiding unnecessary touching and integrating disease prevention and control in daily activities;
 - Use reasonable endeavours to minimise contact and mixing. It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we can achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups;
 - Cancelling all visitors (replacing show rounds with virtual media);
 - Cancelling events that create crowded conditions.

Crofton Early Learners will develop flexible attendance and sick leave policies that encourage staff to stay home when sick or when caring for sick family members. There will be a relaxation in attendance at the setting connected with Funding.

Crofton Early Learners recognises that during the lockdown period each child will have had unique experiences, some positive, some more negative than others. We will encourage children to discuss their questions and concerns with practitioners and provide information in an honest, age-appropriate manner. We will ensure staff are aware of local resources for their own well-being. We will work with health workers/social workers to identify and support families and staff who exhibit signs of distress. We will create opportunities for children to play and relax.

RECOGNISE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

During the COVID-19 outbreak, parents and staff should be aware of and look out for signs and symptoms.

The most important symptoms are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- shortness of breath
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For any child showing symptoms, the following sequence of actions need to be taken:

1. Child presents with symptoms; parents are requested to collect child and seek diagnosis from GP or take further advice from NHS 111.
2. Child's parents are requested to inform setting of outcome/diagnosis and keep child at home for the recommended exclusion period. For cases of suspected Coronavirus, staff and service users must adhere to current Government advice regarding self-exclusion even if no symptoms are present.

Remember that symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough or fever can be similar to those of the flu, or the common cold, which are a lot more common. If your child is sick, keep them home from school and notify the school of your child's absence and symptoms. This is extremely important

CHECKLIST FOR PRE-SCHOOL STAFF

1. Promote and demonstrate regular hand washing and positive hygiene behaviors and monitor their uptake.
Ensure adequate, clean and separate toilets for girls and boys
 - Ensure soap and safe water is available at age-appropriate hand washing stations
 - Encourage frequent and thorough washing (at least 20 seconds)
 - Place hand sanitizers in toilets, classrooms, halls, and near exits where possible
 - Ensure adequate, clean and separate toilets or latrines for girls and boys
2. Clean and disinfect school buildings, classrooms and especially water and sanitation facilities at least once a day, particularly surfaces that are touched by many people (railings, lunch tables, sports equipment, door and window handles, toys, teaching and learning aids etc.)
3. Disinfect surfaces and small items ensuring appropriate equipment for cleaning is used. Loose parts where possible will be put in the dishwasher.
4. Increase air flow and ventilation where climate allows (open windows, use air conditioning where available, etc.)
5. Post signs encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene practices
6. Ensure waste is removed daily and disposed of safely, if necessary double wrapped, and placed in the paladin.

For confirmed cases of a notifiable disease and Coronavirus the setting will contact their local Health Protection Team (HPT) as soon as possible for further guidance. The Leader will inform the Trustees and retain a confidential record.

Acting on the advice of the local HPT, the we will either:

- close for a set period and undertake a deep clean
- carry on as usual but also undertake a deep clean

If a notifiable disease is confirmed, staff will inform the line manager immediately and Ofsted will be informed within 10 days. Cases of confirmed Coronavirus will be treated as a notifiable disease.

A deep clean will be undertaken at the soonest opportunity following any illness outbreak. Hand hygiene messages will be reinforced and staff will be vigilant to any further signs of infection.

The Leader will continue to liaise with the HPT as required and keep a full record of children affected, how long they are away from the setting and the date on which they return.

CHECKLIST AND ADVICE FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

1. Monitor your child's health and keep them home from school if they are ill. Do not ask us to make 'doorstep' decisions.
2. Teach and model good hygiene practices for your children
 - Wash your hands with soap and safe water frequently. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water, if hands are visibly dirty
 - Ensure that safe drinking water is available and toilets are clean at home
 - Ensure waste is safely collected, stored and disposed of
 - Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow and avoid touching your face, eyes, mouth, nose
3. Prevent stigma by using facts and reminding children to be considerate of one another
4. Coordinate with the pre-school to receive information and ask how you can support school safety efforts (through Parent Rep WhatsApp.)
5. Ensure that the preschool have up to date emergency contacts and ensure that carers can be contacted at any point during the preschool morning.
6. Ensure that children who fall sick whilst in the setting are collected speedily.
7. Encourage your children to ask questions and express their feelings with you and their teachers. Remember that your child may have different reactions to stress; be patient and understanding. For example, if your child is feeling sick and staying at home or the hospital, you could say, "You have to stay at home/at the hospital because it is safer for you and your friends. I know it is hard (maybe scary or even boring) at times, but we need to follow the rules to keep ourselves and others safe. Things will go back to normal soon." . Keep regular routines and schedules as much as possible, especially before they go to sleep, or help create new ones in a new environment. Provide age-appropriate facts about what has happened, explain what is going on and give them clear examples on what they can do to help protect themselves and others from infection. Share information about what could happen in a reassuring way.
8. Let us know your anxieties – we cannot know how lock-down has affected your children during this critical time in their development.

CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS TO WORK ON WITH CHILDREN

- ❖ Wash hands frequently, always with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- ❖ Remember to not touch your face, especially fingers in mouths and noses.
- ❖ Do not share cups, eating utensils, food or drinks with others
- ❖ Teach and model good practices such as sneezing (children to blow own nose and bin tissues safely) or coughing into your elbow and washing your hands, especially for younger family members
- ❖ Tell your carers or teachers if you feel sick/ill
- ❖ If you feel poorly ask to stay home
- ❖ Manage own coat

Insurance cover

We have public liability insurance and employers' liability insurance. The certificate for employers' insurance is displayed on the noticeboard.

Further guidance

- DfE Guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Implementing Protective Measures in Education and Childcare settings (2020)
- DfE Guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for educational settings (2020)
- DfE Guidance: Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak (2020)
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- Health and Safety Law: What You Need to Know (HSE Revised 2009)
- Health and Safety Regulation...A Short Guide (HSE 2003)
- Common Inspection Framework: Education, Skills and Early Years (Ofsted 2019)
- Early Years Inspection Handbook (Ofsted May 2019)