

Covid – 19 Policy and Procedures

This policy has been drawn up in line with guidance from The Department of Health, Department of Education, Education of Authority, Social Services, The Public Health Agency and Early Years – the organisation for young children.

To ensure Rainbow Stop can open safely for all children, parents and staff we must adhere to this policy and update it in line with new guidance from all departments.

Before reopening we must:

- Inform Social Services by submitting the relevant paperwork for consideration and approval.
- Ensure relevant Risk Assessments have been completed.
- Ensure all safety measures have been put in place.
- Ensure all staff have completed relevant Covid-19 training.
- Ensure all parents have been made aware of this policy and the new procedures that will be followed in the Playgroup.

Infection Control

Rainbow Stop has a separate Policy to follow in regards to Infection Control, however within this Policy infection control is specific to Covid-19.

- The setting must ensure there is sufficient hand washing facilities within the setting.
- Posters on hand hygiene must be displayed in the setting.
- The importance of frequent handwashing with soap and water for 20 seconds and drying thoroughly will be emphasised including:
 - When staff arrive at the setting and before they leave.
 - Before and after handling food.
 - Before and after using the toilet, changing a nappy or helping a child use the bathroom (also wash the child's hands after helping the child use the bathroom or changing their nappy).
 - Ensure there is always extra cleaning of the toilets, taps and door handles.
 - Ensure soap dispensers are cleaned regularly.
 - After helping a child wipe their nose or tending to a cut or sore.
 - After handling rubbish.
 - Washing a child's hands on arrival at the setting and before they go home.
- Reminding staff to avoid touching their faces and encouraging children not to touch theirs.
- Staff and children should remove their uniform and shoes upon arrival at home and these should be washed at 60 degrees, a clean uniform is required each day.
- Ensuring surfaces and equipment are cleaned more regularly.
- Encourage children to use a tissue or their elbow to sneeze or cough and use bins for tissue waste promoting 'catch it, bin it, kill it'.
- Encourage children to learn and practise these habits through games and songs.
- Ensure bins for tissues are emptied throughout the session.
- Ensure all spaces where possible are well ventilated (opening windows).

- Removing all soft toys and any toys that are hard to clean, such as those with intricate parts and where possible removing soft furnishing such as bean bags, cushions and rugs.

Helping Children Understand the Public Health Measures

The use of meaningful symbols and social stories to support children to understand how to follow rules is advised. As far as possible we will use age appropriate methods including:

- Frequent hand washing.
- As far as possible, avoiding close or direct contact with other children and staff.
- Telling a staff member as soon as possible if they feel unwell in anyway.
- Promoting good coughing and sneezing etiquette.
- Discouraging children from sharing food, cups and eating utensils.

Use of Outside Space

- Outside space is a huge part of the Pre-School Curriculum and is currently used greatly.
- We will be maximising the use of our outside space throughout the year.
- Please ensure children have the correct clothing for wet or cold weather and outside play.
- Outdoor activity can help limit the transmission of infection and can allow for better social distancing between staff and children.

Drop off, Pick up and Deliveries to the Setting

When children are being dropped off or picked up by their parents/guardians the following steps should apply:

- Any child, parent, carer or visitor displaying any symptoms must not enter the setting.
- Only one parent should attend drop off and collection and parents will not be allowed to enter the setting unless this is essential or pre-arranged. Children should be collected from the door where possible.
- Staggered drop off and collection times may be necessary to minimise adult to adult contact.
- Parents will be informed of which entrance to use and the system for drop off and collection of children.
- Parents are not to gather at the entrance to the setting or the surrounding area.
- Visitors and deliveries will be organised for a time when there are no children in the setting where possible to minimise contact with others.
- Hand sanitiser will be available at the entrance to the setting and anyone coming to the setting must use this upon arrival. There will also be stations throughout the setting.
- Social distancing markers may be used at our entrance to ensure protocols are being followed during drop off and collection times.

Suitably Qualified Person in Charge and on Site at All Times

- A suitable person must be in charge of the setting at all times, and they must have a Level 5 Diploma or equivalent in line with the Minimum Standards Guidance.

Risk Assessments

The setting will ensure that risk assessments take place, this will include all risks identified in respect of Covid-19 and must take account of the relevant guidance from the Public Health Agency.

These will be updated where necessary in line with developing guidance.

Children with Symptoms of Coronavirus

The person in charge must have procedures to follow when a child becomes sick in the setting to protect other children and staff from the Covid-19 illness. The following procedure will be implemented to help prevent the spread of Covid-19:

- Children should not attend if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household.
- A plan will be put in place for sharing information and guidelines with parents and guardians that includes:
 - A system to check with parents and guardians daily on the status of their children when children are dropped off at the setting;
 - Ensuring that up-to-date email addresses and home, work, and mobile phone numbers from parents and guardians of children at the setting so the setting can reach them at all times and testing that methods of communication work;
 - Providing parents and guardians with information on COVID-19 symptoms, transmission, prevention, and when to seek medical attention;
 - Encouraging parents and guardians to share the information with their children as appropriate;
 - Communicating with parents and guardians that children should stay at home if they are sick, have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, or if someone in the household has symptoms (loss of taste or smell, cough, fever, shortness of breath);
 - Establishing voluntary methods for parents and guardians to help screen their children for COVID-19 symptoms (For example, ask parents and guardians to check their children every day before coming to the Childcare setting and to keep their children at home if their temperature is high, that is, if they feel hot to touch on the chest or back - they do not need to measure the child's temperature.)
 - Requiring parents to advise the Person in Charge if they, their child or any other family member with whom they live or have had contact has tested positive for COVID-19.
 - Know how to notify the Public Health Agency and the HSC Trust Early Years Team's Early Years Team upon learning that someone who has been at the childcare setting has a COVID-19 infection.

If a Child Becomes Sick at the Setting

A plan will be established which sets out clearly what steps need to be taken if a child becomes sick at the setting, both in relation to a child who does not display symptoms of COVID-19 and a child who develops symptoms (cough, a change in or loss of sense of taste or smell, fever (temperature of 37.8 or higher). The plan includes:

- Procedures for contacting parents and guardians immediately and criteria for seeking medical assistance;
- Designated areas where sick children can rest, be isolated and attended to by a limited number of trained staff. If direct care is required while waiting for the child to be collected, you should wear PPE - a mask, plastic apron and gloves;
- If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.
- If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
- PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).
- In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a Member of Staff Becomes Unwell in the setting

If a member of staff in the setting becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature (37.8 or higher), or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home immediately.

If a member of staff has helped someone with symptoms, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves (and in which case, a test is available) or the child subsequently tests positive. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

Confirmed Case of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the Setting

When a child or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus (COVID-19) they should be sent home, advised to self-isolate for 10 days, and arrange to have a test to see if they have COVID-19. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff who are attending the childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.

Where the child or staff member tests positive, the rest of their Play Pod within their childcare setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of the Play Pod do not need to self-isolate unless the child, or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health Agency will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise settings on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases a larger number of other children, may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps

the whole pod or setting. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.

The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff in the setting will not require PPE even if they are not always able to maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:

- Children whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE pre-COVID19 due to their particular circumstances and intimate care needs. In these situations they should continue to receive their care in the same way as they did pre-COVID-19; and
- If a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) while in the setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home, a face mask, plastic apron and gloves should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, or spitting, then eye protection should also be worn.

Shielded and clinically vulnerable children and young people

For the vast majority of children and young people, coronavirus (COVID-19) is a mild illness. Children and young people (0 to 18 years of age) who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions have been advised to shield. It is not expected these children will be attending childcare and they should continue to be supported at home as much as possible. Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) children are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19). The parents of children in this category should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.

Pregnant Staff Members

To minimise the risk to pregnant staff, this staff member will not be in close contact with parents where possible including during drop off and collection times at the door and face to face meetings if it is possible to do these over the phone. Any pregnant member of staff will have a risk assessment carried out and placed in their file with all updated guidance fed back to staff members. This is all to be done in line with guidance from PHA and Department of Health.

Extra Precautions

As an extra measure we are now asking that any child who has been unwell and unable to attend the setting due to a cold or cough to be tested and the results text message must be sent to the setting to ensure we are keeping the spread of COVID-19 to a minimum. If you feel your child is unwell or showing any symptoms of COVID-19 we also ask that your child takes a test to rule out Coronavirus.

Useful Links & Contacts

Early Years – the organisation for young children promotes and supports the provision of high quality early childhood care, education and play facilities for children and their families. They offer support, training and information to people concerned with early years care and education, including parents, early years providers and students.

Early Years – the organisation for young children can be contacted by email to: support@early-years.org.

Tel: 028 9066 2825

www.early-years.org

Parentline NI is a helpline which can provide information for parents and direct them quickly to sources of childcare support. The helpline can also offer emotional support.

<http://www.ci-ni.org.uk/parentline-ni>

Freephone: 0808 8020 400

<https://www.familysupportni.gov.uk/Support/91/covid19-childcareoptions-and-associated-guidance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19coronavirus/testing-and-tracing-covid-19#testing-for-essential-workers>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-andprotecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>