**Epidemic and Pandemic Policy**

**(Covid 19)**

**Statement of Intent**

Windmill Pre-School intend to use this policy to provide precautionary measures to minimise transmission risks of disease in the setting during an epidemic or pandemic. It also states ideas for continuity of business if allowed.

Legislation and leading authorities which have guided and influenced this policy are:

Coronavirus Act 2020, Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Government Briefings, Public Health England (PHE) and World Health Organisation (WHO). Advice from but not limited to, The Secretary of State, The Chief Medical Officer, Local Authority (LA) and Department for Education (DfE). The policy also has regard to Ofsted and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance where appropriate.

**Aim of Policy**

This Policy defines and assists the operating arrangements in place within the Pre-School that assures compliance to the Government and leading bodies requirements with relation to the outbreak of a pandemic such as Covid19. This information builds upon our current procedures for areas such as Safeguarding, Child Protection and Equality and Diversity, however new practices may emerge as the situation continues. The policy and considerations may evolve and be built upon as the situation deepens and new precautionary measures have been introduced and practices have been reflected upon.

**Method**

As early years providers we ensure to offer a continuum of very high standards of practice of childcare and education. The fundamental principles to be outlined in this policy are set out to ensure physical distancing is enabled and implement good hygiene practices as well as avoiding coming into contact with infected children and adults or anyone displaying symptoms. It states the protective measures put in place for children, parents and staff as best as possible to ensure the risk of transmission is reduced. We will continue to follow our other policies as long as they do not conflict with this policy and be guided by the EYFS as best as we can. The main areas we will be considering are:

* Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell
* Maintaining personal and respiratory hygiene (handwashing, catch it, kill it, bin it)
* Ensuring cleanliness of the environment (especially frequently touched surfaces)
* Minimising general contact and mixing (creating bubbles and limiting numbers)
* The use of Protective and Personal Equipment (PPE) should a child/adult become unwell
* Testing

**Focus/ Areas of Consideration / Recommendations**

**Children**

*Attendance*

* Only children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period should attend the setting.
* Extremely vulnerable children should continue under government advice (to shield).
* Families who attend at least two settings should choose only one for the remainder of the term to ensure their ‘bubble’ remains small.

*Physical Distancing/grouping*

* Children will be organised into groups of no more than 8 and will be in a designated area within the setting, this will also involve the outdoor area. Wherever possible these small groups or ‘bubbles’ should not mix during the day as best as possible. This is to minimise contact with others and mixing. Staff may exercise their own judgement during the day for the high standards of safety for all children.
* Wherever possible, children in small groups should have the same staff team caring for them to limit the amount of people coming into contact with each other.
* In order to achieve the smaller number of children attending the setting, we will follow the criteria below:
  + A temporary cap on the amount of children in the setting at any one time.
  + Temporarily limiting funded hours to provide two whole days (12 hours per week)

to pupils regardless of the amount of funding normally received.

* + Temporarily offering non funded pupils 12 hours per week to be split into whole days – no morning/afternoon sessions to be made available
  + Prioritising children such as those who are vulnerable, those with special educational needs, those from households where both parents are key workers/work (or work full time)
  + Offering places to those children transferring to Primary school
  + Offering places to pupils by date of birth
* These measures will be reviewed and amended as necessary dependent upon the settings ability to operate under these circumstances and mindful of future directives/developments
* Care routines including, washing hands, nappy changing and toileting, should be within the groups.
* Children within their groups will have communal snack, provided by the setting, and eat lunch within that group
* The use of communal internal spaces should be restricted as much as possible and outdoor spaces should be utilised as much as possible and used by ‘bubbles’ in different areas during the day.
* Sunscreen should be applied by the parents / carers before the child arrives at the Pre-School. T shirts covering shoulders and leggings would be preferable to minimise how much top up of sunscreen the staff will need to do.

*Wellbeing and education*

* Children should be supported to understand the changes in the way Pre-School is set up, the structure of the day, what they can play with etc. It will be very different to what they would normally be used to and staff need to be aware of the children’s need for emotional support at this time.
* Children should be supported in age appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe including regular hand washing, coughing into an elbow, using a tissue and adopting a catch it, kill it, bin it regime.
* Children should be supported to understand the changes and challenges they may be encountering as a result of Covid-19 and staff need to ensure they are aware of children’s attachments and their need for emotional support at this time.
* EYFS framework will continue to be delivered through play and adult led activities.

**Workforce**

*Attendance*

* Staff should only attend Pre-School if they are symptom free, have completed the required isolation period or achieved a negative test result. All staff and their household are eligible for testing if they display symptoms.
* The number of staff in the Pre-School will be limited at any one time to only those required to care for the expected occupancy levels on any given day

* Staff hours, days they work and length of day may change in order to meet childcare demands and considerations within this policy.

*Physical distancing/ grouping /safety*

* A thorough and comprehensive risk assessment will be carried out before opening to address any risks from the virus, and to ensure sensible measures are in place to control risks.
* Staff to be fully informed of measures in place and to have read and signed all new policies, guidance etc to state they have read and understood the preschool policies and procedures.
* Wherever possible staff should remain with the small group of children, the ‘bubble’ of children who they are allocated to and not come into contact with other groups.
* Emergency revisions to the EYFS may have been implemented which provides some flexibility on ratios and qualifications to make this feasible.
* Staff have been advised by the government not to wear PPE such as facemasks during their day, but should continue to wear PPE at the usual times such as intimate care and wear disposable gloves and apron if completing one to one care and if supporting an ill child a face mask and visor should also be worn if a 2 meter distance cannot be maintained.
* After dealing with an ill child who displayed symptoms the staff member should continue to wear PPE and clean the affected area with disinfectant.
* All PPE should be removed and disposed of following current government guidelines, the staff member should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds.
* The staff member who supported the unwell child does not need to go home unless they are developing symptoms themselves.
* Social distancing must be maintained during staff lunch breaks.
* Staff will be required to be in charge of specific rooms or areas including the outdoors to minimise their contact with surfaces etc. Staff will be responsible to ensure appropriate cleaning takes place and enough ventilation is in the room such as opening windows. If doors are open ensure the safety of the children is maintained.
* Staff members should avoid physical contact with each other including handshakes, hugs etc.
* Staff to wear fresh, clean clothes for each day.
* Advise staff to change from their work clothes and wash them after use.

*Training*

* Where possible, meetings and training sessions should be conducted through virtual conferencing.
* All staff members must receive appropriate instruction and training in infection control and the standard operating procedure and risk assessments within which they will be operating.
* Where necessary training such as Safeguarding etc requires updating, online training may be available to allow staff training levels to be maintained as appropriate.

**Parents**

*Physical distancing*

* Only parents who are symptom free and or have completed the required isolation periods will be able to drop off or collect their child.
* No parent will be permitted to enter the setting and staff will not be able to ‘take a child’

from a parent.

* Parents will be encouraged to drop off ideally without siblings and only one parent per family, this is to minimise any ‘pinch points’.
* Parents will be given a drop off and collection time to avoid a queue forming.
* When parents are waiting to drop off or collect their child, physical distancing should be maintained in a safe area adhering to government social distancing policies.
* The garden gates will remain open until 9.30am so parents have no need to touch them

*Communications*

* Parents should receive clear communication regarding the role they play in the safe operating procedure and all measures being taken to ensure the safety of their children and themselves.
* Parents should inform Pres-School of their circumstances and if they plan to keep their child away, this helps Pre-School to conform to our safeguarding policy.

**Visitors**

* Attendance to the setting should be restricted to only children and staff as far as practically possible and visitors should not be permitted to the Pre-School unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance).
* Where essential visits are required these should be made outside of the usual Pre-School operational hours where possible.
* As far as possible parents and carers should not enter the premises.

**Travel**

* Wherever possible staff and parents should travel to Pre-School alone, using their own transport or walking
* Parents should be encouraged to ensure they do not leave travel accessories including buggies, car seats, scooters in the setting grounds.

**Hygiene and Health & Safety**

*Hand Washing*

* All children and staff must wash their hands upon arrival at the setting for at least 20 seconds.
* Children and staff members should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently, this includes before and after eating food, after visiting the toilet or playing outdoors, after sneezing, blowing their nose or coughing into their hand and dealing with unwell people.
* Bodily fluid spills should follow the correct procedures as normal.

*Cleaning*

* An enhanced cleaning schedule must be implemented that includes furniture, surfaces and children’s toys and equipment and all staff are responsible in their area of work.
* Communal area, touch points and hand washing facilities must be cleaned and sanitised regularly and cleaned thoroughly every night.
* A deep clean may be needed after a child has become ill in the area they were waiting.

*Waste disposal*

* All waste must be disposed of in a hygienic and safe manner following government guidelines.
* Tissues must be immediately disposed of and placed in a bin with a bag, lid and foot pedal.
* Bodily fluids must be double bagged and disposed of in a bin with a bag, lid and foot pedal.

*Risk assessment*

* The setting and all activity should be risk assessed before opening or going ahead to address the risks from the virus and due consideration given to any adaptations to usual practice. Sensible measures should be put in place and policies and procedures followed.
* It is expected that would include, but not be limited, to the suspension of learning experiences involving materials which are not easily washable such as malleable materials (dough, clay) and the suspension of the sharing of food and utensils.

Reduce the available resources out in the setting.

* Remove anything which cannot be easily wiped down or washed at the end of the day.
* Play food, play cutlery and crockery etc. should be removed or anything else which may be ‘mouthed’ by many children.
* No b
* No baking, food play and finger painting should be avoided.

*PPE*

* Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in early years settings to protect against COVID- 19 transmission.
* PPE should continue to be worn and disposed of as normal for nappy changing, one to one care and the administration of first aid.
* If a child shows symptoms, staff should wear a face mask, visor, disposable gloves and apron if a 2-meter distance cannot be maintained at all times. PPE should be disposed of by placing in 2 bags and taken straight to the biffa bins.

*Premises Building*

* Where premises have been temporarily closed during the lockdown period or where they may need to temporarily close during future lockdowns appropriate Health & Safety checks should be conducted prior to reopening including legionnaires checks.
* Keep windows open where possible to ensure good levels of ventilation. If doors are opened ensure the children safety is maintained with locked gates.

*Resources*

* Children should not be permitted to bring items from home into the setting.
* All resources required for play and learning experiences of children should be regularly washed and/or sterilized. Any resources which are difficult to clean should be removed.
* Equipment used by staff such as stationary, tablets etc. should be allocated to individual staff members where possible and cleaned regularly.

*Supplies Procurement & monitoring*

* The Pre-School should ensure an adequate supply of essential supplies and contingency plans such as additional suppliers are in place to minimise the impact of any shortages of supplies.
* The Pre-School will not be able to operate without essential supplies required for ensuring infection control.
* A monitoring system for the usage of PPE is essential to ensure that a supply of stock is available to all who require it as and when required to meet the operational needs of the setting. When stocks are low, other options may be considered, such as the use of washable tabards and facemasks. These items will be washed at a high temperature in accordance with relevant guidelines and separate to any other preschool washing.

*Responding to a suspected case*

In the event of a child developing suspected coronavirus symptoms whilst attending the setting, they should be collected as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with the current NHS guidance. Parents must arrange a test, if at all possible for the same day for themselves and their household. The results must be shared with the setting – we will need to see evidence of a test result as soon as possible and if a positive result the whole bubble will isolate for 14 days. A test should be booked the same day that the child/staff member is unwell, where possible the test should take place the same day.

* If the tests come back negative the child may return to the setting immediately and if any are positive the whole bubble will need to isolate for14 days. The setting would expect, if applicable, fees to be continued to be paid during this period.
* Whilst waiting for the child to be collected they should be isolated from others in a previously identified area. If possible, a window should be opened for ventilation.
* The staff member responsible for the child during this time should be a staff member from their ‘bubble’. The provider may consider suitable PPE for this staff member such as the addition of face mask, visor disposable gloves and apron.
* The area should be thoroughly cleaned, immediately if the area cannot be left unvisited, and if the area can be left unvisited then cleaned after 72 hours.
* The person responsible for cleaning ideally should be the person dealing with the unwell child and should continue to wear their PPE. This should then be disposed of in 2 bags and taken straight to the biffa bins.
* In the event of a staff member developing suspected coronavirus symptoms whilst working at the setting they should return home immediately and isolate at home in line with the NHS guidance. They should also follow current testing advice for themselves and their household by arranging if at all possible, to have a test that day and the results to be shared with the manager. If it is negative the member of staff can return to work immediately. If positive the whole bubble will have to isolate for 14 days.

**This policy was adopted on 20th May 2020**

**Heloise Ardley - Chair of Windmill Pre-School Management Committee**

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**Claire Baker –Manager of Windmill Pre-School**

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