

Coronavirus/COVID-19 Policy

Legal Framework

Gov.uk Early Years Foundation Stage: Coronavirus disapplications 24/4/2020

Gov.uk Use of Free Early Education entitlements funding during coronavirus (COVID-19) 28/4/2020

Gov.uk Claim for wages costs through the coronavirus job retention scheme 26/3/2020

Gov.uk Coronavirus (COVID-19) Implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings 24/3/2020

Guidance for schools, colleges and local authorities on maintaining educational provision 19/3/2020

Gov.uk Support for those affected by COVID -19 19/3/2020

Gov.uk Coronavirus (COVID-19) early years and childcare closures 1/4/2020

Gov.uk Stay at home: guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection 18/3/2020

Gov.uk Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK and protecting older people and vulnerable adults 16/3/2020

Gov.uk COVID-19 guidance for educational settings 16/3/2020

Government guidance Planning guide for Early Years and Childcare settings 24/05/2020

Department of Health and Social Care - Coronavirus action plan. A guide to what you can expect across the UK

Regularly updated documents from Citation

Gov.uk Working safely during Coronavirus – 5 steps to working safely

Gov.uk NHS test and trace: workplace guidance 27/05/2020

Gov.uk: Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak 27/07/2020 (updated)

Name of responsible person: all staff present at all nursery settings

This policy is written in response to a global pandemic caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) using documentation put into place by the UK Government from 23rd March 2020. It is a rapidly changing situation and the nursery will respond accordingly using guidance issued by the Government, Public Health and our Local Authorities. We will seek guidance and support for health and safety and HR matters from Citation and Atlas, as well as professional organisations with which we have membership including NDNA, Childcare.com and the Early Years Alliance and will update this policy as required.

COVID-19 is a virus within the coronavirus family, the strain of which has not been seen in humans before December 2019 and was declared a Public Health Emergency of National Concern (PHEIC) by the World Health Organisation (WHO), with the potential to spread rapidly. The main symptoms are a persistent, dry cough, a high temperature, loss of sense of taste or smell and in severe cases a shortness of breath. Some people can contract the virus and have no or very mild symptoms but others can develop a severe form of the virus which can lead to pneumonia and can be fatal. Evidence suggests most people who die from the virus already have underlying health conditions so it is important we protect the most vulnerable in our society including the elderly and those already suffering with some form of illness or disease. Current research suggests children are less likely to become severely ill with the virus but there is some concern they may be carriers of the virus so may infect others while displaying no symptoms themselves.

The UK Government placed restrictions in place from 23rd March to limit the movements of people and ensure most people were able to stay at home. At Tigers Day Nurseries we furloughed 69 out of 95 staff with effect from 30/3/2020, with a further 3 on 13/4/2020 and 3 further on 21/4/2020 and two staff from the Training Centre able to work from home, leaving a core team of 19 as a core team at Tigers, Tigers at Theale and Tigers at Swindon. We prioritised staff who were considered vulnerable because of their own health needs or those they live with. All staff were placed on the coronavirus job retention scheme (CJRS) and were contacted regularly with updates on Atlas. All furloughed staff were part of an initial discussion and signed an agreement that they understood and were in agreement with being placed on the scheme. They would stay home and receive 80% of their wages, paid in the

normal way. All overtime payments and sick bonus' were withdrawn with immediate effect from 23/3/2020. With the updated guidance for Early Years settings from 24/05/2020, we planned a phased reopening of the settings to all families from 1st June 2020 and have taken some staff off furlough as their skills are required back in their settings. More staff have returned as of 29/6/2020 as demand for childcare places increases. As of 1/9/2020 all staff have returned to all settings and the furlough scheme is no longer being used. Restrictions are gradually being lifted but we are mindful there may be local lockdowns in certain areas and we have guidance ready to implement should our area be affected. As always we will ensure we are up to date with current guidance and implement this as required.

Procedures:

Staff on furlough

Risk assessments and staying safe during the COVID-19 outbreak

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Test and Tracing

Keeping in contact with families unable to attend nursery during COVID-19

Planning for staff and children to return to nursery

Changes to EYFS during coronavirus outbreak

Staff on furlough

- All staff placed on furlough do so with agreement and in partnership with their nursery setting.
- The Job Retention Scheme which allows staff to be furloughed, is in place to prevent immediate redundancies during the COVID-19 outbreak. Staff cannot choose when to return from furlough. The Employer will make this decision based on when the work is available for individual staff. Staff not returning from furlough when required can be placed on unpaid leave, sick leave if they have the appropriate documents from their GP or put through the disciplinary procedure, whichever is appropriate.
- All staff on furlough sign an agreement to state this either in person or online on Atlas if they are currently not at work.

- Staff are informed the Operations Manager will send them regular updates on Atlas
- Staff on furlough can access training on Atlas, Educare etc if they so wish.
- Staff on furlough are able to work for another company during this time if they so wish but have to be available to work immediately it is requested of them by their nursery settings
- Staff on furlough receive 80% of their normal monthly salary, paid in the normal way and on the normal wage date.
- Staff on furlough continue to accumulate holiday entitlement which can be rolled over for up to two years.
- Staff on furlough who have holidays already booked are able to take this at another time, as well as their bank holiday entitlement.
- Staff who are not furloughed during the COVID-19 outbreak will be prioritised for annual leave when the nursery settings return to some sort of normality.
- When staff are required to return from furlough they will be contacted by their Manager and details put in writing to them, including their return to work date and the date of their return to work training session.
- If a bulk of staff are asked to return to work, those still required to stay on furlough will be contacted out of courtesy and informed they are not yet needed to resume their role.
- As of 1/7/20 previously furloughed staff can be placed on the 'flexible furlough scheme' where they can be brought back to work for any amount of time and we can claim the furlough grant for the difference between the hours they would normally work, and the hours actually worked.
- As of 1/9/2020 all staff have returned to settings and we are no longer accessing the furlough scheme.

Risk assessments and staying safe during the COVID-19 outbreak

- Our priority during this time is to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all our families, children and staff members and a risk assessment has been put in place to support this.
- Handwashing is carried out by all staff and children on a regular basis, when entering the room, coming in from outside, using the toilet,

personal care routines, mealtimes etc. Hand sanitiser should only be used where handwashing is not practicable at that point.

- Risk assessments are updated regularly in line with changes and guidance put in place by the Government and our professional bodies including Ofsted and the Local Authority.
- Risk assessments are sent out to all staff, including those on furlough, and staff will sign to acknowledge receipt and understanding.
- Please see the most up to date risk assessment on Atlas
- We have followed guidelines to ensure we are a COVID Secure workplace by putting in place 5 steps :
 1. Putting in place a risk assessment and publishing it on our website
 2. Developing cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures
 3. Helping people to work from home when they can
 4. Maintain a 2m or 1 m+ social distancing where possible
 5. Where 2m or 1m+ distancing is not possible, managing transmission risk
- Staff and children will bring in minimal belongings from home and where possible leave them at nursery. As of 1/9 we will send personal clothing from children home to be laundered and then returned. We will provide nappies at all settings and children, where possible, should be changed from the feet end rather than at the side.
- We will use wipes for cleaning hands and faces to minimise cross infection and reduce laundry. All bedding to be washed on an 80 degree wash. Bedding can be used for the same child for up to 3 days before it must be washed. In between washes it can be sealed in a bag in the child's box or tray.
- Toys and resources are cleaned after each use and resources have been reduced to manage this. Hard to clean equipment and resources have been removed.
- All soft furnishings, cushions, small rugs, soft toys have been removed for the time being.
- All carpets will be cleaned weekly and weekly fogging of all settings will take place.
- Staff will clean all frequently touched and used areas such as door handles, key code locks, hand sanitisers, telephones, iPads, light switches, bannisters, hand-rails etc three times a day.

- Managers will sanitise their offices including computer keyboards and telephones daily.
- After the children have left at the end of the day, all hard surfaces including floors, worktops, handles, doors, tables and chairs etc will be cleaned with a bleach solution.
- Toys and resources can be cleaned in the dishwashers or soaked in Milton overnight.
- Bleach and Milton must not be accessible while the children are present.
- All bins must be emptied twice daily by staff wearing gloves. All bins must have a liner in at all times.
- Both children and adult toilets and sinks are disinfected after each use.
- Buggies, coracles, sleep mats and the fire cots will be sanitised after every use.
- All outside toys and resources used will be cleaned before being put away so they are ready for the next session.
- Children will not use self-service at mealtimes at the moment. They will not have cups left out to access themselves, but staff will ensure they are offered frequent drinks throughout the day.
- Staff and children will change shoes on arrival at nursery. Anyone unable to do this will ensure their shoes are sanitised on arrival.

Social Distancing

- Due to the nature of the care we give, it is unrealistic to promote social distancing between staff and children.
- Children will be supported to understand excessive physical contact is to be avoided where possible, in so far as they understand.
- Drop off and collection of children will be at the outside doors or gates as specified at each setting. Visual aids will help to guide parents. Hand sanitiser is available at all doors. Children will be supported to understand 'kiss and drop' in a positive manner.
- To minimise the risk of infection in the nurseries, parents will be discouraged from entering the nursery wherever this is possible. If they do have to enter the building PPE will be provided in the form of gloves, aprons and shoe covers. As much is practical we will contact parents by telephone or using iConnect.
- Siblings will be requested to wait in their parents vehicles if they have to be brought to drop off or collection. Parents can call the nursery if they

need their child collected from or dropped off at their car e.g. if they have babies they need to bring with them.

- Children will be unable to access two settings at the moment. Parents will be asked to choose which one they would prefer to use.
- Outside play will be encouraged as much as possible.
- Visitors to the nursery will be by appointment only and outside of attendance by the children and full staff team.
- Trial sessions for new children will be limited and conducted outside where possible.
- Deliveries will be received outside of the setting and will be wiped down with sanitising spray before being brought into the setting.
- With the exception of emergency maintenance work, all maintenance will be completed outside of the children's attendance hours.
- Home visits and outings will not currently take place.
- As of 1/9/2020 some extra curricular activities will be restored and a risk assessment is in place for these and read and understood by tutors taking these classes.
- We have a temporary procedure in place for staff recruitment to restrict the numbers of prospective new staff accessing the settings.
- Children attending transitional visits to school will need to have a two day period before returning to the nursery after their visit in the same way if we have to move staff between bubbles we will try to ensure a two day break in between over a weekend.
- Staff will minimise contact with each other while working, by staying in their own room bubble throughout the day, with their own groups of children. This will be maintained as far as practically possible by reducing numbers accessing the staff room at once etc.
- Staff will also minimise contact with anyone outside of the nursery setting during their working day. As of 1/7/2020 staff will be able to leave the premises during their lunch breaks to return home or go to a public area as long as they continue to maintain the required social distancing from others. Staff are required to comply with Government guidance on wearing face masks when visiting shops on their lunch breaks.
- Staff will ensure they have everything they need in their bubbles before the children arrive each day to minimise staff moving around the setting. Meals and any required resources will be delivered to the doors by

Managers. All staff can contact Managers by telephone if they need help or support.

- Staff will not enter other bubbles or allow children to do this. As of 20/7/2020 bubbles can exceed initial guidance of 16 children but we will continue to minimise contact between different bubbles wherever possible.
- Toys and resources will not be shared between bubbles until they have been thoroughly cleaned.
- Communal areas will not be shared between bubbles until the area has been thoroughly cleaned in between each one.
- Staff will minimise contact with other staff from other bubbles during breaks but if this cannot be avoided they will maintain social distancing of 1 meter (as of 4/7/2020).
- Staff will where possible try to avoid travel to work using public transport. Where they are unable to do this they will be required to change their clothing and shoes on arrival and departure from the setting, and wear a mask and gloves during their travel.
- Staff appointments to GPs, dentists etc will need to be completed during annual leave and they are not able to return to their settings afterwards until the next day.
- Any staff member exempt from following any Government guidelines such as wearing a mask on public transport, should produce their exemption certificate so their Manager can have a copy for their staff file.

Children/staff/families becoming ill with suspected COVID-19

- Parents must inform the nursery if they, anyone in their household or anyone they have been in close contact with, has contracted the virus or has symptoms. In which case we would ask them, and their child to self-isolate for 14 days
- Due to the swift spread of COVID-19 any child, staff member or families displaying any signs or symptoms including a new persistent, dry cough, loss of sense of taste or smell or a temperature of over 37.8 degrees, will be sent home and asked to isolate for 10 days. We will request they are tested and if this is negative and they can provide us with a certificate, they can return to the nursery.

- Any child taken ill at nursery with suspected symptoms will be isolated with one staff member in a designated isolation hub. The staff member will be required to access the full PPE kit stored in the hub, including the face shield and parents will be called to collect urgently. Once the child has been removed from nursery the isolation hub will be cleaned thoroughly with bleach and the waste disposed of in double bags with a label indicating it cannot be placed in the main bin for 72 hours. Until then it is stored in the provided yellow bin in the bin store. This is classed as **contaminated waste**.
- When staff sign in each day they agree to the declaration that they, and everyone in their household is symptom free. If they are not they must not attend.
- We will encourage testing in all displaying symptoms.
- We will use a common sense approach to managing illness within the setting, but will err on the side of caution. The ultimate decision to send the child home rests with the Nursery Manager.
- Without testing if the symptoms have subsided within 10 days and disappeared the person will be able to come back to the nursery
- If testing is refused all other members of the household must isolate for up to 14 days to allow the virus to develop.
- Everyone is entitled to apply for a test if they are symptomatic. Parents of children under 5 should call 111 to apply for this.
- If the person tests positive their GP will contact the relevant authorities to report this as COVID-19 is a notifiable disease. We require a certificate to state they have a confirmed case of COVID 19. We will contact all those who have been in contact with the positive tested person/child and all those within their bubble, staff and children, will be required to isolate for 14 days.
- We only need to contact RIDOOR if we believe a person with diagnosed COVID-19 has contracted it from the nursery setting e.g. in the case of staff member caring for a symptomatic child while waiting for them to be collected.
- Any child/staff member who has been based with someone who tests positive for coronavirus will be isolated for 14 days.
- We have sent out information to parents regarding travelling overseas and restrictions in place to quarantine on return. These are changing rapidly so we have requested parents inform us of their destination and

we will keep these on record and act accordingly. Staff are aware if they travel overseas and they have to quarantine on their return, this period of absence will be unpaid.

Test and Tracing

- Test and tracing program was launched on 29th May 2020
- Tests are available for anyone with symptoms of the virus and will contact those who have a positive test to help them share information of any recent close contacts. The service then contacts those contacts and notifies them of the need to self-isolate to stop the spread of the virus.
- No co-workers or colleagues need to self-isolate UNLESS there is a positive test result
- As an employer we will support staff to self-isolate for the required time period as advised by the NHS contact. They can get an isolation note through the NHS 111 online service
- Staff will receive SSP for this period of self-isolation or if they request this period can be taken as paid holiday entitlement
- If multiple cases of coronavirus appear in our workplace we will receive support from the outbreak team at our LA or through Public Health England.

Keeping in contact with families unable to attend nursery during COVID-19

- It is essential for the return of our business that we continue to keep in touch with families who are not attending due to the pandemic regularly, and with the assumption all the children will eventually return.
- Our settings are sending regular updates out to families on iConnect with activity ideas and learning opportunities the children can take part in at home.
- Parents are being encouraged to upload photos and videos to their child's iConnect account so we can continue to track and record their learning.
- Staff on furlough are being encouraged and supported to send in their own photos and videos of what they have been doing at home to share with their key worker children on iConnect.
- Families have received letters and small parcels from the nursery settings to encourage them to keep in touch.

- Staff have made videos and put regular updates on activities on Facebook for parents to access and share with their child at home.
- The nurseries have encouraged parents and families to participate in activities such as the VE Day celebrations by taking their own photos and joining in with the planned tea party.
- Many parents and families are writing to the nurseries and their child's own key worker, and sending pictures etc to share.
- Managers contact all families individually to discuss their requirements when they are ready to return. All places will be held without charge until parents are ready to return. Parents will be advised if their usually booked sessions are filling up and they are likely to lose that session.

Planning for staff and children to return to nursery

- As always our priority is the health, safety and well being of the families, children and staff at our setting and we are using Government guidance to ensure everyone's safety and minimising the risks as far as we possibly can.
- Staff will be asked to attend a briefing before they return to work from furlough. We will cover all aspects of health and safety, new procedures in place to protect them and the children and families using the settings, PPE and it's use, activities and resources, any required training they haven't already completed, procedures in place for accepting the children back into nursery and how we manage issues such as social distancing and hygiene, as well as staff's own well-being, mental health and their transition back into work.
- Parents will be contacted by telephone to discuss their child's return and how they would like this to be managed and when.
- Parents will be offered a 'pay as you go' option for the first month to ensure they are able to settle their child back into nursery in a considered and individual way. Parents have not been charged for any sessions they have not been able to access care for their child during lockdown.
- Any child unable to attend their paid nursery sessions because of having to self-isolate, either because they have symptoms or someone in their household has, will have these sessions banked to be used at another time.

- We are unable to offer unused funded hours back where children have been unable to attend during the pandemic.

Changes to EYFS during coronavirus outbreak

- On 24/4/2020 the Government published statutory guidance 'Early years foundation stage: coronavirus disapplications detailing temporary changes to the EYFS. These came into force on 24/4/2020 and will be in place until 25/9/2020, but this will be reviewed regularly.
- After the changes are lifted there is a transition period of up to two months for us to comply with the staffing qualifications ratios.
- We must continue to strive to meet the seven areas of learning for the children as outlined in the EYFS but during the outbreak there is some flexibility if it is not possible to meet all seven areas due to restrictions from the coronavirus.
- The progress check at two years old will not need to be completed during the outbreak but children still in attendance will continue to have this completed. Once all children return this will be a priority once they have settled back in.
- Ratio requirements during the outbreak remain the same but there is some flexibility with the requirement that at least half the staff have to have a full and relevant Level 2 qualification. If these ratios are not met Managers must ensure a full risk assessment is in place to ensure the welfare and safety of all the children present.
- With the requirement for new staff to have a Paediatric First Aid certificate within three months in order to be counted in staff ratios, there is some flexibility of a three-month window during the outbreak. This also applies to staff whose existing PFA certificate was due to be taken and their current one has expired. Managers must ensure these staff are prioritised as soon as courses begin again. Guidance now states outstanding PFA training must be completed by 20/11/2020.
- Staff whose current PFA certificate has expired during the outbreak have been asked to complete the Educare First Aid Essentials course as a refresher until it is possible for them to complete their training.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must still be available at all times for support and advice but it is not necessary for them to be present at the premises.

This policy is updated regularly in line with changing guidance.

- **Updated 18/5/2020**
- **Updated 22/5/2020**
- **Updated 26/05/2020**
- **Updated 29/5/2020**
- **Updated 12/06/2020**
- **Updated 23/06/2020**
- **Updated 17/7/2020**
- **Updated 31/07/2020**
- **Updated 1/9/2020**