

## Bramfield Stepping Stones Pre-School

### COVID 19 Attendance & Group Size Policy

#### Attendance

##### Key Points:

1. Pre-school children will NOT be social distancing from each other or staff. We believe it is an unrealistic expectation for children of pre-school age to do so, we will however discourage all activities that would normally involve the holding of hands and intended physical contact. Staff will minimise physical contact with the children where possible, however where a child needs physical help or emotional support, staff will engage to meet the child's needs physically and emotionally.
2. Children who may be unwilling to enter school voluntarily or who staff feel are too upset remaining in school under these circumstances, may need to return home, so please allow for a settling in period and be available if we need to contact you, we may ask parents to confirm emergency contact details.
3. Pre-school will be adhering to strict cleaning and disinfecting guidance as set out from the Dept of Education. We will have a scheduled cleaning policy which parents will be able to view on request. This will include a deep clean at the end of each day as well as ongoing cleaning throughout the day.
4. Children WILL NOT be allowed to bring toys into pre-school as this is deemed an infection risk. If a particular toy is also a comforter then 1 item is allowed but will be placed in a separate container and only offered to the child as a source of comfort when practitioners assess that the child is in need of the emotional support that item offers.
5. Upon guidance from the DfE we have had to place a temporary cap on the numbers to ensure safety is prioritised.
6. The Maximum number of children that can attend pre-school week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> June is 8 per session. SEE GROUP SIZE SECTION BELOW
7. The physical appearance of pre-school will have to change to enable the setting to maintain the heightened cleaning protocols being implemented. There will be less free access to equipment and many pieces of equipment will be moved out of the setting and rotated depending on the daily activities organised. Some resources may be unavailable to the children if it is felt that they cannot be cleaned effectively e.g. soft toys.
8. The garden WILL be in use and the children will be able to play with toys in the garden but again we will need to remove some equipment, to enable to task of cleaning after playing achievable.
9. Where possible, staff will take the children up to Castle Meadow, where they will have more space to run and play whilst giving more distance between each other. Activities that can be adapted to the outside will be as much as possible and it is our hope to really utilise this outdoor space during this time.
10. The number of children and names of children attending the setting will be reviewed weekly in the first instance.
11. We will be issuing a 'drop off' and 'collection' protocol to enable us to maintain social distancing in the areas that we feel it can be implemented.
12. The start and finish time of pre-school will remain the same 9.15am – 3.15pm.
13. For children who attend dual settings, we will need to gain further guidance on how best to facilitate their return to pre-school. [Update] To minimise contact between groups of children and staff, children should attend just one setting wherever possible and parents and carers are encouraged to minimise as far as possible the number of education and childcare settings their child attends.
14. CLOTHING – Please ensure that when children do return to school they have.....if sunny - sun cream applied BEFORE morning drop off ( Please also provide sun cream labelled with their name for reapplication during the day if necessary) also a lightweight, long sleeved top & sun hat. If wet – wellies & raincoat with hood. In addition, a change of clothes in case they get wet whilst playing.
15. FOOTWEAR – if possible Velcro or slip-on shoes that the child can manage themselves.

16. For children who WILL NOT be returning to pre-school for the summer term, please be assured that they still have a secure place for their return in September if applicable.
17. For children not returning to pre-school for the summer term, we will endeavour to continue to support you at home.

**The Dept of Education is updating their guidance almost daily and therefore our advice/information to you may also change accordingly. Please bear with us and apologies in advance for any conflicting information.**

### **Shielded and clinically vulnerable children and young people**

For the vast majority of children and young people, coronavirus 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. We do not expect these children to be attending school, and they will continue to be supported at home as much as possible. Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. A small minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.

### **Living with a shielded or clinically vulnerable person**

If a child or a member of staff lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, they can attend their education or childcare setting.

If a child or staff member lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable guidance, we do not expect those individuals to attend, because stringent social distances measure cannot be achieved in our setting and with the age of children who attend the setting. They will be supported to learn or work at home.

### **Please see below for further information from the Department of Education:**

Guidance from the Department of Education – Coronavirus (COVID – 19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings states:

We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early years, we are taking this into account. Stringent measures must be taken:

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of settings
- minimising 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.

For pre-school children in early years settings, the staff to child ratios within Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) continue to apply, and we recommend using these to group children. For 3 & 4-year-old children, this ratio is 1 adult : 8 children.

Where the physical layout of a setting does not allow small groups of children to be kept at a safe distance apart, we expect practitioners to exercise judgement in ensuring the highest standards of

safety are maintained. In some cases, it may be necessary for providers to introduce a temporary cap on numbers to ensure that safety is prioritised.

Settings have the flexibility to focus first on continuing to provide places for priority groups (vulnerable children & children of critical workers) and then, to support children's early learning, settings should prioritise groups of children as follows:

- early years settings - 3 and 4 year olds followed by younger age groups.

### **Group Size & Priority**

As a setting it is never our intention to prioritise or single out families as to who can and who cannot access childcare; however in these circumstances we have to follow the Dept of Education (DfE) advice and form a small group to attend pre-school from June 1<sup>st</sup>.

The layout of the pre-school inhibits us from dividing it into 2 rooms and we do not have access to any additional rooms, so we must consider and treat it as only the one room, to accommodate 1 small group.

The DfE recommends using the EYFS staff to child ratio to group children per room. It is under this recommendation that we will form a small group of a maximum of 8 children to initially re-enter pre-school.

The DfE has stated that 3 and 4 year olds should be prioritised over 2 year olds and we need to follow this guidance.

The nature of pre-school sessions for children mean that different children attend on different days, we will collate information from parents and will endeavour to minimise the mixing of children.

The safety of children and staff in the setting must be our priority and we hope that parents/carers will understand the reasoning behind the decision.

As time elapses and following guidance from central government and the DfE, we hope to increase group size and invite more children to re-enter the setting.

From 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, Bramfield Stepping Stones Pre- School will re-open with a maximum group size of 8, to children in the following priority:

1. Vulnerable children and children of key/critical workers
2. 4 year olds with parents/carers returning to work
3. 3 year olds with parents/carers returning to work
4. 2 year olds with parents/carers returning to work
5. 3 & 4 year olds starting school September 2020
6. 3 year olds
7. 2 year olds

We will be continually reviewing this situation and be led by information provided by central government and the Dept of Education as to when it will be safe to increase group size to invite more children back into pre-school.

### **Other information**

If anyone in the household develops a fever, a new continuous cough or a loss of smell/taste they are advised to follow the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance (which states that the ill person should remain in isolation for 7 days and the rest of the household in isolation for 14 days). The child or anyone from the household must not attend pre-school.

### **Will children be eligible for testing?**

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- When settings open to the wider cohort of children, all those children eligible to attend, and members of their households, will have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus. This will enable them to get back into childcare, and their parents or carers to get back to work, if the test proves to be negative. To access testing, parents will be able to use the 111 online coronavirus service if their child is 5 or over. Parents will be able to call 111 if their child is aged under 5.

#### **What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in my child's childcare setting?**

- When a child or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus.
- Where the child or staff member tests positive, the rest of their group within their childcare setting will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider group 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 child's cohort or in the wider childcare setting, Public Health England's local Health Protection Teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases, a larger number of other children and young people may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure.

This policy was reviewed by	Bramfield Stepping Stones Pre School
On (dd/mm/yyyy)	28/05/2020
Date to be reviewed by	28/05/2021
Signed on behalf of the provider	
Name of signatory	Rebecca Hitcham
Role of signatory (e.g Chair, Director, owner)	Treasurer
Signed by setting Supervisor	
Signed by Deputy Supervisor	