



## **Childcare Services**

### **Revised Operational Guidance for Covid-19**

#### **Introduction**

As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 the government guidance for Covid-19 changed significantly. The focus is now on living safely with Covid-19 and other respiratory infections. The last two years has been difficult for everyone, and I recognise and understand the challenges the children, parents and staff have experienced. I also thank you all for your continued patience and support over this time. It is due to your patience and support that has helped us stay open and operational throughout the pandemic and with as little disruption as possible.

As of Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 the following guidance will take effect for Childcare Services staff and the parents attending both the Day Nursery and Playcentre.

#### **Reducing the spread of Covid-19 and other respiratory infections**

There are a number of things we can all do to help reduce the spread of Covid-19 and other respiratory infections, which will also help protect those at higher risk. Vaccinations, good ventilation, practicing good hygiene and where appropriate wearing a face covering. In Childcare Services we will be carrying out the following:

##### **Vaccinations**

We will continue to encourage and support the vaccination programme and make it possible for staff to attend appointments for vaccinations.

##### **Ventilation**

We will continue to use CO2 monitors in the rooms and act when levels indicate we should. We will continue to have open windows, meet in open spaces where possible and spend time outdoors with the children. While children are outdoors, rooms will continue to be ventilated in preparation for their return indoors. As we enter the warmer months more outings on campus and time spent outdoors will naturally occur.

##### **Good hygiene**

We will continue encouraging good hygiene practices with the children such as washing hands on arrival to nursery, before and after eating, and after playing outdoors. Staff will continue to wash and sanitise hands throughout the day and we ask that parents continue to sanitise on entry and exit of the nurseries. Those with coughs and sneezes will be encouraged to catch them in tissues and carry out hand hygiene practices. In addition to this we will continue with our enhanced cleaning

which includes regular cleaning of surfaces, frequent contact points and the use of the Zoono machine in all areas.

### Face coverings

We will consider asking visitors and parents to wear face coverings if we are managing local outbreaks in the settings. However, these are no longer required for parents and visitors. It will be optional if parents and visitors choose to wear a face covering on the premises. However, those working directly with the children will not wear a face covering.

### Social distancing

Whilst social distancing is no longer a requirement we ask that parents, visitors and staff continue to respect the personal space of others. Drop off and collection will continue to be at drop off areas in the units. Staff will continue to restrict overcrowding in spaces such as staff rooms and movement of staff across groups will continue to be limited until further notice. This will allow the lifting of other restrictions to be monitored first and where no significant impact is experienced on staffing levels, we can then consider the right time to lift these final restrictions.

### Testing

Whilst the University still offers its testing system, we will continue to be part of this and encourage staff to do at least one per week.

## Managing symptoms of respiratory infections

The symptoms of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections are very similar. It is not possible to tell if you have COVID-19, flu or another respiratory infection based on symptoms alone. Most people with COVID-19 and other respiratory infections will have a relatively mild illness, especially if they have been vaccinated. If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and you have a high temperature or you do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, you are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

Symptoms of COVID-19, flu and common respiratory infections include:

- continuous cough
- high temperature, fever or chills
- loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell
- shortness of breath
- unexplained tiredness, lack of energy
- muscle aches or pains that are not due to exercise
- not wanting to eat or not feeling hungry
- headache that is unusual or longer lasting than usual
- sore throat, stuffy or runny nose
- diarrhoea, feeling sick or being sick

In some cases, you might continue to have a cough or feel tired after your other symptoms have improved, but this does not mean that you are still infectious.

Further guidance on people with symptoms of respiratory infections can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>

We recognise that respiratory infections are common in children and young people, particularly during the winter months. Symptoms can be caused by several respiratory infections including the common cold, COVID-19 and RSV. For most children and young people, these illnesses will not be serious, and they will soon recover following rest and plenty of fluids.

Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend the setting. Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature will be asked to stay at home. Childcare Services Childhood Illness policy will be followed.

### Positive Covid-19 test result

If you have a positive COVID-19 test result, it is very likely that you have COVID-19 even if you do not have any symptoms. You can pass on the infection to others, even if you have no symptoms. Many people with COVID-19 will no longer be infectious to others after 5 days. If you have a positive COVID-19 test result, we ask that you staff stay at home for 5 days after the day you took your test. After this period, if you do not have a high temperature and feel well enough, you can resume normal activities.

We will no longer be requesting PCR tests and LFD tests where symptoms are present for children. However, if a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result we will ask them to stay at home for 3 days after the day they took the test. After 3 days, if they feel well and do not have a high temperature, the risk of passing the infection on to others is much lower and they can therefore return to nursery. This is because children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults.

### Developing Symptoms at nursery

Where children develop symptoms on site including a high temperature and are unwell, we will make them comfortable in a quiet area. The Childcare Services Childhood Illness policy will be followed, and parents will be contacted to come and collect. Where staff are unable to social distance from a child displaying specific Covid-19 symptoms, a face covering and PPE will continue to be used. Those considered at a higher risk of respiratory infections will not support children displaying symptoms during this time. Staff will continue with the good practice of changing of clothes after supporting a child displaying specific Covid-19 symptoms.

### Responding to an outbreak

Education, care, and continuity of service is paramount. Therefore, when responding to an outbreak we will assess the risk and take advice from the UK Health Security Agency to inform any actions we take. Consideration will be given to restricting moving across groups of both staff and children, limiting access to the premises,

introducing face coverings for parents and visitors, consideration of those considered at higher risk and any other actions recommended by the UKHSA.

## **Final note**

Our guidance has significantly reduced in response to the government guidance. We ask that parents continue to support us and are vigilant in responding to symptoms. Whilst the expectation is that most affected by respiratory infections will have mild cases, we do still have to consider those at higher risk and the rate of transmission across the team. At times of high infection rates, we will carry out contingency planning for staffing and communicate this to you in a timely manner. This is the closest we have been to 'normal' operations and something that finally feels good to be doing.

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Childcare Services Manager

## **References**

[Health protection in education and childcare settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-protection-in-education-and-childcare-settings)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-safely-with-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus/ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus-covid>

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