



Cleaning Regime

Cleaning of the environment, including toys and equipment, should be frequent, thorough and follow a recognised procedure within the setting. There are important steps that children and young people, their parents and those who work with them can take during the coronavirus outbreak, to help prevent the spread of the virus.

In childcare settings, preventing the spread of coronavirus involves dealing with direct transmission. For instance, when in close contact with those sneezing and coughing and indirect transmission via touching contaminated surfaces. A range of approaches and actions should be employed to do this. Thorough and regular cleaning of the premises is key. It must be done properly and systematically to be effective.

Colour coding

Practitioners and cleaning staff in the setting should adopt a colour-coded system for cleaning materials and equipment. This makes sure that these items are not used in multiple areas such as toilets and general areas.

This is proven to reduce the risk of infection spreading from one area to another. All cleaning materials such as cloths (re-usable, which are cleaned in between uses, or disposable), mops, buckets, aprons and gloves (re-usable, if cleaned in between uses, or disposable) should be colour coded.

An example system could be:

BLUE Items are for use in general areas throughout the building.

GREEN Items are for use in food preparation and serving areas.

RED Items are for use in toilet areas, washrooms, showers and on floors in these areas. Nappy change areas can also be included in this category although it is recognised that some settings may wish to have a separate colour for nappy change areas.

The golden rule is to work from the visibly cleanest area toward the dirtiest area with a single cloth and then dispose of it. This greatly reduces the risk of cross contamination. The aim of a colour-coding system is to prevent cross-contamination.

Where reference is made to personal protective equipment, such as aprons and gloves, early years settings should use their local supply chains to obtain these products.

Cleaning equipment

Item	Method
Buckets	Wash after each use with detergent solution. Dry and store upside down, not stacked inside each other.
Cloths	Either use disposable ones and throw away after use, or use washable ones which are used once and then laundered on a very hot wash to heat disinfect.
Dusters	Should be reserved for dusting surfaces that are not heavily soiled within general and office areas. They should be washed after each use.
Mops	Wash after use in hot, soapy water, wring out and store mops upside down to dry. Mops should be disposed of when they appear visibly soiled. Washing or disinfection of mops should also occur on a regular basis.
Rubber household gloves	Rubber gloves, which should only be used for general cleaning and for handling waste, should be washed with general purpose detergent and dried thoroughly after each use. If gloves get holes or heavily contaminated, they must be thrown away. An alternative is to use disposable gloves, which should be disposed of after a single use and never re-used.
Toilet brushes	Rinse in clean flushing water and store dry, away from children.
Vacuum cleaners	Change the air filter regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. Wipe detachable tools with a detergent solution.

Key things to remember

- Watch out for the wrong cloth appearing in the wrong area!
- It is essential that such a system forms part of any employee induction or continuous training programme. Consider problems for those who may be colour blind.
- The colour-coding system must relate to all cleaning equipment, including cloths and gloves, unless disposable gloves are used.
- Monitor any system to make sure staff are using the colour appropriately.
- Make sure items of different colours do not touch each other at any time.

Procedures should also be in place to make sure that cleaning equipment is cleaned in between use and stored so that clean items do not become contaminated. For example, mop heads used in one area should not touch those used in another.

Further points to consider when cleaning the general environment include:

- Items such as paper towels and toilet rolls should be stored off the floor and protected from contamination.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) data sheets should be available for each cleaning product used and these items should be stored in a locked area to stop unauthorised people or children getting to them.
- When cleaning, staff should use personal protective equipment as required, such as aprons and gloves. Hands should be washed on removal of gloves.

Cleaning up straight away is important following a spillage of blood and/or body fluids, including faeces, saliva, vomit, nose and eye discharges. When spillages occur, use disposable paper towels and throw away any waste as per your early years setting policy.

The table below provides some prompts that should form part of the procedure to clean an area following a spillage. The recommended method can only be used on surfaces that can withstand bleach. In all other instances and for cleaning up following a spillage of urine, the alternative method must be used. To minimise the risk of cross contamination, mops should not routinely be used to clean up spillages.

Gloves and plastic aprons must be worn.	
Recommended	Alternative
Cover spill with a hypochlorite (bleach) dilution, as per product guidance.	Remove as much of the spillage as possible with paper towels.
Leave for a few minutes and then mop up with paper towels.	Clean the area with a detergent dilution, as per product guidance.
Clean area with a detergent dilution, as per product guidance.	Leave as dry as possible.
Dispose of in an appropriate waste bag.	

General cleaning

A clean environment is essential to prevent the spread of infection..

It is important to make sure any damaged surfaces are replaced, since germs can build up and survive in rough areas and scratches. To kill germs, a disinfectant needs:

- a clean surface to be able to get to the germ
- to be able to act against those particular germs
- to be of the right concentration
- enough time to kill the germs

Item	Method
Basins and taps (excluding kitchens)	Clean at least daily with detergent or cream cleanser and hot water solution.
Hard Floors	Vacuum or sweep all hard floors daily. The kitchen and toilet areas should be mopped daily. The main room should be mopped at least twice weekly, but more frequently if required due to visible soiling. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic mopping will be increased to daily. Mops should only be used for floors. Colour coding - dependent upon area - should be followed at all times.
Carpets	Vacuum or sweep daily. There should be a schedule for cleaning carpets, dependent upon level of use. Under normal circumstances this will be carried out twice yearly or as obviously needed after heavy soiling. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic this will be carried out at least termly. Carpets should be dry after cleaning, before children return to the area.
Drains	Clean often with a detergent solution. Never clean drains with disinfectant.
Low shelves, doorknobs and other surfaces touched often	Clean with clean water and detergent solution. Colour coding of equipment and materials used- dependent upon area - should be followed at all times.
Furniture	Surfaces should be damp-dusted with colour-coded cloths.
Nappy changing mats and surfaces within this area	Mats should be wiped with hot soapy water and dried or wiped with a moist detergent surface wipe after every change, and at the beginning and end of each day.
Tabletops and trays	Must be cleaned with hot water and a general-purpose detergent solution (or multi-surface detergent wipe) and dried thoroughly before and after serving food, including snacks.
Toilet bowls, toilet seats and flush handles	Clean at least daily using hot water and detergent/cream cleaner. In addition, toilet areas should be regularly checked so that any accidental soiling can be dealt with quickly. Start cleaning toilets with the flush handle, cistern, seat and then bowl and dispose of cloth/wipe afterwards.

	If an outbreak of diarrhoea and/or vomiting occurs, bleach cleaning should be put in place following the normal cleaning procedures.
Waste bins	Clean with detergent solution, paying particular attention to the lid, which may have contact with hands. Interior should be checked in case waste has leaked out of bags.
Walls and ceilings	When visibly soiled, use hot water and detergent.

Laundry

Staff will take home laundry to be washed.

Some guidelines to follow include:

- Make sure dirty laundry is transported and stored safely so that children cannot get to it.
- Provide suitable drying facilities and a separate area for storing clean linen.
- Provide appropriate protective clothing for staff (gloves and plastic apron when handling fouled/infected linen or clothing).
- Items should be washed using domestic washing powder on a hot wash cycle, preferably at a temperature of 71°C or above. (The normal wash temperature of 40-60°C may not be enough to heat disinfect the items.) Other washing, e.g. play clothes, should be washed on the hottest possible wash that will not damage them.
- Launder any items used for cleaning e.g. cleaning cloths, separately from other items.
- Wear gloves and an apron when handling soiled items that are waiting to be washed.
- Staff must wash hands after handling dirty laundry regardless of whether it is visibly soiled or not.

Clothing

Aprons will help cover clothing/uniforms and reduce the potential for splashes, spills and contamination. Staff should have a change of clothing for 'accidents' or after dealing with potentially infectious situations. By using disposable aprons when doing tasks where there is a potential for soiling of clothes, the risk of spreading germs is greatly reduced.

Toys and play equipment

Toys often have porous surfaces and crevices in which organisms (germs) can thrive. Because some children have a tendency to put toys in their mouths, the risk of them acquiring an infection in this way is increased. Thorough cleaning on a regular basis with a detergent/disinfectant solution, followed by drying, will reduce the risk of cross infection.

Washing toys well is very important to reduce the spread of infection.

Warm water and detergent help to loosen germs so that they can be washed away. Any toys that need cleaning should be removed during the day. The use of any toys that travel home with the children should be avoided. Any toys that cannot be cleaned thoroughly, such as those with intricate parts or soft toys, should be removed from the setting at this time. This may seem problematic, but as the sharing of toys in early years settings is a matter of course, the problem of germs or infections spreading is increased, particularly as:

- both well and unwell children handle toys
- toddlers between the ages of two and four have been observed to put a hand or an object in the mouth once every three minutes
- personal hygiene is difficult to maintain

It is recommended that all early years settings have a list of equipment and toys detailing all items that are cleaned within the setting, how this is done, by whom and when. This ensures that staff are all aware of responsibilities in relation to routine cleaning and promotes standards within the setting to be in place which are measurable and should be of an appropriate level for the risk posed. All cleaning should be undertaken in accordance with manufacturers' guidance, if this is available, as frequently as possible, and also with the cleaning products that they detail as being appropriate.

Books

Inspect weekly and surface wipe where possible. Look for signs of body fluids, infestation, damp and mildew and discard if soiled. Leave damp or wet books out of circulation until dry.

It may be easiest to inspect following communal use.

Cool packs used following a bump

The usage of single-use cool packs which are disposed of after treatment will ensure that no cross contamination can occur

Dressing-up clothes

Launder on a regular basis at a frequency that is appropriate to the amount of use they receive, at the temperature recommended on the label. Dressing-up clothes should always be visibly clean.

Outdoor toys

Should be checked prior to each use to ensure they appear visibly clean. If soiled they should be cleaned with hot water and detergent and left to dry thoroughly prior to re-use. Equipment which is stored over winter months is thoroughly cleaned and left to dry prior to storage.

Always refer to the manufacturers' guidance for specific recommendations.

Spillages of blood and body fluids should be promptly removed, using the cleaning detailed under spillages unless manufacturers recommendations detail the use of a chlorine (bleach) disinfectant. Soft furnishings should be removed from the setting where possible.

Storage of toys

When multiple items are stored in a container, it should be rigid, washable and preferably lidded. Boxes should be washed using a hot water and detergent solution and dried or wiped out using a multi-surface detergent wipe on a monthly basis and in addition when visibly soiled. They should be kept dust free at all times. Ideally non-floor standing toys should be stored off the floor. This makes it easier to clean flooring and minimises the risk of inadvertently contaminating them with germs from the floor.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of
Held on
Signed on behalf of Tansor Playgroup Committee
Role of signatory

Tansor Playgroup Committee

18th September 2020

Karena Corkill

Co-Chair of Playgroup Committee
