



Coronavirus (COVID-19) Safe Operating Procedures

Last updated 18 September 2020

1. Introduction

It is important that everyone complies with the latest government guidance on coronavirus (COVID-19).

We have developed these Safe Operating Procedures based on guidance from the Department of Education and Public Health England specifically for Early Years. It is important that we adapt our everyday practices to ensure that we continue to offer the staff and children a safe environment. Hygiene and social distancing remain the two key elements of infection prevention and control. If any symptoms are displayed, families must be alert and self-isolate for the safety of everyone.

Children can get coronavirus (COVID-19), but they seem to get it less often than adults and it's usually less serious.

Compassionate leadership is at the heart of this reopening and we will do everything we can to be honest, open and to communicate with you. There will be a lot of anxieties and we acknowledge that it is OK to feel worried and that coronavirus (COVID-19) and the lockdown has had an impact on everyone.

Everyone involved in the day to day running of Tansor Playgroup will receive appropriate instruction and training on how to operate under the terms of the Safe Operating Procedures.

There is always a risk when children come into a childcare setting, but we are doing everything possible to minimise this risk. We are constantly updating our procedures to take account of any changes in government or local authority guidelines.

We aim to work in partnership with parents and trust that everyone understands and follows these Safe Operating Procedures.

The key principles of these procedures are:

- Any child, staff member, parent or visitor with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who has someone in their household who has symptoms **MUST NOT ATTEND** Tansor Playgroup and must self-isolate at home. Symptomatic persons should arrange for a test. Please refer to the current

government guidance (a link is given at the end of this document) for more details about self-isolation and how to arrange a test.

- Clean hands thoroughly more often.
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- We have introduced enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces throughout the day, and also at the end of the day.
- Minimise contact between groups where possible. The requirement to operate within small bubbles was removed on 20th July. But we will be keeping the number of children attending each session lower than our maximum capacity whilst we navigate reopening for the autumn term. The temporary cap on numbers will be kept under review as term progresses. We have also requested that children attending Tansor Playgroup do not attend other childcare settings where possible. Our staff do not work at other childcare settings.
- Drop-off and collection will be from the main gate to the playground and not from the front door. Parents/ Carers will be reminded of the need to practise social distancing on arrival and departure.
- Parents will not come on site unless this is explicitly arranged with the Playgroup Supervisor e.g. in the event of a child being distressed.
- The process for settling in sessions will be managed away from the other children

2. Attendance

Children and staff are welcome to attend Tansor Playgroup but must not be experiencing any symptoms of coronavirus, however mild. The most common symptoms include: a high temperature; a new and persistent cough; or a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia). Additionally, if someone in the same household is experiencing coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) you must not attend playgroup. Please self-isolate, arrange to be tested and please contact us as soon as you can to let us know, so that we can take all necessary actions.

It is important that you seek medical advice if you are unsure.

It is important that children do not attend if unwell for their own wellbeing and for the safety of others.

If anyone is experiencing symptoms, however mild, they will not be able to return to the playgroup until they have completed the required isolation period and be symptom-free or have achieved a negative test result. Prompt exclusion is essential to preventing the spread of infection. Children and staff who are classed as clinically vulnerable should follow medical advice before attending playgroup.

To reduce mixing with different groups of children, please limit the number of different childcare settings that your child attends at this time. Ideally, please ensure that your child only attends the same setting

consistently. We appreciate that this is not an ideal situation for families to be in and we hope that this temporary measure will be lifted soon.

Drop off and collection of children

Parents are asked to drop off and collect their children from the main gate and not to enter the playground or playgroup building. We ask that only one parent comes to the gate to drop your child off at these times, and that siblings stay in the car. After dropping off / collecting your child, please move away from the gate promptly to allow other parents to drop off / collect their children.

Whilst parents are waiting, it is important to maintain social distancing by keeping a distance of 2 metres apart. We will have social distancing markers on the ground to help parents and children ensure they are spaced apart when waiting.

Please do not approach the gate if it looks very busy outside, instead please wait until people have moved away. We will try to be as quick as possible.

On arrival, children will be given a squirt of hand gel to sanitise their hands. We request that you take your child to the toilet before leaving home to come to playgroup and ensure that your child has washed their hands thoroughly. This is to help reduce the need for immediate requests for the toilet at drop off when our team will be welcoming children to the playgroup.

If you need to collect your child early on a particular session please call us in advance and we will deliver your child to the gate when you arrive. The same would apply to late arrivals - please telephone at the gate, and we will come to you to collect your child.

Temperature and symptom monitoring

Public Health England (PHE) is clear that routinely taking the temperature of children is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19). Parents and staff should follow the government guidelines and, in particular act on evidence of a high temperature; a new and persistent cough; or a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell.

Travel to playgroup

We advise parents not to share lifts 'to and from' playgroup unless absolutely necessary.

Travel to foreign countries

Parents/carers and staff must inform Tansor Playgroup of any travel plans in or out of the country when there is at least one overnight stay. It is vital that you observe government advice in respect of self-isolation rules when returning from abroad.

3. Implementing social distancing

It is very difficult to avoid a level of physical interaction with young children and it is important to have their wellbeing at the centre of everything we do. If a child is in need of a hug, then it would not be fair to deny this. We are keeping the number of children at each session lower than our usual capacity to help with social distancing, and we will make as much use of our outside space as we can. Seating arrangements for e.g. snacks or lunchtime will be socially distanced.

Children in early years are not expected to practise social distancing, however we will talk to the children about keeping their hands to themselves, along with using tissues for noses. We will show them how to use their arm to cover coughs and sneezes if a tissue cannot be found quickly enough. We would ask that you also practice this at home.

Regular hand washing is still the most critical, and we fully expect you to promote this at home with your little ones. At playgroup we will wash hands at key times throughout the session.

Drinks, Snack and Lunchtimes

Children who are staying for lunch on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, or joining the afternoon sessions at 12 noon will need to bring along a packed lunch from home. Children will wash hands before, and after lunch.

The children will need to bring in their own, named, drinking bottle filled with water at the start of each session, and take it home to be washed. Drinks will be offered at regular intervals during a session.

Children will be taken to wash or sanitise their hands before and after drinking. Water bottles will be kept spaced apart from other bottles and will be used at lunch time and re-filled if necessary. These bottles must be clearly recognisable by the child and must be the same one each day to avoid confusion.

Normally we ask parents to provide a piece of fruit for snack to be shared among the group. For the time being we will provide the fruit at snack time.

Staff will serve the children at snack time and no food will be eaten out of shared plates or containers.

If your child has a birthday, and you would like to provide a shop bought cake please let us know. Lots of families do this, and it makes the child feel special - we don't want this to end because of Covid, but we feel shop bought cakes are safer! We will sing Happy Birthday without blowing out candles!

Staff

All employees will undergo a return-to-work induction and training on the new Safe Operating Procedures, with emphasis on good hygiene practices and maintaining social distancing between each other as far as possible.

Fire drills and emergency lockdown practice

If we have to respond to a fire or emergency lockdown, we will continue to manage social distancing, as far as possible. The safety of the children and our staff will always come first.

4. Wellbeing

We know that this is a very unusual and worrying time for everyone. It is especially important that at the forefront of this heightened awareness of safe operating procedures, we do not forget that care and consideration must be taken of the need to ensure that everyone within the playgroup community feels safe and secure. We will try our best to create a normal playgroup environment and hope that you will bear with us.

We will be concentrating on nurturing secure attachments and, whilst we will be constantly observing and assessing the children, we will not be posting as many online observations or carrying out lengthy handovers. We want our team to spend time with the children, playing and building their relationships.

We would always speak with parents immediately if we had any concerns. If your child is expressing any concerns or worries, it is important that you inform either their Key Person or the Playgroup Supervisor. If you would like more lengthy chat please contact us to arrange.

5. Visitors

Settling in sessions

Parents may only enter the playgroup grounds for the purpose of settling-in sessions, or when a child is particularly struggling at drop off. This must be agreed by the Playgroup Supervisor and would require separation from the rest of the group. For example; the parent and child would be asked to spend time in the garden area. The parent would be asked to social distance, and resist the urge to touch play equipment. This will only occur when all else fails!. The Playgroup Supervisor will give further guidance on the day. It is important that social distancing continues to be maintained. Parents will not be able to spend time in the playgroup building in order to minimise any risk of infection.

Visitors

Visitors to the playgroup will not be encouraged unless it involves a safeguarding issue that cannot be resolved by telephone. Meetings will be conducted via videoconference.

Playgroup visits

Prospective parents should make use of the playgroup website for information relating to the ethos and organisation of Tansor Playgroup. The Playgroup Supervisor will be able to give you all the information you require and welcomes chats by telephone regarding new starters.

Contractors

Any contractors working at the playgroup will be reminded of Public Health England guidance prior to entering the building.

6. Health, Hygiene and Safety

Reducing the spread of the virus

It is recognised that good hygiene and cleaning practices significantly reduce the spread and transmission of the virus as well as everyone being alert to the symptoms. Doors and windows will be opened as much as possible to ensure a free-flow of air around the Playgroup.

Cleaning

An enhanced cleaning schedule will be implemented throughout and at the end of the day. Communal areas, door handles and shared facilities will be regularly cleaned. The Playgroup Supervisor will be responsible for implementing these cleaning schedules.

The rate of hand washing will be significantly increased. Everyone, including children, must thoroughly wash or sanitise their hands on arrival at playgroup. There will be regular opportunities for thorough hand washing throughout the day, including before and after playing outdoors, and before and after eating.

Use of tissues

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach to good respiratory hygiene continues to be very important. Children will be supported in age-appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves and others safe and this includes coughing or sneezing into a tissue (or their arm if immediate) and then to dispose of the tissue in the bin.

Toileting

Children will be taken to the toilets and supervised. Hand washing signs will be displayed to ensure hand washing is thorough and the practitioners will talk to the children about why we are washing our hands and encourage children to learn and practise these habits through games, songs and repetition.

Clothing

All staff and children should wear clean clothing to playgroup every day.

Risk assessments

All risk assessments will reflect the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Certain activities will be adapted or removed to reflect this risk e.g. our fortnightly Fabulous French sessions are on hold for the time being.

Items from home

We are asking that children DO NOT bring in a bag unless the child is still in nappies. We will have plenty of spare clothes should they need anything. Every child should bring a named coat as we will be outside A LOT and a pair of named wellies. The wellies can STAY at playgroup. Sensible clothes for the weather are an absolute must. We will be outside a lot, and warm clothes will be required along with a coat suitable for slight rain.

We will also have to insist that any comforters are kept at home such as teddies, blankets and special toys. We understand that young children will still need support, and we will work hard (as always) to develop a relationship with all of our children. Please do take the time to read our Key Person Policy which is available on our website.

Playgroup toys and resources

Toys and resources that are difficult to clean will be removed, including cushions and soft toys. We will aim to sanitise items at the end of each day, and some items will be regularly rotated to ensure a minimum of 72hrs has elapsed before items are used again.

7. Responding to a person displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)

A child

If a child is suspected of displaying coronavirus symptoms whilst attending the Playgroup, they should be collected as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with government guidance. The child must be tested before they return.

Whilst waiting to be collected, they will be isolated from others in a designated area. An employee will stay with them and will wear PPE.

If the child becomes very unwell, we will follow our normal emergency procedures and call 999.

The isolation area will be cleaned once the child has been collected.

Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after any contact with someone who is unwell.

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any children who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate. However, they must self-isolate and arrange for a test if they develop symptoms themselves, if the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive, or they have been requested to do so by Test and Trace.

A member of staff who displays symptoms

In the event of a member of staff developing coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms whilst at work, they will leave work as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with government guidance. They will be required to have a test before they return.

PPE Equipment

Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in early years settings to protect against coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission. Hand washing, effective cleaning and social distancing are the most effective measures. Gloves, aprons, and 3ply masks will also be used for nappy changes and close contact first aid. On the occasion that staff suspect a potential case of coronavirus (COVID-19), we also have face visors for staff to use in addition to the PPE mentioned above.

Reporting, testing and tracing

Everyone is now eligible for a coronavirus (COVID-19) test, should they display symptoms.

Any suspected or confirmed case must be reported to the Playgroup Supervisor as soon as possible.

Settings must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). The Playgroup will contact the dedicated advice service introduced by Public Health England (PHE) and delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority. This can be reached by calling the DfE Helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case.

The advice service will work with the Playgroup to carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate. If, following triage, further expert advice is required the adviser will escalate your call to the PHE local health protection team.

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will work with the Playgroup to guide us through the actions we need to take. Based on their advice, the Playgroup will send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious.

Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin to skin)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1-2m for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will provide definitive advice on who must be sent home.

The PHE local health protection team will also contact the Playgroup directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the setting - as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

Ofsted will also be notified of any positive tests by the Playgroup Supervisor

If there is reasonable evidence that a positive diagnosis was caused by exposure at work, this will be reported to RIDOR.

The Test and Trace system is a way of helping to protect everyone. If you are contacted by a Test and Trace team (including either the NHS Test and Trace team or the PHE local health protection team) please do follow the instructions that you are given.

Further guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care>