



# Little Blossoms

## COVID POLICY

### **Covid 19 POLICY**

#### **1 Introduction**

It is important that everyone complies with the latest Government guidance on Coronavirus.

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 have developed these Safe Operating Procedures based on guidance from the Department of Education and Public Health Agency, specifically for Early Years NI. 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.

Covid-19 appears to affect young children less often and with less severity. Children's role in its transmission is unclear but it seems that it is not significant.

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 COVID-19 and the lockdown has had an impact on everyone.

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

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:

1. Any child, staff member, parent or visitor with coronavirus symptoms must not attend Little Blossoms and must isolate at home.
2. Increased cleaning processes are in place, throughout and at the end of the day.
3. Children and team members will be social distancing as far as possible.
4. Children will each day stay in key family groups (a bubble) with a buddy group working alongside to ensure continuity of staffing and children



# Little Blossoms

## COVID POLICY

5. Key family groups will be in place inside and outside.
6. Arrival and departure will be staggered, where this is possible.
7. Parents will not come on site or visit the nursery rooms unless this is explicitly arranged with the Nursery Manager e.g. in the event of a child being distressed
8. The process for settling in sessions will be managed away from the other children

## 2 Attendance

Children and employees are welcome to attend nursery but must not be displaying any coronavirus symptoms, the most common being a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of taste and smell.

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

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

If anyone is experiencing any symptoms they cannot return to nursery until they have completed the required isolation period and be symptom free or have achieved a negative test result (proof will be required). Prompt exclusion is essential to preventing the spread of infection. Children and employees who are classed as clinically vulnerable should follow their medical advice before attending nursery.

It is preferable that your child only attends one setting to avoid mixing with different groups of children. Please speak with the Nursery Manager if this is going to be a problem or to make them aware that this is the case.

### 2.1 Drop off and collection of children

Parents are asked to drop off and collect their children at designated entrances and not to enter the nursery. Whilst parents are waiting, it is important to maintain social distancing by keeping a distance of 1 metre apart. It is preferable if only one parent does the drop off and collection.

Parents will be allocated a suggested time for arrival and drop off to ease pressure in the car park or waiting outside. Please approach the nursery slowly when driving as there will be parents and children waiting to enter.

Children will be assigned to a key family group based on the room they are in and a team member from that group will be responsible for collecting and delivering that child back to the parents. We will give you a limited handover, unless there is an important issue to discuss, as other parents may be waiting.



# Little Blossoms

## COVID POLICY

### **2.2 Temperature and symptom monitoring**

Routine temperature testing is not recommended as a reliable method for identifying coronavirus. Parents and employees should follow the NHS guidelines and, in particular, evidence of a high temperature and/or new continuous cough.

### **2.3 Travel to nursery**

It is better not to share transport and to travel by car, bike or walk. Face coverings have been advised by the Government for use on public transport.

### **2.4 Travel to foreign countries**

Parents/carers and employees must inform Little Blossoms 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. If the government has advised 14 days self-isolation, you will be required to pay fees for the time your child is absent. (Unless your child is in hospital)

## **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. To help with social distancing the children will be grouped in small groups (a bubble) with a practitioner and this group will work alongside a buddy group to ensure that an adult is always available. Social distancing will also apply to coat pegs, shoe changing and seating arrangements.

### **3.1 Playrooms and groups**

We aim to keep children in their groups which will be identified by their Pod number room name but will be further defined by colour names for outdoor play in order to continue with the small group approach. We would only merge groups if there was no other choice.

We are fortunate that we already have a system in place of key family groups and so this arrangement will not be unusual for the children and will not interrupt their play.



# Little Blossoms

## COVID POLICY

The practitioners will organise designated areas, indoors and outdoors, for the children in their groups. Children will have access to the full range of activities that are considered safe at this time.

### 3.2 Mealtimes

- As always, children will eat in their rooms.
- The practitioners will serve the children.
- No food will be eaten out of shared platters or containers.
- The children will need to bring in their own, named, drinking cup only if they cannot drink from an open disposable cup, and this must be taken home daily to be washed.
- Drinks will be offered at 30minute intervals instead of cups being at the children's level to avoid accidental sharing of cups.

### 3.3 Employees

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. This policy needs to be implemented in all areas of your job description.

### 3.4 Fire drills and 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 employees will always come first.

## 4 Wellbeing

We know that this is a very unusual and worrying time for everyone. It is very 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 Little Blossoms community feels safe and secure. We will try our best to create a normal setting environment and hope that you will bear with us.

We will be concentrating on fostering those secure attachments and, whilst we will be constantly observing and assessing the children, we want our team to spend time with the children, playing and building their relationships.



# Little Blossoms

## COVID POLICY

We would always speak with you immediately if we had any concerns. If your child is expressing any concerns or worries, it is important that you inform the key Setting Manager.

### **5 Visitors**

#### **5.1 Settling in sessions/transitions**

Parents may enter the setting for the purpose of settling-in sessions, if not doing so would cause a child distress. The Manager will give further guidance on the day.

It is important that social distancing continues to be maintained. If a parent feels it is completely necessary to be in the room with their child in order for the child to settle, a single parent may enter if they wear a face mask or shield along with an apron, gloves and shoe covers to minimise any risk of infection. Those children who were in our Summer scheme will already be settled and therefore will not need a settling in period.

We will aim to organise groups of children who are due to transition so they can transition together. However, some children who were due to transition might need the reassurance of the family group they were part of in order to feel safe and secure and parents might prefer them to stay within a particular age group. The Setting Manager will assist with this.

#### **5.2 Visitors**

Visitors to the nursery will not be encouraged unless it involves a safeguarding issue that cannot be resolved by telephone. Interviews or meetings will be conducted via videoconference. There will be no parents' evenings for the time being, nor any other mass events such as pre-school graduations.

#### **5.3 Nursery show-rounds**



# Little Blossoms

## COVID POLICY

Prospective parents should make use of our facebook page for information relating to the ethos and organisation of the nursery. There are videos showing the setting and also the activities that take place. The Setting Manager will be able to give you all the information you require.

### **5.4 Contractors**

Any contractors to the nursery will be reminded of Public Health Agency guidance prior to entering the building.

## **6 Health, Hygiene and Safety**

### **6.1 Reducing the spread of the virus**

It is recognised that good hygiene and cleaning practices will 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.

### **6.2 Cleaning**

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

The rate of hand washing must be significantly increased. Everyone, including children, must wash their hands on arrival at nursery. If no washbasins are available, sanitiser will be available. There will be regular opportunities for hand washing throughout the day.

### **6.3 Use of tissues**

The children will be supported in age-appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves and others safe and this includes sneezing into a tissue (or their arm if immediate) and then to dispose of the tissue.

### **6.4 Toileting**

The 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.



# Little Blossoms

## COVID POLICY

### **6.5 Clothing**

All employees and children should wear clean clothing every day. If you have travelled on public transport, it is advised that you change your clothing on arrival at nursery. Children should bring a pair of indoor shoes or pumps, to be changed into, please have these named for ease.

### **6.6 Risk assessments**

All risk assessments will reflect the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Certain activities will be adapted or removed to reflect this risk e.g. going on trips using coaches.

### **6.7 Items from home**

If your child requires a comforter e.g. soft toy or blanket, please bring it in a bag and then take home at the end of the day and wash it. We would prefer no toys or comforters to be brought into nursery but do understand that this could cause distress. Again please label the child's name where possible.

### **6.8 Resources at Nursery**

Toys and resources that are difficult to clean will be removed, including cushions and soft toys. The children will only share toys and activities within their groups. All items will be sanitised at the end of each day.

## **7 Responding to a person displaying symptoms of**

### **COVID-19**

#### **7.1 A child**

If a child is suspected of displaying coronavirus symptoms whilst attending the setting, they should be collected as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with NHS 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.



# Little Blossoms

## COVID POLICY

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.

### **7.2 An employee who displays symptoms**

In the event of an employee developing coronavirus symptoms whilst at work, they will leave work as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with NHS guidance. They will be required to have a test before they return.

### **7.3 PPE Equipment**

Government guidance is that PPE is not required for general use in nurseries to protect against COVID-19 transmission. Hand washing, effective cleaning and social distancing are the most effective measures. Gloves and aprons will be used for nappy changing and first aid. Aprons will be worn at snack times

### **7.4 Reporting, testing and tracing**

Everyone over the age of five, children, parents and members of their households, is now eligible for a COVID-19 test, should they display coronavirus symptoms.

Any suspected or confirmed case must be reported to the Setting Manager as soon as possible. If a positive result is confirmed, the practitioners and children associated with that group/bubble must self-isolate for 14 days before returning to nursery. Positive tests will be reported to Public Health Agency and Education & Training Inspectorate by the Setting Manager.

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

The Government's tracing app is a way of helping to protect everyone.

Please see our track and trace policy.

## **8 Further guidance**





# Little Blossoms

## COVID POLICY

**[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk) Covid19**

[www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk)

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-smptoms](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-smptoms)

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/what-to-do-if-you-or-someone-you-live-with-has-coronavirus-symptoms](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/what-to-do-if-you-or-someone-you-live-with-has-coronavirus-symptoms)

[www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test)