STAY SAFE
BACK TO NURSERIES, PLAYGROUPS AND CHILDMINDERS

GUIDANCE FOR THE RE-OPENING OF OR EXPANSION OF NURSERIES, PLAYGROUPS AND CHILDMINDERS WHO HAVE REMAINED OPEN DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

29 MAY 2020
As the government begins to relax some restrictions for our island population and more facilities open up again we are aware that some parents are looking to put their children back into Nurseries, Playgroups and Childminders. As we have discussed previously we understand the difficult decisions that are taking place, either to add more children to the groups in settings that are open, or reopen settings for the first time in the current situation. There is no easy answer and any decision must be made based on the right decision for each individual setting. **We will not expect any setting to open if it is not the right decision personally, professionally or financially.** If, and when you choose to reopen your setting is entirely up to you and you can set the date for this (the government is providing an opportunity not a start date). The decision about when you choose to re-open will be down to you as providers; we are here to support you through this process when the time is right for you. For those of you who have remained open, we will continue to offer support and provide guidance as we move forward.

- The Isle of Man Government has produced a road map for the medium-term response to COVID-19. This phased return to work provides schools, nurseries, playgroups and childminders the opportunity to plan accordingly to the demand of their services for parents returning to work and the government permitting settings to increase their capacity of care. In order to plan ahead for any expansion of your service or for re-opening, some providers have carried out a parental survey in order to determine which parents will be sending their children back to their settings and which phased category they fall into.

- How each setting does this is very unique to their own layout, rooms available and staffing in nurseries and playgroups. Childminders are also reviewing the family groupings to ensure children remain safe within their home environment whilst not increasing the risk of infection. Many schools, nurseries, playgroups and childminders have asked parents whether they will choose to send their child to them and what days and times so that they can ascertain the numbers of children that they will be working with, and the staffing that this requires. We are aware that some parents will choose not to send their child/ren back to you at this present time, which is understandable, especially if they have underlying health conditions.

This additional guidance has been produced from the questions that those of you in the early years’ sector have asked and we hope that this and the previous guidance we provided will support you in planning accordingly enabling you to make the right decisions for your setting. We have added the previous guidance into this document where appropriate, identified at the end of the final paragraph of each section.
At present the message remains that nurseries, playgroups and childminders should only provide childcare to the children of key workers, vulnerable children and the children of parents working in those sectors announced by the government where they are unable to stay at home.

We continue to be guided by Public Health and the Council of Ministers with regard to the sectors that can access nurseries, playgroups and childminders and will inform everyone about any planned changes as soon as possible.

Vulnerable Children and families

Vulnerable children are classed as those who either have Complex Needs or are under the Social Services ‘umbrella’ of support. We are aware that you will have some children and/ or families that you have concerns about or those who were not vulnerable have become vulnerable due to the COVID-19 situation.

Whilst those who fall under the recognised definition of vulnerable children can attend your setting, keeping in touch with the other children and families is important. Many of you are already phoning, video calling and sending information home so that those children who are not with you know that they are still important and help and guidance is available for their families.

Clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable refers to children with underlying health conditions (who were advised to ‘shield’ for 12 weeks back in March/April). There will be separate guidance provided on this from Public Health.

Before you open

- Do not rush to open before having the opportunity to plan and get organised and find out as much information as possible.
- Please ensure that you have completed/updated your Emergency Contingency Plan and that this has been approved by your inspector.
- Ask your known parents what days of the week, hours during the day that they require including the start and finish times for their work (these may be different from the hours or days that they previously worked).
This will help you build a picture of the needs of your parents and consider how you can organise the children and staff teams.

- Plan your staff team wherever possible into small groups i.e. a group of no more than eight 2-4 year olds and three 0-2 year olds with consistent staff. This group remains separate from other groups.
  - (By the way childminders, you are the group or bubble!)
- Plan the daily routine according to these groups so that indoor and outdoor areas, snack and lunchtimes are separate for each group, with cleaning undertaken of any shared resources before rotating.
- Where groupings are not possible, the emphasis will be on enhanced cleaning and handwashing, as young children find it difficult (if not impossible) to physically distance (see physical distancing) themselves from each other.
- Whilst age groups are important to consider, at present schools, nurseries, playgroups and childminders are opening in relation to the phases set out by the government. From Monday 15 June all school sites will reopen and from Wednesday 17 June all those children currently taught in the designated school hubs will be able to return to their normal school. Attendance will be on a voluntary basis until the new school year in September. Following this attendance will be phased in with pupils in Years 2, 6, 10 and 12 returning to begin with although there is no date set for this to happen at present. The aim is to limit the number of children all attending at once and provide a more controlled approach to reintegrate children back.
- For nurseries, playgroups and childminders the next phase to re-open will be announced next week, and a pre-school road map outlining how the phased return will continue so that nurseries, playgroups and childminders can plan for the medium term future.
- Some settings have identified staggering the number of children returning to their setting over a few days and/or weeks so that it is more manageable, enabling you to share new routines and requirements with one group of children (age appropriately) before introducing the next group of children into your setting.
- Try to make contact with the children and their families prior to their return. This could be by phone, video call or a letter. This will also give parents an opportunity to share any concerns that they may have about their child’s return so that you can plan for any support that may be needed.

Emergency Contingency Planning, Policies and Procedures

Emergency Contingency Planning

- Prior to opening please send an emergency contingency plan to the Registration and Inspection Unit with a risk assessment of how you will
implement this. Once you receive approval from your inspector you can then open in line with the government requirements.

**Policies and Procedures**

- Review your policies so that staff are clear about the procedures that will need to be adapted due to COVID-19. These include:
  - Health and Safety
  - Exclusion of children who are infectious (which meets guidance issued by Public Health)
  - The safe arrival and departure of children
  - Intimate and personal care
  - Outings
  - Caring for under twos
  - The use of social media & portable electronic equipment including mobile phones
  - Taking photographs of children and their usage
  - Lone Working
  - Care, learning and play

The emergency contingency plan and associated documents will become working documents as government guidelines evolve and your cohort expands.

For those settings that have remained open, continually review documents making changes to them when needed so that up to date information and guidelines are being implemented within your setting.

**Child Day Care Centre and Childminder Standards**

**Child Daycare Standards**

**Relaxed Standards**
We will not be imposing restrictions, as per standards, on:
- The need for supernumerary staff
- The ratio of qualified staff
- Mixture of client groups and age ranges.

However, this will continue to be monitored and reviewed

The standard in relation to staffing levels (ratios) will return to the requirements within Standard 2.4
The minimum staffing ratio requirements are:
1:2 children under 2 years who are cared for above ground level
1:3 children under 2 years
1:8 children aged 2-7 years
These ratios include any children of staff or volunteers. Regular volunteers who have had the required checks can be included in normal staffing ratios.

Each provider must ensure that the service remains safe for all service users and staff.

Childminder Standards

❖ Childminder standards will remain the same

Changing opening hours and shift patterns

❖ The only restrictions would be if there were specific opening times, days, (ie Mon-Fri, term time only, between the hours of etc.) on your registration and any planning restrictions.

Policies and Procedures

❖ The Registrations and Inspection Unit do not write policies for providers. Providers have developed operational/contingency plans. These will need to be under constant review as the COVID-19 situation evolves and restrictions are lifted.

Risk Assessments

❖ These will need to be reviewed as restrictions change or are lifted

Viability and Business Continuity

❖ Throughout the period of emergency measures both departments have been acutely aware of the impact that the closure of nurseries, playgroups and childminders have had on the businesses and staff members.
❖ As we begin the phased reopening of sectors of the Manx economy more parents will be seeking out childcare. As identified previously, some parents will be working differently in the future and therefore, some families will not require child care or as many sessions. This will be beneficial with regard to reducing the number of children in the setting but reduces the financial viability.
❖ At present, as providers you have been able to access the following financial support:
Continued funding of pre-school vouchers for all settings closed or otherwise for all preschool age children who are registered at that setting;
Additional pre-school vouchers for pre-school age children where they move to settings who remain open;
Extending pre-school vouchers to the younger children (0-3) of key workers who attend settings which are open. This provision will continue until the 31st August 2020. When a setting reopens, the third term payment available to parents will be pro-rata at £285.00 per month up until 31st August 2020.
Pulling forward of 3rd term payments for pre-school vouchers which were paid in April 2020.
Access to the Coronavirus Business Support Scheme
Access to the Manx Earnings Replacement Allowance - MERA

We are aware of some of the additional financial pressures that you have highlighted and will continue to monitor these with you as those of you who have remained open plan to expand your provision and those of you who have been closed plan to re-open.
There are some issues you have raised that we are currently following up and will provide further information within an additional circular.

Staffing

We understand how challenging it is to organise staff throughout a day and week when the numbers of children attending your setting fluctuates. Some of you have identified that your staff team is dependent on an individual member of staff’s ability to return to work, depending on the availability of child care for their own children or their own health care needs.

Consideration therefore has to be given to the availability of the staff team to determine the grouping of children with key staff, so that smaller groups remain together lowering the risk of cross-infection.
Having enough staff to cover for illness and/or self-isolation remains a challenge especially if some staff members are themselves unable to work. Your parent survey will guide you regarding staffing requirements and rotas throughout the day and week.
Consider how you can maintain the normal ratios for children and staff, and if possible reduce the size of the children in each ‘bubble’. A maximum of 8 children per grouping is advised for 2 - 4 year olds and a maximum of 3 babies per group is advised for babies aged 0 to 2 years. Or 2 babies per group if children are cared for above ground floor level.
Staff Personal Care at the end of a shift
❖ At the end of their shift staff should consider changing into alternative clothes and place work clothes in a plastic bag for transporting home. It is also worth considering having a pair of shoes at work (easy to wipe down with a disinfectant wipe) and having a pair of shoes to travel home in.

❖ Staff arrival at home
❖ Take any outdoor shoes off before entering your home
❖ Place your uniform/clothes in the washing machine and wash separately from household laundry. Wash items in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. Use the warmest water setting and dry items completely.
❖ Wipe down any door handles or furniture you have touched on the way in.
❖ If you have been to a location that has confirmed or suspected Covid 19, it is advisable to take a shower or bath to self-clean.

Childminder’s Personal Care
❖ Consideration given regarding the work clothes worn within the home environment, with designated clothing for work and shoes that can be easily wiped down (using disinfectant wipes).
❖ At the end of the day place your uniform/clothes in the washing machine and wash separately from household laundry. Wash items in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. Use the warmest water setting and dry items completely.

How do you choose which children attend your setting?
We understand the difficulties that you may face in choosing which children attend your setting. Many of you have been seeking an answer to this dilemma from us. How do you say no to parents who require childcare?
❖ At present you can accept children of Key Workers https://covid19.gov.im/businesses/key-workers/ and vulnerable children and the children of parents who have been identified by the government as being able to return to childcare facilities if possible. The important thing to remember is you know your children best, not us. As well as vulnerable children and the children of key workers, you know which children whose parents work in the identified sectors would benefit the most from attending your setting.
It is important to remember that some parents are not doing the same shifts and days that they were previously doing prior to COVID-19. This means that some are choosing to work from home either all week or for a few days per week and therefore, you might not have to make difficult decisions with regard to who you have in the setting.

However, we are aware that some of you are having to inform parents that there are no places at present for their child/ren, especially non key worker parents and those that are requesting additional support for their children despite not meeting the government requirements to have their children in child care. We know that this is not easy but we must adhere to the government road map and instructions.

Arrivals and Departures

- Nurseries, playgroups and childminders are now receiving children at the door, with parents remaining outside.
- Where possible, staggering the times that parents are dropping off and picking up their child/children will enable staff to receive or say goodbye to the children, have time to chat with parents whilst physically distancing themselves and ensuring the child or children are settled.
- The children should have their temperature checked prior to entering the setting or on entry. Any child who has a temperature should not attend.
- Daily record of the children’s temperature should be recorded stating if it has been taken by a parent or practitioner.
- Children wash their hands on entry prior to joining the play and learning. Children also wash their hands before leaving the setting.
- Settings wipe down packs of nappies and wipes which remain in the setting so that limited amounts of belongings are being transported between home and the setting.
- Lunch boxes are wiped down with disinfectant wipes or sanitising sprays and disposable kitchen paper towels.
- Where possible children arrive in clean clothes and if uniform is used, a relaxation of the need for uniform every day should be considered to allow parents time to wash clothes.
- To reduce the risk, keep visitors out and make arrangements for deliveries to be left at the door. Physical distancing should be promoted at all times.
- Children should change out of their outdoor shoes on entry to the setting. These can be cleaned with an antibacterial wipe and indoor shoes put on to reduce the risk of infection. One suggestion is to put out a laminated name card for the children to place their shoes on in an area that is not used by the groups of children and adults and the reverse happens when getting ready to go home.
Settling in children is quite rightly a concern for practitioners as some children will not have attended for many weeks. However, the settings that have remained open and received new children during this unprecedented time have found that almost all of them have settled in well, despite parents saying goodbye at the door.

The good practice that took place prior to the COVID-19 outbreak still applies, such as ensuring a child’s favourite resource (where permitted), song, rhyme, interest and/or fascination are waiting for them.

In addition, having time to chat to the parents/guardians of the child will help them feel more comfortable dropping off their child again.

Sharing photos of the setting with any changes to the layout and new routines, will help both parents and children know what to expect prior to their arrival back into your environment.

Finding a balance in your Early Years Environment

Finding the balance in your environment shouldn’t mean removing everything. Careful selection of resources ensuring variety remains will enable children to be creative in their play and learning. This may mean not putting the whole of the construction bucket out, but having a smaller duplicate selection for each group so that the variety is there and children are able to make something with it without staff still cleaning the construction corner at midnight!

Some practitioners have put duplo bricks, etc into the dishwasher so that they know it is clean and dry before using again.

If in a single room setting, cordon off some areas for parts of the day (dependent on the number of children that you have) so that you are not continually cleaning the whole area all of the time.

Limit focused activities around a table, and only have individual or small numbers of children doing the activity (2 metres apart if possible).

We still want the environment to look familiar for the children and be an early years environment, whilst adhering to the public health advice for infection control. A good starting point is to review the layout of your setting.

Think how you can signpost and organise areas of provision to help these small groups remain separate, for example:

- Put large signs in the areas identifying how many children can use this area at one time (picture and the number helps older and younger 2-4 year olds understand and it is a great mathematical resource)
Put masking tape on the floor to mark out the areas so that they stop prior to entering these areas (Some settings have used laminated stop / give way signs and arrows on the floor for some fun and learning about road signs, to ensure that there is some normality for everyone).
Display handwashing and hand sanitiser posters so that staff and children can follow the advice and routine.
Have hand sanitisers available near areas of provision but not within reach of the children.
For each area think about how you can provide variety whilst limiting the number of resources in the area. We do not want a bare room. Limit circle time activities to small groups, and postpone whole group activities for now.

We understand that removing dressing up clothes, soft toys, messy play, dough, sand and water takes away much of what young children enjoy within the early years sector. However, we do suggest removing dressing up clothes and soft toys at the moment.

Settings that have remained open have told us that they are finding ways to ensure children can still enjoy a little of these experiences:

- Some settings plan one day per week for children to experience dough, sand and/or water activities so that they are still having fun. HOWEVER, steps must be taken to limit the spread of infection such as:
  - Create a laminated A4 name card (wipeable) with a different picture for each child. Prior to the child joining for example the playdough table (spaced out as much as possible) put their name card on the table and provide utensils (if you have lots of the same share them out so that they have their own on the name card). Provide each child with their own playdough (no sharing) and put in a child’s named lidded container after use. If you have sufficient utensils put them in the container as well so that the child has their own. Wipe/ clean name card and utensils down using antibacterial wipes or spray ensuring that they are completely dry before using again. Dispose of individual playdough either at the end of the day or after a few days.
  - Instead of using the water tray, put individual wash bowls out spaced apart. Use smaller equipment e.g. yogurt pots rather than the large buckets (also helps with the mopping up!). After individual children have finished, tip the water away and wipe down the bowls with antibacterial wipes or spray and dry, ready for the next group.
  - Use sand in different ways for example making sand pictures, coloured sand bottles, or in a similar way to water play use small containers and remove sand after use, and clean bowls and equipment.
  - As always remember to ensure good ventilation and incorporate outdoor play into the daily routine wherever possible as this lowers the risk of infection.
Curriculum, Assessment and Observation

Some of you have asked whether a focus on the curriculum and making observations and assessments can take a back seat at the moment. Certainly as you start to put things in place these are not the essential things to focus on initially. However, the children will need predictable familiar routines in order to help them settle back into your setting.

The schools will not be expecting Learning Journeys and assessment trackers to be completed. However, you may have some information you wish to share in order to support the children’s transition into school. We will be providing some specific guidance on Transition in a separate booklet. However, if there is something wonderful that a child does that you have the opportunity to make a note of that is great, even if it is to remember to tell everyone about it. You can then gradually start to introduce observation and assessment practices back into your setting.

Finding the balance for 0 - 2 year old age group

Many practitioners in nurseries, playgroups and childminders have been asking what is best practice for the under 2 year old age group. We know that children in this age group are more reliant on an adult to meet their educational and personal needs than other age groups, with closer contact needed during feeding, intimate care routines and settling children to sleep.

- Feeding the youngest age group is often done in baby chairs and high chairs with the adults in close proximity to the child. This is unavoidable when caring for young babies. We all know what happens when a baby sneezes with a mouthful of food and therefore, practitioners should take steps to minimise the risk such as wearing aprons and gloves, and not facing the child when feeding them, instead sitting alongside the child in the hope that they do not look at you before the sneeze arrives!. Hand washing is vital and the most important thing here as soon as this happens as gloves will not protect you if you touch your face after a sneeze.
- Much of the time working with young babies involves lifting and carrying them. We would not want the intimate contact with babies to stop as this may have a long term impact on their attachment and emotional development. Practitioners who have been looking after babies during this time have told us that they are
still cuddling babies, soothing them on their knees, and picking them up but are more aware of hand hygiene and cleaning prior to the close contact with each baby and afterwards.

- For those more mobile 1 - 2 year olds many practitioners are already encouraging self-feeding and stepping beyond very close contact just a little more when mealtimes and snack times take place, whilst still being close enough to the child to help and observe.

- Staff are wearing aprons and gloves during times when they are feeding children and having very close contact with the babies. These aprons need to be changed when dealing with another child.

- **Teething presents many issues at the moment** with increased dribble and loose stools in the baby’s nappy. This results in increased wiping of their mouth and face, changes of bibs and a longer amount of time attending to their intimate care. This does result in an increased demand in cleaning and wiping things down as well as the child! Practitioners who are working with this age of children have informed us that this is now just part of the job. We admire them for their fortitude and adaptability under these unusual circumstances.

- **Teething also causes a dilemma in diagnosing a high temperature.** Many practitioners would normally identify a high temperature as teething and not worry too much if the other signs of teething were present. However, during this pandemic any high temperature cannot be assumed to be teething. Therefore, any child must leave the setting despite an assumption that it may be teething, requesting that parents to contact their GP or dial 111. Both parents and practitioners will then be led by the medical advice with regard to the next steps to take.

- **The normal approaches to sleep** need to be maintained where possible whilst being mindful that some adaptations may be required. Spacing the cots apart as much as possible is advised. No babies should share cots and they should have their own personal linen which should be washed each day at the hottest temperature possible and dried thoroughly before being used again.

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**Social / physical distancing**

**How can you physically distance young children from each other?**

- The early years sector identifies that you cannot physically distance young children from each other, and much of their early years development relies on the interactions and close connections with both adults and their peers. This is essential for the children’s well being and development. As identified above, the emphasis for this age group is the grouping of children and a focus on enhanced hygiene routines and cleaning.
While it is advisable to keep children in small groups, we have not stipulated numbers. Neither have we suggested ‘bubbles’, if providers wish to adopt this method they can.

Feedback from early years practitioners who are working with young children have identified that some children are much more reticent when near adults and other children at the moment, which they suspect is due to the learned requirements to physically distance and not touch things when out with their family. Practitioners are working with these children to reassure them that if they need a cuddle or need help with dressing and toileting the adult and their friends are there for them.

Snack and Lunchtimes

Lunch and snack times are staggered so that large groups of children are not sat together. Consideration is given regarding table and chair groupings to establish physical distancing where possible. Staff reinforce the importance of not sharing food and drinks.

We have been advised that children bring their own lunch and snacks rather than having cooked meals at your setting.

Named, personal water bottles are kept at the setting and cleaned ready for the next day instead of being taken home each day.

Again, the emphasis is on the children within the groups (‘bubbles’) eating together. As tables and chairs can easily become contaminated it is important to implement a written schedule for regular cleaning. The cleaning schedule should identify who, what, when and how resources and equipment should be cleaned and monitored. Evidence should be available and monitored regarding the completion of this schedule and any problems identified.

Decontamination of areas and surfaces should be done at least once daily using a chlorine solution of a 1000ppm or other disinfection products currently in use (in accordance to your own setting’s COSHH information and Public Health Guidance).


Hard resources and equipment are preferred, as these can be wiped clean after play.

Soft toys and dressing up clothes should be avoided at the moment, but we are aware how challenging it is to try to space eight 2-4 year olds 2 metres apart at tables! It just doesn’t happen sometimes. ‘Wherever possible’ in this case means move them apart as far as you can and make sure that you do enhanced cleaning before and afterwards. Sitting side by side would be better than face to face in terms of seating.
Make sure that children wash their hands before and after eating, and that tissues are nearby in case a child coughs whilst drinking or eating so that you can ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’, ensuring that you and they clean their hands afterwards.

Enhanced Cleaning
Enhanced cleaning helps reduce transmission during any outbreak.

Provide information displaying the areas that will need additional cleaning to reinforce requirements.

A minimum of **twice daily** cleaning of areas, paying particular attention to door handles, handrails, light switches, tables and desks, toilet flushes, taps and all other communal areas where surfaces can easily become contaminated.

Clean and disinfect objects which are touched regularly and surfaces more often than usual using standard cleaning products. Resources modelling, dough, sand and water should be for individuals only and disposed of after use. (see the section on finding a balance in your early years environment).

Accessing the Outdoor Environment

There is increasing evidence that virus transmission in the open air is much lower than indoors, therefore early years practitioners are using their outdoor environment whenever possible. Childminders are using their gardens to play, have picnics and sometimes enable children to snooze in prams when the weather is good.

As the children will have been together at other times the risks from each other will be less outside. Open air activities in which distance between children can be maintained would be lower risk than those that involve close face to face contact. A walking line with spacing less than the social distance recommendation would be intermediate in risk. Therefore it is advisable to keep children within their small (bubble) groupings when outside in order to mitigate risk.

Nevertheless, all outings should be risk assessed in order to ensure that they are safe. We also advise that providers consider physical distancing rules and
take measures such as not mixing with children who are not part of the nursery group.

❖ For any setting that does not have a garden the adults and children can access the outdoors beyond their own environment if they have signed permission from parents and have completed a risk assessment for the areas they wish to visit.

❖ As the Manx population is able to access the outdoors more often, childminders are aware that pavements are becoming busier and therefore are choosing beaches, glens and open spaces where paths are wider and not restricted by walls.

❖ Again remember to practice good hygiene when out and about reminding the children to wash their hands on leaving and returning to your setting or home. You can also use hand sanitiser whilst out and about.

Buggies and Car Seats

For childminders and baby unit teams the discussion has been around the impossibility of physically distancing babies in buggies and car seats. As we know children will have been together inside the setting so it is considered that this is ok as long as the steps to reduce the spread of infection identified in the previous guidance and above are followed, such as:

❖ Wiping the car seat and/or buggy with antibacterial wipes prior to using and again when you remove the child/ren.
❖ Remembering to wash or wipe the baby’s or child’s hands prior to putting them in the buggy or car seat.
❖ Recognising that if a baby sneezes or coughs that more of the vehicle will need a wipe!
❖ Wiping noses as soon as possible using the ‘catch it, bin it kill it’ approach
❖ Reminding older children to use a tissue or their elbow if they need a cough or a sneeze (give them one ready just in case- tissue that is not an elbow!).
Cars and Minibuses

We have been asked by some of you who use your car or minibus what the restrictions are for the transportation of children and adults at the moment.

- As with everything it is about lowering the risk to the lowest possible. If you are transporting in a car or minibus that is full of children or adults the risk is higher and so you must put in place measures to address this.
- When using a minibus/car transport children and adults who will be part of the same group (bubble) in your nursery only. That is the lowest risk. At present we advise that children and adults from different (bubble) groupings should not be transported together as this negates the value of having smaller groupings (bubbles) in your nursery or playgroup.
- If you can you should do more trips with fewer children or adults in the minibus or car.
- Weather permitting, having windows open and spacing children if at all possible in a minibus is advised. As with buggies and car seats it is about the enhanced cleaning that you put in before and after your passengers use the vehicle. So make sure everyone has washed their hands or used hand sanitiser prior to getting in the vehicle, tissues at the ready if a cough or sneeze is imminent and making sure that you clean the vehicle after everyone has got out.
- When transporting children from different schools to your after school provision transport the children and adults who will be part of the same group (bubble) in your before or after school provision. Where there are smaller numbers consider spacing the children out within the minibus.

Hand Washing and hand sanitisers

We have had a number of queries regarding hand washing and hand sanitisers. Predominantly when to use them and the cost of using them.

- We are aware that young children cannot be expected to wash hands after every activity if they are flitting between areas. It may be useful to use the laminated stop signs in each area of provision so that you can apply hand sanitiser to their hands prior to moving on to another area. Please note that hand sanitisers should not be used independently for the very young children that you work with.
The Public Health advice is for children to wash their hands before and after using the toilet. For our youngest children who are using these facilities this may be difficult as speed is of the essence when they need to go! Therefore it has been suggested that they have a squirt of hand sanitiser on their hands as you race towards the toilet and then you have time to help them wash their hands afterwards.

**Hand Washing Approaches**

- Handwashing on arrival and prior to departure of the premises which includes everyone.
- Staff and children should wash their hands in between activities, before and after meals and before and after using the toilet.
- Alcohol based hand rubs i.e. hand sanitisers, (recommended by WHO and Public Health IOM) and tissues readily available in areas of the provision if hand washing facilities are not available.

Reinforcing new expectations of personal hygiene is inevitably challenging, in particular with young children who want to interact. Therefore, adults should always monitor how children are learning to wash hands so that they become proficient in this routine (age appropriate). Where children are unable to complete this routine themselves adults should ensure that measures are taken to ensure enhanced hygiene standards are maintained for all children.

**Intimate Care**

- A robust policy and procedure should be put in place outlining the enhanced routines required during COVID-19 in order to ensure that there is a process that adheres to infection control when supporting children’s intimate care.
- Early Years practitioners wear gloves and a disposable apron when changing individual children’s nappies. Social distancing is not possible during this routine, however making sure that the child’s wipes and nappy are ready, with the adult wearing gloves and an apron prior to collecting the child, will reduce the risk of possible infection. Stringent cleaning of the changing mat and area used is required, using your standard cleaning products.
When assisting children in their toileting needs, aprons and gloves should be worn. Following the child using the facilities, surfaces which have been touched and toilet equipment should be cleaned using standard cleaning products prior to another child using the same facilities. Adults should supervise children to ensure they wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water and dry them thoroughly using paper towels. Adults should also wash their hands. Posters and the procedure on general hand hygiene can be found via:


The use of PPE

We are all aware of the debate that has been taking place both on the island and further afield with regard to the use of PPE. The advice remains that good handwashing and enhanced cleaning are the best ways of preventing the spread of the virus. Handwashing is the really important thing here. Gloves do not protect if the wearer touches their face! Within the early years sector nurseries, playgroups and somechildminders are familiar with wearing disposable aprons and gloves during snack, mealtimes and when changing a child’s nappy/toileting. However, everyone is scrutinising the use of PPE with regard to the additional times that adults are in close contact with children.

Settings that are open inform us that they are using aprons and gloves as part of their uniform. Some settings are wearing aprons and gloves through the day and changing them when for example, they have had children on their knee or snuggling babies.

Other settings are putting aprons and gloves on only when they are in close contact with children such as snuggling a baby or changing a child’s clothes.

Aprons and gloves are then being changed for new when they are about to prepare snacks, support mealtimes or nappy changing/toileting.

As with any guidance it is up to you and your team to decide if you use PPE beyond these normal times dependent on the ages of the children and the organisation of your setting.

If a child becomes ill and is awaiting collection, where possible they should be moved away from all other children. A practitioner should be with them to support and monitor their condition prior to the arrival of their carer. Early Years practitioners should be mindful of individual children’s needs and it would not be appropriate for younger children to be alone without adult supervision. Wherever possible, staff should wear PPE including an apron, gloves and masks if with the child and enhanced hygiene routines following collection of the child needs to be undertaken. Guidance for putting on and taking off PPE equipment can differ and therefore, the advice is to follow the manufacturer’s guidance.
Public Health Information

The Directorate of Public Health has supported the development of these guidelines drawing on evidence and good practice from published sources such as the World Health Organisation, the European Centre for Disease Control and Public Health England.

Children of all ages are less likely to be infected with COVID-19 than adults and, when they are, their symptoms tend to be milder and of shorter duration. Younger children (less than 10 years old) are less likely to be infected than older ones. When children do get infected it is usually within their households. There have been few reports of outbreaks centred on nurseries or schools which involved child to child spread. Child to adult spread in any setting is also uncommon.


How does COVID-19 spread?

Based on The World Health organisation (WHO) information, the virus is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person. The highest risk is from an infected person coughing or sneezing. However, singing, shouting and mouth breathing during exercise can also generate droplets. It is possible for people to be infected but show no symptoms. These individuals are less likely to spread virus (because they are not coughing or sneezing frequently) but can still do so through normal speech and the activities noted above.

Individuals can also be infected from touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and touching their face. The COVID-19 virus may survive on surfaces from a few hours up to 72 hours but simple disinfectants can kill it.

Public health measures are critical to slow the spread of the virus and include:

❖ Staying home when sick
❖ Covering mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing, disposing of any tissue used immediately and washing hands for at least 20 seconds
❖ Washing hands more often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
❖ Cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects with sanitiser.

Nurseries, Playgroups and Childminders will be reviewing their policies and procedures to ensure that these actions are implemented effectively, educating children as part of these strategies and approaches for the health and safety of all present during the day.
Reinforcing new expectations of personal hygiene is inevitably challenging, in particular with young children who want to interact. Therefore, adults should always monitor how children are learning to wash hands so that they become proficient in this routine (age appropriate). Where children are unable to complete this routine themselves adults should ensure that measures are taken to ensure enhanced hygiene standards are maintained for all children.

What should I do if a child starts displaying symptoms of Covid-19?

❖ If a child starts showing symptoms of Covid-19 while at your setting, they should be collected as soon as possible by a parent/carer.
❖ While they are awaiting collection If possible, they should be put in a separate room with a closed door - depending on the age of the child - with appropriate adult supervision if required.
❖ Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation.
❖ If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least two metres away from other people.
❖ If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
❖ You should increase the frequency of handwashing and cleaning surfaces, toys and other equipment in your setting.
❖ If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in a setting they must be sent home and advised to follow the staying at home guidance.
❖ In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.
❖ If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves.
❖ They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell.
❖ Cleaning with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.
❖ Children should not attend your setting if they or someone in their household has symptoms of possible COVID-19. In such cases, advice should be sought from 111 and individuals should only attend nursery if advised by 111 that that is appropriate.
What are the risks of catching COVID-19 for little children?

Children of all ages are less likely to be infected with COVID-19 than adults and, when they are, their symptoms tend to be milder and of shorter duration. Younger children (less than 10 years old) are less likely to be infected than older ones. When children do get infected it is usually within their households. There have been few reports of outbreaks centred on nurseries or schools which involved child to child spread. Child to adult spread in any setting is also uncommon.

How many cases of Covid have there been for children under 5 on the Isle of Man?

There have been 3 cases of COVID confirmed in children aged 0-4. None were associated with a nursery/early years setting. There have been no confirmed cases associated with staff.

Some of you are concerned that you could follow all policies and procedures correctly and a child could still catch Covid-19 due to external factors and for your setting there could be enormous implication leaving you open to scrutiny particularly through social media.

As noted above, children who do get infected are overwhelmingly likely to have caught the infection from a household member. We can’t stop rumour and social media comments.

What is the risk of a member of staff of contracting COVID-19 in an Early Years Setting?

This is impossible to quantify but extremely low. With the current level of new cases on island, the risk of anyone contracting COVID-19 is extremely low. See above re evidence that schools/nurseries do not seem to act as focuses for virus transmission/outbreaks.

What is the most up to date information for contact tracing, antibody testing for early years workers?

Testing is available to all people who are displaying symptoms via the 111 service.

Is there a 60 minute test available and would this be available to all early years providers?
This is not available at present and would need to be agreed with DHSC for inclusion in pathways

**How does contact tracing work and what can you do to support this within your setting?**

Contact tracing just requires good record keeping of who was in a facility during each day (or each session) – including staff, children and any other visitors (e.g. tradesmen). The contact tracing team would need the names and contact details for all.

![Contact tracing](image)

**What to do if a child falls ill and tests positive for COVID-19?**

- If a child falls ill it would be down to you as the provider to manage this and place the onus on the parent for ensuring symptomatic children do not attend your setting.
- A single case would not usually be an indication to close nursery or playgroup unless there were specific factors in that case. More than one confirmed case could lead to closure. This would be agreed in discussion with the Outbreak Management Team that would be convened to agree and deliver the response to the particular outbreak.
- Only those staff/children identified as close/high risk contacts would need to self-isolate. If the nursery/playgroup is running with stable small groups/bubbles, at most it would be those in the bubble who would usually have to self-isolate.

![Child](image)

**What to do if a staff member falls ill and tests positive for Covid 19?**

- If a staff member falls ill or displays symptoms of Covid it would be down to you as the provider to manage this and place the onus on the staff member to contact 111 for advice and testing or advice that a return to work without testing is appropriate.
- For any member of staff clinical assessment/testing and advice on self-isolation or return to work should be taken from 111.

![Staff](image)

**How do we distinguish between COVID-19 and winter colds?**

Whether it be teething, colds, infectious viruses, a fever- at the initial stage of all of these things the symptoms are similar to covid-19. Exclude a child with any symptoms that could be COVID.
Parents would then contact 111 for advice and testing or advice that a return to your setting without testing is appropriate.

Underlying Health Issues

Can staff with health issues or those living with vulnerable people be required to attend their place of work?
Guidance on this to be published shortly and will be shared with all providers as soon as it is available.

Will there be guidance on children who have underlying health problems?
Yes – in summary, children in clinically vulnerable groups who are looked after in primary care should be able to attend with no restrictions. Children in the clinically extremely vulnerable group who are looked after by a paediatrician should only attend after the parents have reached an appropriate decision in discussion with their paediatrician.

This guidance has been developed by the Early Team from the Department of Education, Sport and Culture in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care - Registration and Inspection Unit and Public Health. It has been approved by Public Health.

Friday 29th May 2020