



## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Policy

During the COVID-19 pandemic LTNS followed strict guidelines from the English Government, NHS and Public Health England.

It is vital that during this time legislative requirements continue to be met and that Government guidance is adhered to. At LTNS will continue to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). We will also ensure that we consider the recent additional elements as directed by the DfE in relation to the EYFS in this policy.

LTNS maintain three main risk assessments which may be enforced should a lockdown be instigated by central government. These cover the nursery environment, children's health and wellbeing and staff, included any adults who come into contact with the children and other colleagues.

When England is not in a lockdown scenario LTNS will use this policy to ensure everyone is being kept safe and an 'Outbreak Management Plan' is referred to where needed. This is updated monthly by the Senior Management Team. See appendix 1.

Since the beginning of the pandemic on March 2020 there have been a number of COVID variates which have a number of symptoms including:

- Fever (above 38 degrees)
- New continuous cough
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling tired or exhausted
- Aching body
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Blocked or runny nose
- Loss of appetite
- Diarrhoea
- Feeling sick or being sick

COVID 19 has been placed on the Exclusion Table outline by Public Health England which you can see here: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/exclusion-table?fbclid=IwAR1dZGQEZQnl83RBGSqC7E5cKGyOreqkbucg63QlsRpbDxWh5mSLEzA\\_I](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/exclusion-table?fbclid=IwAR1dZGQEZQnl83RBGSqC7E5cKGyOreqkbucg63QlsRpbDxWh5mSLEzA_I)

### **Infection control and effective hygiene practices**

The main features of effective infection control remain in place and most are aware of these measures to reduce the spread of COVID 19. Children are encouraged and supported to follow effective procedures that are modelled by adults. These include:



- Frequent handwashing for no less than 20 seconds
- Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products
- Bubbling in specific groups (when instigated via the Outbreak Management Plan)

### **Testing for COVID-19**

All employees who work at LTNS have been required to complete Lateral Flow tests for COVID-19 twice a week. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 this will no longer be necessary, however if a new variant emerges then testing may be reintroduced as instructed by central Government. During a time when testing is required this will be administered by the employee before they begin their travel to work either on the morning of their shift or the night before and report their results to NHS track and trace and to their settings COVID coordinator. The testing partner will only share the results of these tests with the relevant employee. Results will not be included in an employee's personnel file.

Testing will be applied in a consistent, non-discriminatory manner, in accordance with statutory guidelines.

If any employee is unable to be tested due to disability or religious belief, please contact your COVID coordinator.

Failure to comply with testing requirements will disqualify an employee from working at the nursery and as such will be considered an unauthorised absence.

### **What to do if a staff member test positive for COVID-19 (to be adhered to as required)**

If a staff member tests positive for COVID on a Lateral Flow Device test (LFD) they must book a PCR test and self-isolate until they receive the results. If the PCR is positive they must inform their COVID co-ordinator or line manager. Self-isolation is no longer mandatory for the vaccinated or the unvaccinated, however if the staff member is not well enough to come to work they must stay away until they feel better. Staff members may be required to take a LFD test before they return to work and may be told to self-isolate for up to five days or until the test is negative. The manager will assess each case individually with the support of the Senior Management Team if required. If LFD tests are not easily accessible the manager will discuss the staff member's symptoms with the Senior Management Team and assess the possible risks before the staff member returns to work.

Any staff member who tests positive will no longer be paid SSP from day one and instead will only receive SSP from day four of absence providing a 'Statement of Fitness for Work' has been completed.

### **COVID-19 and travelling outside of the UK (to be adhered as required)**

If a staff member travels outside of the UK they no longer need to complete a PCR or LFD test upon their return whether they are fully vaccinated or not.



## **What to do if a child tests positive for COVID-19**

If a child tests positive for COVID they must inform the nursery manager. Self-isolation is no longer mandatory, however if the child is not well enough to come to nursery they must stay away for at least three days and only return when they feel better.

## **Self-isolation periods**

From 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 self-isolation is no longer mandatory for those who have COVID or those who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID. This includes both those who are vaccinated and unvaccinated.

In the event of an outbreak in the nursery (an outbreak would be deemed as more than 50% of children and staff within the same room or bubble) the manager must inform the Senior Management Team and the Local Authority Public Health Teams. (Old Town is Lambeth. Webbs Rd and Lavender Hill are Wandsworth).

## **Vaccinations against COVID-19**

Vaccinations are available for all people over the age of 5 years old. LTNS encourages its staff team to have the vaccinations to protect themselves, their colleagues and the children in our care.

From December 2021 a booster jab is available for all adults over 18 years of age.

A fourth jab will be offered to those over 75 years of age and immunosuppressant people over the age of 12 from spring 2022.

Any staff member who does not wish to have the vaccine must discuss this with their COVID coordinator.

## **Safeguarding principals**

Our safeguarding principles continue to remain focused on the following:

- Children, their well-being and safety is paramount at all times and we continue to adopt child centred practice based on Froebelian principles
- Any concerns about a child or young persons welfare should be acted upon immediately in keeping with effective safeguarding policies and procedures
- There should always be a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy available at all times
- There should always be a Paediatric First Aid trained person on site
- Ensure that unsuitable people do not enter the children's workforce and have access to children



All managers maintain a culture of safeguarding across LTNS and undertake their role to lead and manage safe and protective practice for children and young people.

### **Contingency planning for staffing and ratios (not currently in practice)**

The DfE has made it clear that individual settings take full responsibility to ensure the statutory guidelines of the EYFS are adhered to, including ratios and staffing qualifications. However, if a high number of staff are ill due to COVID the setting could take measures to ensure the setting can stay open whilst effectively assessing the risk and ensuring the health and safety of staff and children is paramount. At LTNS we may choose to close a bubble or whole setting if an outbreak is declared and we cannot effectively or safely remain open.

### **Risk Assessments**

During a lockdown (or similar) scenario LTNS maintains and updates three main risk assessments along with this policy, these include:

- LTNS Environments for each of the three nursery schools
- All Sites Staffing
- Children's Health and Wellbeing

Other risk assessments are updated for viewings, settles and staffing trials and can be found on our internal H drive or copies can be requested by emailing [info@ltns.org.uk](mailto:info@ltns.org.uk).

Any further risk assessments such as around contingency planning can be created as needed and signed off by a member of the senior management team.

### **Designated safeguarding leads**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) states that a DSL must have attended child protection training and that their role enables and supports staff to recognise signs of possible abuse and neglect and to respond appropriately in a timely manner.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, LTNS will ensure that considerations for early years practitioners in regard to safeguarding and child protection include:

- Communication to all staff of any changes to arrangements for the named DSL in the event of staff absence or illness
- A coordinated approach that provides compliant and effective information sharing for children who may move to other settings, including cross border / LA social care details and arrangements
- Effective safeguarding systems that work across more than one setting should settings merge
- Revision of policies and any changes or details of changes are communicated with all staff, volunteers and parents



It is important that all settings have access to a DSL at all times. The roles of DSL's continue to involve supporting other staff and also liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments as and when required.

### **Working with and supporting vulnerable children**

The Government has published a definition what they consider to be a vulnerable child during the COVID 19 crisis. Vulnerable children therefore include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with plans. We know that not all vulnerable children will have statutory inventions in place already to determine this level of vulnerability. Increased risks for children will need to be considered as a result of them being at home more frequently and because for some, they will not have the usual support from our early years educators. Children and families will not have the same access to community provisions and support networks. As a result of isolation, children are more at risk regarding all categories of abuse and neglect but especially in relation to domestic abuse, child criminal exploitation and on-line dangers. Knowledge of children who are at risk or children whose welfare is compromised must always be acted upon and referred to the appropriate services for timely interventions. Working closely and liaising with multi-agency partners is extremely important especially during the COVID 19 period.

### **Children's attendance**

Any children for whom attendance at school or early year's provision has been agreed, must be monitored. If those children identified as vulnerable yet are not attending, their absence should be followed up with parents and reported to the child's social worker.

It is important that parents make clear the correct and most up-to-date information for emergency contact details to the school and / or early years provision. Additional emergency contact numbers should be sought and arrangements agreed.

If a child that is eligible to attend an early years setting as a result of them being identified as vulnerable, non-attendance should be responded to and monitored by the DSL or manager of the setting who will:

- Contact the child's parents to establish the reasons for non-attendance
- Contact the child's social worker or key workers and partners working with them externally to your setting
- Record accurately responses from parents and *conversations, advice* and *actions* from other professionals with whom we liaise such as social workers. These records will form an important chronology of events, circumstances and decision making processes taking during the COVID 19 period.

Wandsworth and Lambeth are requesting data from early years settings who are supporting vulnerable children. You will need to seek advice from the LA when necessary.



## Mental health

It is clear that during this difficult time children are understandably anxious and worried. The Government has produced a document specifically to children's mental health and wellbeing. This publication 'Government's Guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus COVID 19 outbreak' has a number of principles to consider.

- How children and young people react can vary depending on their age
- Some children will show stress and anxiety straight away, some will react later
- Negative reactions may include worrying thoughts about their health or that of family and friends, fear, avoidance, problems sleeping, or physical symptoms such as stomach ache
- When adults can stay calm and confident they can best support children and young people

Here are some considerations from the Government document to help children and young people cope with stress.

- **Listen and acknowledge** – Given that children will respond and react differently, be aware that this will show in a number of ways. This could be demonstrated through emotions and behaviours. Emotions may display as being distressed, anxious and upset (tearful) or anger. Children may have a significant change in behaviour and they become more clingy or withdrawn. Children will feel less anxious when they can communicate and express their feelings in a safe environment and with people whom they can trust and love. Listen to children, acknowledge their concerns and show them extra attention during times of stress.
- **Provide clear information about the situation** – It is important to talk openly and honestly about what is happening with children and to answer their questions as best as you can. Explain what is being done to keep them safe and well. Even though we may not have all of the answers it is most important to keep listening and acknowledging their worries and concerns.
- **Be aware of your own reactions** – Children will look to important and relevant adults in their lives and to take from them their 'emotional cues'. It is important that adults stay calm and try to manage their own emotions.
- **Connect regularly** – Some children during the COVID 19 crisis will find themselves in locations that are different than usual for example staying at home, in hospital or other locations. It is important for them to be in regular contact with those important adults in their lives. Make time for frequent contact via phone calls or on-line video calls.
- **Create a new routine** – Routines provide children with an increased feeling of safety especially when things are significantly changing around them. Children who are not in school or nursery can feel displaced as they take on new routines each day. Think about how the changes can be adapted to create new routines taking into account times for play, learning and relaxing. Sufficient sleep and exercise for children is particularly important during this period of time also.



- **Limit exposure to media and speak and talk about what they have seen** – So much media attention on COVID 19 is currently taking over our TV and social media content. If children are worried about what they have seen on TV or heard about from their families, encourage them to talk to you about this.



## **Appendix 1.**

### **COVID-19 Outbreak Management Plan – Linden Tree Nursery Schools**

This outbreak management plan should be adhered to during an outbreak of COVID-19, including any new variants which may surface. There are a number of measures which need to be in place in case of an outbreak, either within an individual nursery or within the wider borough.

This plan will focus on what to do in the following scenarios:

- 1. What to do if there is a single (one) case of COVID-19 in the nursery, this can be either from a staff member or child**
- 2. What to do if there are five or more cases of COVID-19 in the nursery, these can be either from a staff member or a child**
- 3. What to do if there is a wider outbreak within the borough where the nursery resides**

This plan has been constructed using the following guidance for early years from the Department for Education which was withdrawn on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, you can still access this guidance here:

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings>

Information and advice from the Local Authorities in Lambeth and Wandsworth Public Health Teams have also been included.

All information below will be updated as required in line with changing guidance, rise or fall in cases across the country and will always be conducted in line with LTNS risk assessments and the Coronavirus (COVID-19) policy.

Any identified positive LTD test must be followed up by a confirmatory PCR test (where testing is possible). The following scenarios assume that in all cases the positive result has come from a PCR test.

In the event that there is a positive case identified in the nursery the response may be different depending on the number of cases. Each scenario is outlined below:

**In all cases if a child or staff member is admitted to hospital due to COVID-19 Public Health should be contacted. This can be done via the DfE helpline: 0800 046 8687, option 1.**

**A hospitalisation could indicate increased severity of illness or a new variant of concern.**

- 1. What to do if there is a single (one) case of COVID-19 in the nursery, this can be either from a staff member or child:**

As soon a positive PCR case is identified the Head of Schools must be informed

1. The manager has been informed of a positive COVID-19 case within the nursery
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2. The manager tells the positive case to begin to self-isolate until they feel well and asks that the case to be reported to NHS Test and Trace
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3. The manager should refer to the risk assessments and continue to act accordingly if a bubble is affected and report the case to Senior Management
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4. Email parents of children in bubble to inform of positive case, but not to tell children to self-isolate

5. Be alert for any further cases and offer staff to test on LFD test if required

From 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 if a staff member has been identified as a close contact of a positive case they do not need to self-isolate or take LFD test for 7 days. This includes both vaccinated and unvaccinated staff.

**2. What to do if there are five or more cases of COVID-19 in the nursery, these can be either from a staff member or a child**

If there are five or more cases this could mean there is an outbreak in the setting. An outbreak is considered when 50% of the setting test positive for COVID-19. The procedure to follow is similar to that of one case however, the local authority public health team may be involved sooner to advise and support. In all cases the following must occur:

1. The manager has been informed of five or more positive COVID-19 case within the nursery. Inform the Senior Management Team.

2. The manager tells the positive case to self-isolate until they feel better and asks that the case to be reported to NHS Test and Trace

3. The manager should refer to the risk assessments and instigate contingency plans such as staff to wear a face covering in communal areas and whilst doing parent handovers

4. Email parents to inform of positive case, but not to tell children to self-isolate

5. Inform the Senior Management Team, the LA Health Team of outbreak and follow advice

6. Be alert for any further cases – LFD test may be reintroduced

7. Adhere to enhanced cleaning regime including washing soft furnishings daily and deep cleaning the affected rooms/areas with disinfectant such as Milton

**3. What to do if there is a wider outbreak within the borough where the nursery resides**

Managers should be alert to outbreaks within the wider area. This includes the borough, or local community spaces such as Theatres, cinemas or soft play areas.

If an outbreak were to occur the LA will inform the nursery via email and/or with announcements on their website or the local news. Managers should be up to date with any incidents within the local area by signing up to newsletters and from reading information sent through from the head office team. Managers should be ready to respond at any given time by following the below:



1. Alerting the nursery staff teams, both verbally and by posting information in the WhatsApp groups/sending out an email. Inform the Senior Management Team.

2. Reviewing posters around the nursery reminding staff of the 'Systems of Control' and replacing any out of date posters, especially in the staff room and hygiene areas

3. Alerting the parents by putting posters up at the entrances warning them of the outbreak within the community and sending out important correspondence

4. Working to assist the LA as required when called upon

5. Re-introduce LTF tests/PCR tests as requested by the LA\*\*

6. If an outbreak were to occur in the nursery follow the procedures outlined in points 1 and 2 depending on the cases identified

\*\* LFD testing may be re-introduced during an outbreak. The nursery should have test kits in reserve for emergencies.

If any new variants of concern emerge the manager should follow the advice of the Senior Management Team and implement any precautionary practices as outlined either within the risk assessments or via Government. Further information will be shared as required.