

## **Pandemic – Policy and Procedures**

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Unlike ordinary seasonal influenza that occurs every winter in the UK, pandemic flu can occur at any time of the year. Symptoms would probably be similar to flu, but likely to be more severe. Pandemics arise when a new virus emerges which is capable of spreading in the worldwide population. Good planning and preparation will ease the impact of the occurrence of a pandemic. This policy aims to provide guidelines in the interim to a standard policy for early years settings. Any specific advice provided by Health Authorities in the event of a pandemic will override this policy and procedures. This policy also applies to any major infectious outbreak that might seriously risk the health and safety of children, staff and visitors to pre-school.

### **Planning for a Pandemic**

- Staff will be kept apprised of the latest DfES and HSE guidelines regarding pandemic flu, including being able to recognize the symptoms.
- All staff will adhere to Churchill Pre-School Health and Safety Policy, since infection control is best maintained through good H&S practice.
- All parents will be made aware of the Pandemic Policy and procedures and the need for their full co-operation in the event of a flu pandemic.
- Stocks of cleaning materials, tissues, paper towels and other cleaning items will be maintained and increased should the risk of a pandemic be reported.
- This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary whenever new Government advice is issued regarding pandemic flu.

### **Procedures for Pandemic Alert Status**

- Should the UK Alert status for pandemic flu be implemented, the Leader and Chair will immediately seek advice from and maintain contact with the Local Health and Education Authorities (North Somerset Council).
- All staff and parents/carers will be informed of the increased national alert status, the need to monitor their children for signs of symptoms and the need to be ready to collect their children at short notice.
- Pre-School will remain open unless directed by Government or the local Health and/or Education authorities or as deemed necessary by the Leader/Chair to protect the Health and Safety of all attending pre-school.
- Whilst pre-school remains open, visitors to pre-school other than parents and carers, will be kept to a minimum, excursions to local attractions/farms etc will be cancelled and certain activities that can promote exchange of body fluids such as such sand, clay and water play will be suspended.

### **Infection Occurrence within Pre-school**

- Any children displaying flu-like symptoms, no matter how minor, should be kept at home until they are fully recovered and pre-school must be informed immediately even if the symptoms arise on a day when the child does not normally attend pre-school.
- In the event of a confirmed infection discovered either during a pre-school session or with any child who attends pre-school, all staff and parents will be informed using the staff call-out list and parent/carer registration folder.
- In the event of a child falling ill at pre-school, the parent carer will be contacted immediately. In the interim the child will be isolated from the rest of the children until collected and/or medical help is available.
- All staff and children attending when the infection was discovered will be closely monitored.

### **Closure/Re-opening of Pre-School**

- In the event of the need to close pre-school, the Leader will not need to obtain prior permission from the Management Committee, but the Chair must be informed at the earliest opportunity. The Chair and Leader will assess the situation and agree action to be taken.
- All parents/carers will be contacted using the registration list and asked to collect their child immediately or nominate another adult who will be assigned a password, as per normal collection procedures.
- The staff call-out list and parent/carer registration list will be used to inform all other parents of the closure of pre-school and subsequent re-opening.
- It may be necessary to maintain a skeleton service for a period, but this will only be possible if the child:staff ratio can be met.
- Pre-School will provide as much support and assistance to staff and families during the recovery period as they need.