

COVID-19 Parent Update - Wednesday 11th March

The spread of the virus continues worldwide and the government's view remains that widespread exposure in the UK may be inevitable. How things develop from here is hard to predict but there are clearly things we can do that will help. Our guiding objectives are:

- to keep up to date with and follow all government guidance
- find the appropriate balance between protecting the health of the children, their parents and our staff members, and continuing to provide as normal a day to day service as we can
- keeping parents informed about what we are doing and why as often as practical

Given the situation will change rapidly and so to ensure you can always know the latest from us before you leave the house, any instructions for that day, all relevant links to official bodies and guidance, and copies of this and subsequent parent updates, will be available on a dedicated page on our website:

<https://www.rainbownurseryschool.co.uk/covid-19>

This update details what we have done so far, what additional measures we are putting in place, and what we need you and your children to do to help. Your support and cooperation are both appreciated and essential.

Government Guidance to Educational Settings

The government has provided detailed information covering background and essential “what to do if” type guidance specifically for early years settings and schools, which can be found here:

[COVID-19: guidance for educational settings](#), and linked from our webpage.

Broadly speaking the government’s current guidance specifies the actions we must take if any child or member of staff becomes a CONFIRMED* case of COVID-19, or if a child or staff member becomes ill while at the setting and they have had direct contact with a CONFIRMED case, or have recently been in one of the defined hotspots. We are currently unaware of any child, parent or member of staff in this situation, though this may change at any time, and we request that you let us know immediately if you, your child, or anyone you have been in contact with, are CONFIRMED as having COVID-19.

** Going forwards, the government has indicated that as the numbers of cases grow and outstrip the ability to practically test and confirm they will instead adopt a “Presumed Clinical Diagnosis”. For the purposes of this document and going forwards please treat “Confirmed” and “Presumed Clinical Diagnosis” as one and the same in meaning.*

Over and above this there is a specific and growing list of countries (outside of the hotspot zones in China, Iran, Northern Italy, and South Korea) which the government requires different treatment of people returning from them, who are therefore considered to be at higher risk. The current list can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public#returning-travellers>

If you, or anyone you are in direct contact with, are shortly to travel to or return from any of these countries please let us know.

For advice or to contact the NHS if you believe you have have contracted COVID-19 do not go to your GP, instead call 111, or use the NHS specialist COVID-19 online service which is suitable for all age groups: <https://111.nhs.uk/service/COVID-19/>

Actions We Have Already Taken At Rainbow

We have been and are:

- Making daily checks on the Government and Local Authority guidance, and considering how we would implement the guidance at Rainbow if required.
- Promoting awareness of symptoms and methods of transmission with staff, reiterating the importance of following all our personal care policies, specifically handwashing, use of sanitiser and disinfectant on surfaces, and general cleaning
- Regularly disinfecting high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, staff tablet screens, telephones, Junior Club minibus handles/steering wheels etc over and above our usual standards.
- Keeping our staff informed of “What to do if...” and ensure staff are fully aware of the need to inform management if they, or anyone they have been in contact, with becomes a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Planning out scenarios for dealing with significant staff absence and prioritisation of childcare places should that be required (government has made vague reference to temporary changes in staffing ratios in Early Years - should detail ever follow we will factor that in, but only insofar as we are comfortable the safety of the children will not be put at risk)
- Planning alternative menus in case of supply chain problems
- Increasing both quality and quantity of nursery children’s handwashing through the day.
- Ensuring the existing policy for Junior Club children to wash their hands on arrival off the minibuses after school is rigorously followed, and ensure staff are extra vigilant that this is happening and effective.
- Implementing additional measures to limit the risk of the spread of the virus within the nursery

What We Are Going To Do

General measures to prevent the spread of the virus (handwashing; and catch it, bin it, kill it) are now widely known and actively promoted by the government and the media.

We have identified a number of additional measures that will reduce the risk of spreading the virus in the nursery. “Exit and Entry”, and “Illness, Temperature and Medication” will come into effect from Monday 16th March. The other internal measures are being introduced now.

Entry and Exit:

- Please wash your child’s hands thoroughly before leaving your home
- Baby Nursery and Day Nursery entrances do not have access to sinks for hand washing, but will have supplies (while stocks last) of baby wipes and hand sanitiser. The baby wipes are not anti-viral and are not as effective as soap and water but in situations where nothing else is practical they are better than nothing. The hand sanitiser is for you, it is your choice if you use it on your child’s hands after using a baby wipe.
- In Preschool, once your child has removed their coat in the cloakroom please take them to the toilets and ensure they and you wash their hands before entering the care rooms.
- In Junior Club, we request parents do not enter the building beyond the entrance foyer, and the member of staff granting access will ensure your child washes their hands on arrival.
- Practitioners will be advised to allow 5 minutes extra on your entry times to minimise any disruption to your work commute times this additional activity will take.
- We strongly recommend the same routine at collection, or if not, that you wash your child’s hands thoroughly on arrival at your home.

Illness, Temperature and Medication:

Temperature is a key symptom of COVID-19 and so we are using it as a key part of our risk prevention measures. We acknowledge that a high temperature in young children may be as a result of a myriad of reasons however during this period we have to consider the broader potential risks to all the children and our staff. Normal temperature range is between 36.4 and 37.8 and our Sickness and Illness Policy (*a copy of which is available in the "Information and Downloads" section of our website*) defines a high temperature as ≥ 38 degrees. However given that PHE have indicated their guidance will be anyone with a mild fever (defined as 37.8 to 38 degrees) should self-isolate, for the purposes of these interim measures we are defining that a high temperature is ≥ 37.8 degrees.

Given the obvious close and frequent physical contact between parent and child we consider that if you, or anyone in your child's home, have been in direct contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case then the child is also considered to have been in direct contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case and as such is a higher risk to other children and staff within the nursery.

As such, please carefully review the following temporary supplemental measures that we are putting in place from Monday 16th March:

- If your child is ill or has a high temperature - do not bring them to nursery. This is wholly consistent with our existing Sickness and Illness Policy but will be enacted more stringently than under normal circumstances.
- If you, or anyone in your household, have been in direct contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case and are symptomatic, do not bring your child to nursery, or have anyone else bring your child to nursery, regardless of whether your child is feeling fine or not.
- If your child seems fine, but is running a temperature to the point that you feel the need to administer a Paracetamol suspension or Ibuprofen - do not bring your child to nursery - even if the medication has brought down their temperature by the time you are leaving home to come to nursery
- If you bring your child and tell us they have had Paracetamol suspension or Ibuprofen within the last 6 hours, we will be unable to accept your child into our care.
- Checking all children's temperatures on arrival, while you wait, is not practical. We will however be checking and documenting the temperatures of all nursery aged children in our care, periodically through the day.
- For children identified as at higher risk, as defined above, we will check and document their temperature at least twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon.
- If your child develops a high temperature we will contact you in line with our existing policy to seek approval to administer Paracetamol suspension or Ibuprofen. We will also request you, or one of your authorised carers, come and collect your child.
- For children identified as at higher risk, as defined above, who develop a high temperature we will immediately safely isolate the child, contact you, and request you, or one of your authorised carers, come and collect your child.

We recognise that restricting attendance for sick or potentially sick children, and requiring immediate collection if your child runs a high temperature when in our care, may be inconvenient and disruptive. We do not take such measures lightly and do so to protect all the children in our care, and staff and parents, as best as we are able. There are many reasons that a child will run a temperature and hopefully COVID-19 will remain an unlikely one. However as with the government's actions, we need to take reasonable and proportional measures to limit the risks to all the children in our care, and all our parents and all our staff. If one child's high temperature goes on to be confirmed illness through COVID-19, then our early action may have saved onward transmission to dozens of children, parents and staff.

Other Internal Measures We Are Progressing

- Planned method of immediate isolation of high risk children with high temperature.
- Staff “what to do if” crib sheets generated and circulated
- Staff advised to wash hands when moving between rooms (for example to cover colleagues over lunches) and of the importance of logging their check in and out to rooms on the Staff Sign In tablet application.
- Before children are moved between rooms (start/end of day, or as part of visits) they go through a thorough hand washing routine before moving
- Preschool yoga to take place in preschool not the Junior Club room, to stop unnecessary movement around the nursery or cross contamination risk between age groups.
- Baby soft play area temporarily taken out of use; to be disinfected and packed away
- Offsite visits to indoor public places (eg library) to stop until further notice
- Online form for ongoing provision or relevant information by parents/carers (for example holidays where/when, letting us know about contact with suspected or confirmed cases) generated and to be shared.
- Limit where possible all regular deliveries to a single access point away from the care rooms.

How You Can Help

- Let us know immediately if you, your child, or anyone you have been in contact with, are CONFIRMED as having COVID-19
- If you or your child is CONFIRMED as having COVID-19 do not return to the nursery until you have been advised by a health professional that it is safe to do so. Please keep us informed as best as you are able during your isolation, and before your child’s return to nursery.
- Let us know other relevant health/travel information as soon as possible by phone or using the e-form circulated to you by email/or on our website. We would rather know that your hairdresser’s cousin is a confirmed case than not know. All information will be treated confidentially.
- If you are not bringing in your child because they are ill, or meet any of the criteria in section “*Illness, Temperature and Medication*” please let us know by phone or our notification form.
- Check in on the Rainbow website dedicated page often to ensure you are fully informed. Should the situation escalate we would advise checking daily before leaving the house.
- Adhere to the additional measures outlined. We would politely remind you that both Paracetamol suspension and Ibuprofen mask true temperature, and it's use without telling us could potentially put your child, and other children at risk.
- Please check our list of contacts for you, specifically that your contact details are up to date, and those of who we are able to call to collect your child if they become ill.
- If you have a holiday booked in the coming 2 months and receive our information request email please respond as soon as practical.
- If you have international travel with work coming up please let us know.

These are challenging times. We sincerely appreciate your understanding and adherence to our policies and the additional measures we are putting in place. As ever, should you wish to discuss anything contained in here please contact Lisa Watson, Karl or Harriet Shields by email or phone.