



COVID-19 Procedures:

Living with Covid - Effective from 01.04.22

From 1st April 2022 we moved to the 'Living with Covid' phase of managing covid 19 as set out by the government. Stepping Stones will continue to follow the latest advice given by government and the UKHSA on how to manage covid-19 and other common respiratory illnesses.

Our priority, as it has been throughout the pandemic, is to support children's wellbeing, and we recognise the need for children to receive face-to-face, high-quality education and childcare to support their achievements, life chances and mental and physical health. It has been highlighted that children are at a greater risk to wider harms caused through missed education rather than from covid.

Testing is no longer required – whether symptoms are present or not. Young children should not be requested to test unless directed by a Health professional

UKHSA published new guidance on 01.04.22 to minimise the risk of transmission and to protect the vulnerable. It recommends the following baseline measures:

- Individuals take up the full course of vaccination
- Engage in regular handwashing and improved hygiene practices (catch it, kill it, bin it)
- Ensure good ventilation when inside
- Consider wearing a mask when in crowded public places such as public transport – this DOES NOT apply to education settings.
- Additionally, in education and care settings, the need to enforce cleaning regimes.

In practice we will reinforce our baseline measures to help prevent transmission and infection and support the programme of vaccination and immunisation so that face to face education can remain a priority. Use of resources such as E-bug will support our education of young children to understand covid and mitigate the risks.

However, it is important that we take the following common sense measures:

- People with symptoms of a respiratory infection (including covid 19) and a high temperature, OR who feel unwell, should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people until they feel well enough to resume normal activities AND NO LONGER have a high temperature.
- Anyone with a positive covid-19 test result should try to stay at home and avoid contact with others for 5 days. For those under 18, the advice is 3 days.
- Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people. They can go back to setting when they no longer have a high temperature and are well enough to attend.

Stepping Stones can reasonably refuse children if we feel it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19 or other communicable illnesses.

Risk Assessment & Identifying harm

We will continue to assess the risks for children in our care who have EHC plans or additional needs and ensure they are safely cared for whether in setting or at home. We will continue to work together with local agencies and services to actively look for signs of harm, given that some children may have been exposed to greater harm because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the case of a local outbreak, we will seek advice from UKHSA.

Control measures: We will -

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, using standard products such as detergents.
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone

- ✓ *Hand hygiene* - Frequent and thorough hand cleaning will continue as our regular practice. We will continue to ensure that children clean their hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water or hand sanitiser.
- ✓ *Respiratory hygiene* – Our ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach continues as good practice.
- ✓ We refer to [e-Bug website](#) for resources and materials to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene.
- ✓ *Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)* - Most staff in settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work.

✓

It is important for staff to recognise that coronavirus will be ‘a way of life’ for young children and we must educate them in preventative and hygienic measures which must be embedded into their thinking and daily lives.

2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes

We have a thorough cleaning schedule in place, which includes regular cleaning of areas and equipment with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces. We use standard products such as detergents and a fogger to sanitise non-wipeable items. We refer to PHE guidance on [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings outside the home](#).

3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

We will keep the building well ventilated whilst in use and between different groups. We will try to balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature, but children may need extra clothing on cold days.

We will identify areas which are poorly ventilated as part of our risk assessment and take steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas when visitors or parents are on site.

Prioritising early years places

In the uncommon event of high levels of workforce absence may mean we need to restrict attendance (for example, if we are unable to operate at full capacity) we will give priority to:

- children of critical workers, and vulnerable children – some children may be vulnerable who are not officially in statutory systems and we would seek to support any children who we believe may have challenging circumstances at home
- then 3- and 4-year-olds, in particular those who will be transitioning to Reception
- followed by younger age groups

Admitting children back to the setting

In most cases, parents and carers will agree that a child with symptoms should not attend the setting; if a parent or carer insists on a child attending our setting, we can take the reasonable decision to refuse the child if we feel it is in their best interests or the interests of the other children. The setting’s decision is final.

Staying in touch with parents or carers whose child is at home

If appropriate we will:

- continue to support the learning of children who cannot attend - including maintaining contact with their key person and peers
- parents and carers can be supported to provide a positive learning environment at home
Resources for home learning can be found at:
 - ✓ [Hungry Little Minds](#) - provides simple fun, activities for kids aged 0 to 5 for parents to do at home with children to support their early learning
 - ✓ [BBC Tiny Happy People](#) - activities for babies, toddlers and children
 - ✓ [Words for Life](#)
 - ✓ [Help children aged 2 to 4 to learn at home: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Wellbeing and support

It is possible to experience a variety of emotions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. We will liaise with families and monitor individual children for issues where we may need to provide more focused support. The same applies to staff and we will support members of staff with their wellbeing and mental health.

It is important that all staff have regular opportunities to discuss any concerns and issues with management. Wellbeing interviews were, and will continue to be conducted with staff where they have been absent due to covid related matters or because of closure due to covid. All staff have received information and signposting to useful wellbeing resources. Further useful info from MindEd can be accessed at [coronavirus staff resilience tips](#) with advice and tips for frontline staff. Regular supervision meetings enable staff to discuss any concerns or issues relating to mental health and well-being.

There will be no charge for children unable to take up their place due to any covid related reasons

Public liability insurance

We have appropriate insurance with Morton Michel.