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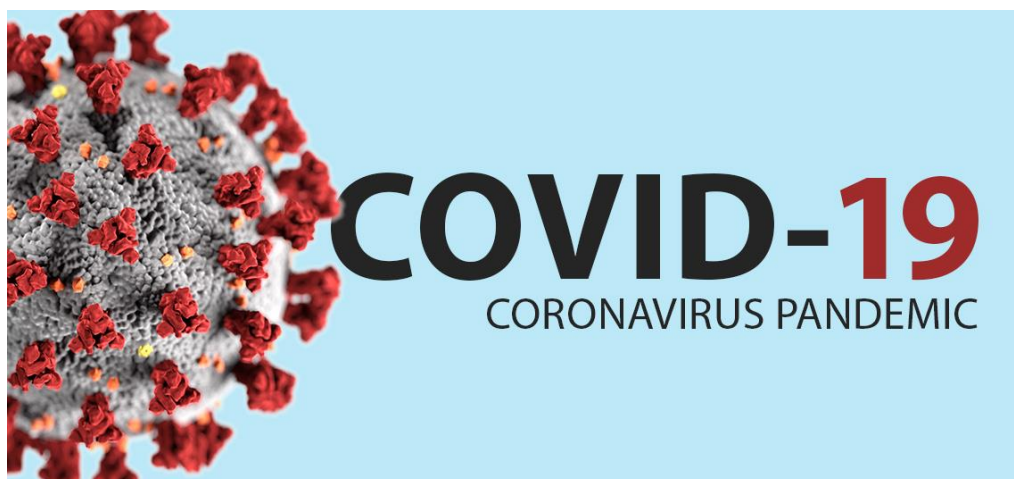
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Updated 04<sup>th</sup> May 2022 effective from Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022

# 2020-22

## RISK ASSESSMENT



Hazel Kelly

Cassiltoun Stables Nursery

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This risk assessment has been written taking into consideration the risk to the internal and external stakeholder of the nursery returning to operations after the suspension of the service due to CODID 19.

The nursery is awaiting further guidance from The Scottish Government. This risk assessment will then be updated in line with the guidance.

	RISK	WHO?	LEVEL	REDUCE RISK BY	LEVEL
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The risk has been identified, followed by the current level of risk, 5 being the highest risk and 1 a very low risk of any infection being passed between children, staff and parents.

The document then identifies the people at risk and how that risk can be lowered by measures put in place.

Finally the level that the nursery will be operating at using the measures.

	RISK	WHO?	LEVEL	REDUCE RISK BY	LEVEL
1	Drop off and collection of children	Children Parents Staff			
1.1	Parent's all dropping and collecting at the same time	Children Staff parents	4	Families to be issued with staggered times to drop off/collect. Social distancing to be adhered to at all times.	2
Change				<p>Nursery will open from 7:50am. Parents are asked to wear face coverings where possible, and there will be no allocated drop off times.</p> <p>Face coverings are there to protect yourself as well as others, please respect that some people are exempt from wearing masks.</p> <p>Parents will be offered 4 collection slots and asked to adhere to their times and socially distancing from staff and parents where possible.</p>	
Change				The nursery will be open from 7:30am. Anyone accessing drop off or pickup points are asked to wear masks where possible. Hand gel is available outside the front door of the nursery and on your left hand side going through the gate.	
change				Due to the rising number of cases in Glasgow we are reverting back to allocated pick up times. 3/5 children will be dropped off and collected at the front door. The children will be in the front foyer with their bag and jacket on at your selected time. Their daily sheet will be in their bag for your information. Social distancing signs will be visible outside, please follow the appropriate distancing and guidelines. Children in	

				the 2/3 room and babies please use the side garden door at the 2/3 room.	
Change				Due to updated Government guidance, the nursery will only be open to keyworkers' children, eligible 2's and vulnerable children. They guidance has been issued and is at the digression of the nursery manager. Parents will be asked to provide evidence of their keyworker status from their employer to access their place at nursery.	
Change				<p>Following the government's latest guidance the nursery will reopen to all children from Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021. The current advice is that it is safe for children to return to nursery enhancing their health and wellbeing safely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Children in the 2/3 room will be dropped off and picked up from their door leading from the garden at the side of the buiding.</li> <li>➤ Babies will be dropped off and collected at the front door.</li> <li>➤ 3/5 children at morning drop off will access through the front door.</li> <li>➤ Children arriving and being collected at 1pm will be dropped off at the back garden door.</li> <li>➤ 3/5 4:30pm pickups will be at the back garden door</li> <li>➤ Any 3/5 pickups after this will be at the front door</li> </ul>	
Change				All drop offs and pickups will be from the garden doors. The back path has been completed, making this safe to do so.	

				<p>Babies should be dropped off and collected from the back garden fire door.</p> <p>Children in the 2/3 room will be dropped off and picked up from their door leading from the garden at the side of the building.</p> <p>All 3/5 room drop offs and pickups are by the back garden blue door, from the playroom.</p>	
				Collection points remain from outside the building	
1.2	Parent's signing in, cross contamination.	Parent Staff	3	Parents to register attendance at a table outside the front of main door, children's possessions will be placed in a box to be passed to staff member receiving the child from the outside playroom room door.	1
Change				All children's belongings should fit into their bag and no toys from home can be brought into nursery.	
Change				Children are now signed in at the playroom door by nursery staff. Any hand over information should be passed on at this point. We would recommend you call the nursery or email if there are any changes to your child's care plan or information held.	
Reminder				All additional items including toys should be left with the parent at handover. Bringing in toys from home adds to the potential risks within the nursery.	
				Staff sign children in and out and the beginning and end of the day, parents should inform staff of who is collecting.	
1.3	Symptomatic children attend nursery	Children Staff	5	Only children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period attend the setting.	2

				Children's temperatures can be taken and recorded on arrival, this can be monitored throughout the day if a child appears to be unwell	
				No temperatures will be taken unless a child appears unwell. A high temperature will still be treated as a threat of Covid and parents will be informed to collect their child until the temperature subsides and child is feeling well enough to return to nursery	
1.4	Symptomatic family members within the household	Children parent staff	4	On arrival at the nursery, it is reasonable to ask if parents, children or any member of the household have any of the symptoms of COVID-19 (high temperature or a persistent cough). If the answer is yes, they will not be allowed to leave their child at the setting. The child cannot return until current isolation guidelines have been followed, or a negative test result received.	2
Change	Guidance			All children that are asked to self-isolate through track and trace should book a COVID test between day 3 and 5 of receiving the call from track and trace. 10 days isolation must still be adhered to even after a negative result. Should symptoms develop after this this period, another test should be taken.	
Change				All children develop runny noses at this time of year. Children can still attend nursery with this but, if this in addition to any other symptoms please keep your child at home. For the best practice and care of your child, please be aware that if they are distressed or upset due to being under the weather, we will contact you and ask you to arrange to collect your child.	

Change				Please see attached guidance on self-isolation from test and protect, we will be following this guidance until further notice.	
Change	Guidance			From Saturday 11 December household contacts of all cases, regardless of which variant is suspected, must isolate for 10 days. This applies to everyone in the household, irrespective of age, testing negative or being vaccinated.	
				There is no requirement for a child to stay at home if a family member has tested positive for Covid	
1.6	Cross contamination on items from home	Children staff	3	Only essential teddy's or blankets (or similar) to be brought in from home.	1
Update				Children are gradually bringing more items in from home, this is still an issue for cross contamination as well as upset for a child if we ask parents to take them away. Please leave them at home or in the car.	
Reminder				Many children are attending nursery with additional items from home, staff will take these items from your child and hand them back to parents at the door at drop off, this is due to the potential risk to the nursery. This can cause distress to your child, please do not put your child under this duress by leaving toys etc. at home.	
				We would ask that minimum item's from home come into nursery and all are cleaned prior to bringing them in.	
1.7	Infection control	Children staff	4	As children enter the setting staff will assist them to wash hands thoroughly. Hand wash monitoring and supervision will continue regularly throughout the day.	2

				Regular hand washing will continue on arrival, before and after lunch/snack and regularly throughout the day for both children and staff.	
1.8	Cross contamination	Children staff	3	Encourage children to avoid touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth.	2
1.9	Social distancing and cross contamination	Children Parents staff	3	All children coming to the setting should avoid all non-essential public transport travel, and outside of setting hours, follow national guidelines for social interaction.	2
				There are no longer restrictions to travel or public transport.	
1.10	New children could be emotionally distressed starting nursery.	Staff children	3	Consider allowing parents to enter the nursery for the purpose of settling in session if not doing so would cause a child distress. All measures should be taken to minimise contact between the parent and other children and staff members. New children settles will be done at the end of a day when a room can be made available for the child and parent, and would be carried out by an additional staff member / manager who had minimal contact with other children.	1
Change				Children settling into nursery will settle on their selected days to minimise extra children in the rooms. Parents will be allowed in following strict social distancing and hand washing procedures.	
				New children settling at nursery will be invited in daily the week previous to starting nursery, their time will be extended daily as required to suit the needs of the child. Parents / carers are welcome in the nursery following handwashing procedures	



1.11	Social distancing and cross contamination	Children staff	4	Only parents who are symptom free and or have completed the required isolation periods will be able to drop off or collect their child. Aim to limit drop off and pick up to 1 adult per family and stagger the timings where possible.	2
Change				Due to the increase of COVID-19 in other places, we are asking parents to ensure social distancing around the nursery and where possible only 1 adult coming into the nursery ground for drop off and pick up. There is now a hand sanitiser at the nursery gate, please use this on entering the garden.	
update				There is sanitiser on the gate through to the garden and also one on the front door, we would ask that the sanitiser is used before pressing the bell to reduce contact surfaces.	
1.12	Cross contamination within the small pram shed, social distancing between belongings and parents accessing the shed	Parents Staff	3	Prams to be left in the covered outdoor pram area at the rear of the side garden. Staff can access prams and sanitise handles.	1
				Both pram sheds can be used again, please ensure you pram is folded down to allow space for everyone.	
1.13	Social distancing for staff mixing with parents	Parents staff	3	Children to be collected from the garden. Staggered collection times. Parents to wait outside side gate. One member of staff to take child out to parent. The child's belongings will be in the box from drop off, parent removes belongings and boxes are sanitised.	1

Change				Please respect other parent's space and privacy during handover times as there could be personal and confidential matters discussed.	
Update				Staff will only be bringing one child at a time, to the door. The train will be in place to ensure social distancing between parents and staff.	
Reminder				When staff are meeting you at the door or gate, they will have their mask or visor on, please help us to keep our staff safe by always wearing a face covering when you are around others.	
				Staff no longer are required to wear a mask but some staff may choose still to wear one. Please respect staff's personal space at handovers.	
2	Physical Distancing	Children and staff			
2.1	Children mixing in large groups, open to cross contamination	Children staff	5	Children will be in 'bubbles' of eight or less children. These 'bubbles' will remain with the same eight children and the same members of staff. Children can mix within their 'bubble' but not with other 'bubbles'. Garden time will be within the 'bubble'.	2
Change				Children can mix both indoors and in the garden and we do not need to allocate bubbles any longer, however staff are required to social distance.	
change				During this period of restricted service, the nursery will have 2 bubbles, under 3's and over 3's. We will also operate with 2 bubble of staff for each age group.	

Update				<p>In conjunction with the latest guidance children will be able to mix within the nursery and the nursery will be deep cleaned every night. The social and emotional benefits outweigh the risk of transmission to children under 5.</p> <p>Staff will be in allocated rooms and mixing and time using a shared space is kept to a minimum.</p> <p>The nursery has been notified that staff will have the opportunity for COVID testing twice a week. We expect this to be in the next 2 weeks.</p>	
Updated				<p>Nursery staff are regularly using LFT testing at home, some staff are also regularly attending testing sites for PCR testing, this is a personal choice and only done as an additional precautionary measure when showing no symptoms and not been contacted by Test and Protect. Should any staff member be getting tested due to showing symptoms or having been contacted by Test and Protect, they will be asked to isolate until their test results are back with a negative result as per the attached guidance.</p>	
Updated				<p>As per the guidance shared in September, staff are no longer classed as a close contact unless contacted by track and trace. If a child has attended nursery and then tests positive staff in the room will be asked to test daily for the next 5 days.</p>	
				<p>There are no restrictions for children mixing in nursery, and outside space is utilized as much as possible.</p>	
2.2	Infection control	Children staff	3	Care routines including provision of snacks should be within the space allocated to each "bubble".	2

Updated				Children in 3/5's are mixing throughout the three room and child safe hand sanitisers are being used. Hand washing is being carried out regularly and before and after eating. Under 3's are mixing in the side garden. When numbers are reduce after 4:30pm and space allows all children can mix in the side garden prior to collection.	
2.3	Toilets and corridors, children mixing with different 'bubbles'.	Children Staff	4	The use of communal internal spaces should be restricted as much as possible. Accessing toilets and corridors will be done with the support of a member of staff.	2
change				2/3 room children will only use the blue toilets and 3/5 room children will only use the yellow toilets. Staff must ensure the toilets are cleaned after their group of children use them, following the current infection control policy.	
				2/3 children and 3/5 children will continue to use separate toilets with regular cleaning in place.	
2.4	Cross contamination and infection control of outdoor toys	Staff Children	3	Outdoor spaces should be used by different "bubbles" at different times of the day. Our door toys will be limited and sanitised in-between groups.	1
Change				Children are encouraged to be outdoors as much as possible with toys sanitised daily.	
				All children will access outdoors at least once per day, this could be a walk in the woodlands, playing in the garden or both	

2.5	Sharing indoor resources	Children staff	4	Each room will have resources for the day, all resources will be sterilised before being used by another 'bubble.	2
Change				Bubbles are no longer applicable	
				All toys are cleaned daily and logged on toy cleaning records	
2.6	Education, learning and children's mental health	Children staff	3	<p>Within the children's 'bubble' we will be continuing to learn through play. The health and wellbeing of the children will be of paramount importance in the first phase of returning to nursery.</p> <p>Children should be supported in developmentally appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe including regular hand washing and sneezing into a tissue.</p> <p>Children will be supported to understand the changes and challenges they may be encountering as a result of COVID-19 and staff need to ensure they are aware of children's attachments and their need for emotional support at this time.</p>	1
				Through Getting it Right for Every Child and Realising the Ambition all child are supported individually through planning and one to one time with keyworkers. As all the children are back to regular attendance and socially mixing with all their peers. Children are building healthy attachments to staff and building friendships within and out with the nursery.	
3	Staff health wellbeing and safety				

3.1	Physical distancing between staff	Staff Children	4	Staff will remain within their allocated 'bubble' for the day/week. Within the playroom staff will remain 2 meters apart where possible. The allocation of staff for each 'bubble' will allow for staff breaks. Only 2 staff will access the staffroom at any given time. The garden and front foyer can be used by staff.	2
Change				Staff are now required to wear a face shield at any points of contact with parents. Staff are also required to wear a face covering entering and leaving the building and in any communal areas within the nursery.	
change	Reducing the risk of low staffing and the number of children having to isolate should there be a positive case on the nursery.			3/5 room Staff will remain with their key group of children in the same room for 1 week at a time and rotate on a weekly basis. Staffing will be arranged to enable children to be looked after without staff changing rooms during the day. All other rooms will be covered by the same staff for the full day.	
updated				Staff are asked to wear face coverings in all public and shared space within the nursery as well as entering and exiting the building.	
				Staff are no longer required to wear a face covering but some may choose to continue. If staff have a cough or cold they will be asked to wear their mask to minimise any infections spreading.	
3.2	Attendance / sickness	Staff Children parents	5	Only staff that are symptom free should attend the service. Temperatures will be taken and recorded daily to ensure staff are well and safe to be with the children. If a member of staff becomes unwell or showing signs of COVID then they will be asked to leave the playroom immediately and we will ensure they get home safely.	2

				<p>If a member of staff has helped someone who displayed symptoms they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact.</p> <p>The area should be thoroughly cleaned, immediately if the area cannot be left unvisited, and if the area can be left unvisited then cleaned after 72 hours</p> <p>The person responsible for cleaning the area should wear appropriate PPE.</p> <p>They will only be allowed back to nursery after an appropriate isolation period has finished or a negative test result concluded.</p> <p>It is suggested that all other staff and children that have been in contact with them also get tested where someone has tested positive. All other children and adults in that bubble must get tested and can only return after a negative result. There is no need to test members of their household unless they have a positive result.</p> <p>If clinical advice is needed, the setting staff, parent or guardian should go online to NHS 111 (or call 111 if they don't have internet access)</p>	
3.3	Uniform and PPE cross contamination and infection control	Staff Children	4	<p>All staff are supplied with uniform tops. Staff are asked to bring their freshly laundered top to work and get changed on arrival. Work fleeces should also not be worn out with the nursery. Staff should arrive promptly for their shift ensuring enough time for hand washing, accessing your locker and changing.</p>	2

			<p>Face coverings are not recommended within the play room. Gloves and apron are available for all cleaning including intimate care. Blue aprons should be worn during food preparation and serving children. Children will no longer be able to 'self-serve'.</p> <p>If a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A fluid-resistant visor face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant visor mask should be worn by the supervising adult.</p> <p>Sanitiser gel is available in all areas of the nursery but is not a substitute for hand washing which should be carried out regularly and in between contact with children where possible.</p> <p>Nails should be kept short and polish free, false nails will be permitted.</p>	
Change			<p>All staff are supplied with uniform tops. If staff travel on public transport they are asked to bring their freshly laundered top to work and get changed on arrival. Work fleeces should also not be worn out with the nursery. Staff are now required to wear a face shield at any points of contact with parents. Staff are also required to wear a face covering entering and leaving the building and in any communal areas within the nursery.</p>	
			<p>The Staying at Home Guidance states that: If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and you have a high</p>	



				<p>temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, stay at home and avoid contact with other people, until you no longer have a high temperature (if you had one) or until you no longer feel unwell. Children and young people aged 18 and under with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, do not need to stay at home and can continue to attend education settings. Children and young people should only stay at home if they are unwell and have a high temperature. They can go back to school, college or childcare, and resume normal activities when they no longer have a fever and they feel well enough to attend.</p>	
3.4	Training	staff	5	<p>All staff members must receive appropriate instruction and training on infection control and the standard operation procedure and risk assessments within which they will be operating.</p> <p>This will be signed with the agreement that risk assessments and Government guidelines will be adhered to both within and out with the workplace.</p>	2
Updated				<p>Training will be assigned to new members of staff and guidance and risk assessment will be emailed to all.</p>	
3.5	Students	Children staff	3	<p>There may be times where our competent students will be in the garden with a small group of children. They will be supervised by a qualified member of staff through the door being open or the windows to the playroom. This will allow smaller 'bubbles' to have more time outdoors.</p>	1
	Parents				

4.1	Communication	Staff parents	3	Parent's sign in at the drop off point. They will be asked to email or text nursery with any additional information required for the care of their child for that day. Daily report sheets will be completed by staff for the children in their 'bubble'. This will be personally about their child and the experiences they have been offered that day. This will include feeds and changes for younger children.	1
Update				Parents are invited to call and make an appointment with their child's keyworker or room senior at a time that suits for a catch up. New online learning journals will be launched at the beginning of November.	
Update				Parents are now welcome to make an appointment to come into nursery and meet with their child's key worker.	
4.2	Social distancing	Staff parents	3	Parent's will be asked not to spend any more time that necessary within the nursery grounds when dropping off and collecting their child. If they have any questions this should be communicated at the sign in point or by text or email. Parents will be asked to call ahead if they require to collect their child out with their allotted time.	1
	Timing	Parents		Allocated time slots are made with the government guidance in mind. The maximum time that staff would be mixing, through bringing children from their rooms to the foyer will be less than 15 minutes and staff will have their face covering on. If you are going to be late this would mean that you child will then be mixing with more children and staff, increasing the risk for both. If you are going to be late please call ahead and we will arrange for your child to be pick up in the next time slot.	

Update				Bubbles no long apply	
5	Cleaning and infection control				
5.1	Toilets, nappy changing areas	Staff Children	5	Each room will be allocated an individually marked toilet for their room. This should be adhered to at all times and supervised by a member of staff. Cleaning will be done before children arrive and hourly from there on in.  Nappy changing areas should be cleaned after every use and appropriate disposal of PPE followed after each change.	2
	change			2/3 children and 3/5 children will be allocated different toilets and the staff member will clean each toilet and sink after each use.	
				Separate toilets will remain in place and regular cleaning will be monitored.	
5.2	Rooms and surfaces	Staff Children	5	Cleaning throughout the day of all surfaces, door handles, light switches, tap and sinks. Deep clean of all chairs, tables' surfaces, floors and toys each night.	2
				Regular cleaning of touch surfaces will remain in place and regularly monitored.	
6	Visitors	Staff children visitors	4	Attendance to the setting should be restricted to children and staff as far as practically possible and visitors should not be permitted to the nursery unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance) and an area can be cleared.	2

				Visitors are welcome in nursery while following handwashing procedures.	
6.1	Emergency and essential	Staff children visitors	4	Where essential visits are required these should be made outside of the usual nursery hours where possible, or restricted to communal areas, excluding contact with children. If it is essential to communicate with a child this could be conducted in a safe space.	2
				Visitors are welcome in nursery while following handwashing procedures.	
6.2	New families	Staff Children Parent	3	New family show rounds should be done virtually outside of nursery hours.	1
Change				Show rounds for new families have been limited to quieter times within the nursery, with face masks and increased hand hygiene.	
change				Any professionals visiting the nursery will only access one room per visit.	
				Visitors and professional are welcome in nursery while following handwashing procedures. Numbers will be monitored	
7	Food preparation and kitchen				
7.1	Cook and domestic staff	Staff children	5	Only one member of staff in the kitchen at any time. Nursery staff will prepare breakfast. When breakfast is finish in the playrooms trolley should be left outside the door to be collected by Kathleen. Kathleen will start food prep before Kathy arrives and takes over.	2

				<p>Bottles should be passed into the kitchen to be made with clear instructions given.</p> <p>All dishes should pass through the dishwasher to ensure they are sterilised for the next use.</p> <p>All surfaces should be cleaned down regularly, before, during and after cooking.</p>	
Change				<p>There are times when both kitchen staff need to be in the kitchen, on these occasions staff will wear a face covering.</p> <p>These occasions will be kept to a minimum.</p>	
				<p>Face covering are now optional unless showing signs of a cough or cold.</p>	
7.2	Staff use of kitchen	Staff Children	5	<p>Out with Cathy or Kathleen being in the kitchen staff should only enter following the kitchen guidance. Washing hands and wearing a blue apron.</p>	2
	<b>Office space</b>				
8	Nursery office & Hazel's office	staff	3	<p>There will be a maximum of two people in the office at any time. If staff need anything for rooms they should call the office and this will be brought up. Children should not be entering the foyer area unaccompanied and should not enter the office.</p> <p>Staff should you room phone where possible. Items / paperwork can be brought to rooms to reduce staff mixing, and cross contamination in the offices.</p>	1

9	Restricted opening	staff	4	During the period of restricted opening to children, the staff will only be in the nursery when needed to reduce the risk of transmission. They will work on a 2 week rota and will be accessing training while at home.	2
Update		Staff Children Parents	4	The nursery will continue with restricted opening hours between 8 am and 5:30pm this is due to staff deep cleaning for a change of children on a daily basis.	2
Change		Staff Children Parents		Nursery will be open from 7:45am and closing at 5:45pm. To complete an effective handover, parents should arrive by 5:40pm at the latest. Staff will still be on shift until 6.00 pm to carry out additional cleaning.	
Update				The nursery will be open from 7:30am – 5:45pm, breakfast will be offered in 0-2 and 2-3 room from 7:30 – 9am and 3-5 room from 8am – 9am. All parents and carers are asked to use the Children’s room doors at drop off and pick up times. Face covering should be worn where possible and especially during handovers with staff.	
10		Children staff		<p>New guidance has been shared from the Scottish government surrounding experiences</p> <p><b>Singing, Music and Drama</b></p> <p>Advice from the Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues shows that there are increased transmission risks associated with music and drama activities.</p> <p>The sub-group has now reconsidered its advice in the light of the ongoing success of the vaccination programme, the continued</p>	

				<p>suppression of the virus and the importance of singing for the health and wellbeing of children well as their social, physical and cognitive development.</p> <p>At level 4, the sub-group's advice is as above – that singing should not happen indoors as an organised, large group activity. Some settings have allowed this outdoors and where that is the case this should be take place with as many appropriate mitigations as possible (at low volume; for short periods of time; in small groups; and with greater physical distancing). As before, children need not be discouraged from singing naturally in the course of activities and play and singing can also be used to comfort young children when necessary.</p> <p>At levels 3, 2 and 1, singing outdoors and indoors is permitted for children in ELC settings, as long as careful attention is paid to ensuring effective and adequate ventilation and subject to risk assessment and other risk mitigation measures being implemented. Other risk mitigations include singing: outdoors or indoors in large, well ventilated spaces; at low volume; for short periods of time; in small groups; and with greater physical distancing between adults.</p> <p>At level 0 singing outdoors and indoors is permitted for children in ELC settings.</p>	
Update				Children can now sing indoors	

Update	Car sharing			For staff traveling together- when traveling in a car a driver can take one other in the back of the car. Both driver and passenger must be wearing a face covering and the car must be well ventilated. Handles should be wiped down regularly.	
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## **Self-isolation and contact tracing**

### **Information sheet for school and registered childcare settings<sup>16</sup>**

**August 2021**

When people test positive for COVID-19, or develop the symptoms of COVID-19, others who have been in close contact with them are asked to take certain actions to limit the potential for spread of the virus. These people are generally referred to as “contacts”.

From 9 August 2021, the approach to self-isolation and contact tracing for close contacts aged under 18, and for close contacts who are fully vaccinated adults, was updated. These changes were made to better reflect our understanding of the risks of infection and transmission, taking into account high levels of vaccination amongst adults and the evidence we have about infection and transmission in children and young people aged under 18.

### **Why these changes are being made**

In summary, the health risks that arise when people are in contact with others who test positive have changed significantly, most notably due to vaccination. Vaccine uptake is very high, particularly among individuals who are at greater risk of harm from COVID-19, and the vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe disease (with 96% effectiveness against hospitalisation for the Delta variant – [COVID-19 vaccine surveillance report](#)). Children and young people have a very low risk of health harm from COVID-19, and children and young people with asymptomatic infection are at a relatively low risk of transmitting COVID-19 to adults. This means that the risk environment has changed significantly, and our approach to managing COVID-19 is evolving to reflect that.

## Changes to the self-isolation policy

The changes to self-isolation policy do not apply if you have had a positive test or if you have symptoms of COVID-19. In those circumstances, you must self-isolate in line with [NHS Inform](#).

The action that close contacts of positive cases must take varies depending on age and vaccination status (see below for information on how close contacts will be identified and asked to take these actions). In summary:

- if you are a close contact aged more than 18 and 4 months who lives in the household of the positive case, OR who has been identified by Test and Protect as needing to take action, then:
  - if you are fully vaccinated (two doses, with at least 2 weeks having passed after your second dose), you should self-isolate and book a PCR test.
    - If the PCR test is negative and you remain without symptoms, you can end self-isolation and go about your daily life, including returning to work or school
    - If the PCR test is positive, you should continue to self-isolate in line with [NHS Inform](#)
    - If you subsequently become symptomatic you should self-isolate and book a PCR test
  - If you are unvaccinated, have only a single dose of the vaccine, or had a second dose less than two weeks previously, you should self-isolate and book a PCR test. You should continue to self-isolate regardless of the results of the test, in line with [NHS Inform](#)
- if you are a close contact aged between 5 years to 18 years and 4 months, who lives in the household of the positive case, OR who has been identified by Test and Protect as needing to take action, then:

- You should self-isolate and book a PCR test.
  - If the PCR test is negative and you remain without symptoms, you can end self-isolation and go about your daily life, including returning to work, school or childcare
  - If the PCR test is positive, you should continue to self-isolate in line with [NHS guidance](#)
  - If you subsequently become symptomatic you should self-isolate and book a PCR test
  
- if a close contact is aged under 5 years then they will not need to self-isolate if they remain without symptoms. This reflects the lower risk of transmission from very young children, as well as the challenges in tolerating testing that some very young children may experience. Although a PCR test is not required for this age group before returning to usual activities (including early learning and childcare), it is encouraged. It is recognised that this will not always be possible and parents/carers are the best judges of this

People who have had a positive PCR test in the previous 90 days do not require to repeat this. This is because after the infectious period is over, dead virus (with RNA) can still be present and picked up on testing, yet is not evidence of infectiousness.

Some people are exempt from having to take a PCR test to end self-isolation, due to medical reasons.

Some people who may previously have been asked to self-isolate as close contacts will no longer be asked to do so. However, they may be asked to be particularly vigilant for symptoms, and to ensure they continue to do regular at-home testing. This is due to our understanding of the risks of infection and transmission, and is explained further in the following section.

## Contact tracing – overview

People who live in the same household as the person who has tested positive for/has symptoms of COVID-19 will be contacted by Test and Protect and advised to take the actions set out above. This is because much of the spread of COVID-19 takes place in household settings.

Test and Protect will also speak to the person who has tested positive for COVID-19 and identify close contacts where there is judged to be a higher likelihood of the virus being passed on. They will then get in touch with those close contacts and ask them to take the actions set out above.

Certain settings, including schools and registered childcare settings, will also be asked by Test and Protect or local Health Protection Teams to take action to “warn and inform” other potential contacts, where there is judged to be a lower likelihood of the virus being passed on.

## Contact tracing in schools and registered childcare setting

Contact tracing will continue to operate in schools and registered childcare settings, but it will be done in line with the approach set out above. In practice, this means that when a person who attends tests positive, contact tracers will:

- contact the person or their parent/carer, and ask them to identify any **individual** contacts with very close contact and **high risk of transmission** and give them **individualised** messages about testing and self-isolation. There will be a particular focus on household contacts e.g. siblings or social settings involving prolonged contact (e.g. sleepover, intimate contacts), where we know there is a higher risk of transmission. Test and Protect will also ask the individual or their parents/carers whether there has been any unusually close or prolonged contact in the setting, with either adults or children and young people, that may mean there is a higher risk of transmission; and

- if indicated as necessary following a risk assessment based on the initial call, contact the school or childcare setting to:
  - inform them of the positive case; and
  - ask them whether they are aware of any unusually close or prolonged contacts the positive case may have had in the setting during a specified timeframe, that could have led to a higher risk of transmission. This will not involve “business as usual” contacts where the relevant mitigations are being followed – so, for example, simply being seated next to a positive case in class will not necessarily result in a requirement to self-isolate and take a PCR test. It may, for example, involve children who have slept in shared accommodation during school trips, or staff who have provided close personal care to children/pupils with additional support needs

If any additional individual close contacts are identified in this way, they will be contacted directly by Test and Protect and given individualised advice as set out above.

If, based on the initial call with the person testing positive, contact tracers assess there is no requirement for a direct call to the setting, they will nevertheless request that the pupil/parent/carer informs the setting of the case.

When a school or childcare settings is informed of a positive case, whether by Test and Protect or by the individual or their parents/carers, they should also identify **groups** (e.g. class, school year, school trip) of other potential contacts in the school or childcare environment, and give them a “warn and inform” letter, which is similar to the approach taken with other infectious diseases in schools. A template warn and inform letter has been provided to all local authorities for agreement with local health protection teams, and sets out the steps required of these lower risk potential contacts. A [warn and inform information sheet](#) for use by registered childcare settings is available. In summary, they are not required to self-isolate, but they should: continue with any regular testing programme e.g. the secondary school LFD programme; stay vigilant for symptoms; and take precautions to limit any potential spread.

It is the school/childcare setting that is responsible for issuing these letters. The setting may exercise its judgement as to which groups this letter should be sent to. They may opt to take a precautionary approach and issue it to the whole year or whole community. If in doubt, they can contact their local health protection team or local authority for advice.

In this way, all potential close contacts (whether higher or lower risk) will be identified and provided with appropriate, risk-based advice on the action that should be taken. This approach also means that blanket isolation of whole classes will no longer be routine. Far fewer children and young people are likely to be asked to self-isolate, and when they do it will be for a shorter period of time while they await their PCR result.

### **Does this mean the definition of “close contacts” has changed?**

No – the definition of close contacts remains the same. However, what has changed for close contacts under 18 is the threshold for intervention, based on our understanding of the risks of infection and transmission in different scenarios and involving different people over the past year. Throughout the pandemic, contact tracing has evolved in relation to levels of risk in particular settings or to particular groups of people. High vaccination rates have had an important influence on judgements around risk as we move beyond Level 0.

For example, previously, higher risk settings have been triaged to receive manual contact tracing, with lower risk contacts receiving SMS or digital contact tracing. This approach to risk-based interventions is reflected in the approach to contact tracing in schools set out above. A similar approach is also expected to be delivered in England and in Wales. Our approach to contact tracing will continue to evolve based on the evidence we gather about infection and transmission, including adjustments to reflect any higher or lower risk settings identified.

### **What this means for the risks of infection and transmission in schools**

The changes above reflect the significant changes in the public health impact of COVID achieved through high vaccination coverage. They also reflect what evidence from Public Health Scotland and other expert sources tells us about the risks of infection and transmission amongst children and young people and staff in schools and registered

childcare settings, versus the educational harms that resulted from requiring large numbers of children and young people to self-isolate under the previous approach. As with all public health interventions, the approach to contact tracing and self-isolation must be proportionate to the risks both of transmission and wider harms.

## **Vaccination**

As noted above, vaccination has significantly changed the risk environment in wider society and in schools and registered childcare settings, and vaccination rates are expected to increase further in the coming weeks. The vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe disease. Amongst school staff, it is estimated that around 85% of teachers who have taken up the offer of a first dose of vaccination will have been offered both doses of the vaccine and developed a second dose response by 16th August (79% of the teacher population in Scotland), and this will increase to 90% by 23rd August (85% of the teacher population). Further, of those who have only received one dose, the vast majority will be under 40 and are likely to have received the Pfizer or Moderna which have a relatively high level of protection from a first dose. Projections indicate a timeline of near-complete vaccination of over 18 year olds by late September.

## **Infection and transmission in school/childcare setting outbreaks**

Children and young people as a group have relatively low risk of direct COVID-19 harm, but are at particularly high risk of wider – and long-term – social, educational, economic and wellbeing harms. In advance of schools finishing before the summer holidays, under the previous approach to self-isolation, approximately 26,000 children and young people were in isolation. This meant that on average, for each positive pupil identified who was infectious while in school, 19 other children in the same school year were required to isolate in primary schools, and 20 children/young people in the same school year were required to isolate in secondary schools. Although transmission can occur in school settings, recently published analysis from across schools and early years settings in England found that in almost two thirds (64%) of COVID cases in schools there were no secondary cases among the contacts. Where transmission may have occurred, outbreaks were small with the median number of secondary cases being one, and the large majority of outbreaks being less than 5 cases. The study provided further evidence that cases in children and young

people follow patterns in communities, which will be further reduced by higher vaccination coverage. Children and young people with asymptomatic infection are at a relatively low risk of transmitting COVID-19 to adults.

### **Mitigations in schools and registered childcare settings**

We recognise that these are significant changes and that some staff and pupils may be anxious about the move to a more risk-assessed approach. Measures such as physical distancing, face coverings, one-way systems, etc., many of which are expected to be removed in wider society, will be retained in schools and registered childcare settings for a period of 6 weeks and will be kept under review. This cautious approach reflects the unique features of the school environment, and will allow time to monitor the impacts of the changes to self-isolation and contact tracing and adjust where necessary, as well as ensuring higher proportions of staff have time to become fully vaccinated.