

# **Harting Village Preschool**

## **COVID Policy**

### **February 2021**

This policy overrides any other of Harting Village Preschool's policies that any of the information below relates to. Any decisions to be made in relation to differences within the content of this policy and another, will be made at the discretion of the Preschool Leader.

Our aim is to minimise the risks of transmitting Covid-19 into Harting Village Preschool. In order to keep our children, staff and families as safe as we possibly can, we are currently working with guidance set out by the Government, Department of Education and Public Health England, as well as further advice from our Local Education Authority. A risk assessment has been carried out and as a result, some changes have been made to our usual practices, routines, procedures, grouping, resources, learning environment, staffing and hours.

The children and staff's well-being are of our utmost priority. However, it is recognised that full social distancing in preschool amongst young children is impossible. The following steps are being taken to minimise the risks of spread of the virus to an acceptable level. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee full protection from it.

In line with Government guidance we are open to all children effective of Monday 4th January. There is no government requirement to operate in bubbles and numbers of children attending are not limited. All nursery fees are payable effective of 4th January, the only exception being if the nursery is unable to offer a place due to staffing.

- Vulnerable children continue to be expected and encouraged to attend nursery
- Children who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions and who have been advised to shield should not attend nursery
- A child who lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, can attend
- Staff and children should not attend if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household
- Staff and children should not attend nursery if anybody in their household is displaying symptoms, or awaiting test results
- Where a person within the same household as any staff member or child has tested positive, they must not attend nursery until they have completed the full self-isolation period, even if they themselves subsequently test negative within this period
- Protective measures will be put in place for staff and children, as far as is possible to ensure the risk of transmission is reduced. These measures and procedures are detailed within this policy.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and edited in line with changing government guidance and local authority advice and recommendations.

## Group sizes and grouping

Currently the Preschool children and staff mix as one group. We have a maximum of 26 children in a session at any one time. The children will be encouraged to play outdoors as much as possible.

## Staffing

If staff become unavailable e.g. because they or someone in their household is isolating, and where it affects our staff to child ratios, it may be necessary for us to close the preschool. Where it is possible to manage by reducing the number of children attending at any one time, we may ask some parents to keep their children at home. We will try to do this as fairly as we can, first asking for volunteers and families who do not need childcare at the time. The list below highlights how we would prioritise places if necessary.

- Key worker children, children with an EHCP or Social Worker
- Children deemed to be vulnerable or requiring support, by the preschool team
- Children of parents who require childcare to work
- All other children

During the Coronavirus pandemic we will not use agency staff to cover staff absence.

## Staff training

Staff training carried out by an external provider is currently carried out virtually where possible. Where face to face attendance is possible or advised, then a risk assessment is carried out and appropriate social distancing procedures are followed. Internal staff training is carried out on site.

## Drop off and collection

To minimise potential contact between families and to avoid larger numbers of people standing together outside the preschool at any one time, only one adult is permitted to drop off or collect a child. Where possible siblings should not come to drop off or pick up.

Parents/carers will not be able to enter the Pre-school building, unless previously agreed by the Preschool Leader.

Children will be dropped off at and collected from the main door, where a member of staff will greet them/hand over to the parent. Parents and carers will wait behind outside of the coned area to ensure social distancing. The children will come in / be sent out one at a time. Parents will be notified of any changes to the drop off or collection points if they occur.

If a child is extremely upset, and we are unable to encourage them in through the door, their parent will be invited to come to the door to hand their child directly to a member of staff. If possible, a mask should be worn by both the parent and the staff member.

Social distancing guidelines must be followed whilst waiting to drop off or collect your child. Parents should stand 2m apart whilst waiting outside the preschool.

## Childcare bubbles and support bubbles

Parents and families who are creating childcare and or support bubbles must follow the rules and guidance as set out by the government.

## Children who attend more than one provider/child carer

The Government advises that parents should limit the number of settings their child attends, ideally ensuring their child only attends the same setting consistently. This is the same for staff. If your child attends more than one childcare provider, please ensure you inform the Preschool Leader. We will request to share policies, so everyone can be sure they are happy with all the procedures in place and address any concerns. During tier 4 and national lockdown we strongly encourage parents to use only one provider during that time.

## Food and drinks

Children must bring their lunch in a lunch box or container that can be easily cleaned. We prefer that the children bring in a reusable container that can be cleaned, rather than a one-time plastic bag.

Children must bring in a clean, filled bottle of water each day, which will be taken home at the end of their session. **Please ensure your child's bottle is clearly labelled with their name.** If a child's bottle is not named, we will name their bottles using a sticky label. If necessary, staff will refill their bottle during the day. To avoid the risk of cross contamination, the bottles will be kept out of reach and children will ask an adult for their drink when they are thirsty. Staff will monitor their water intake and remind them when necessary to have a drink.

We will also continue to provide a drink at snack times. Any uneaten food and packaging will be sent home in the children's lunch box, for it to be appropriately disposed of.

## Nappy changing, Toileting and Personal Hygiene

Where possible, children will be encouraged to use the bathroom one or two at a time and the sink and toilet wiped down by staff after each use.

Children will be asked to wash their hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds. This includes and is not limited to: when they arrive at preschool; before and after eating; when coming in from the garden; after coughing or sneezing or touching their face; and after going to the toilet. Hand sanitisers are also available around the setting to use at times when it is not easy or possible to go and wash hands. If your child is unable to use hand sanitiser please let us know as soon as possible.

If a child needs their nappy changed or they have had a toileting accident, a member of staff will take them to the bathroom to change them. Staff will wear disposable aprons and gloves. We will continue to encourage children to be independent and to manage their own personal care where possible and appropriate e.g. undressing and dressing.

Tissues are available at all times and we will continue to promote 'catch it, kill it, bin it'. Lidded bins are located in the setting for each group to dispose of their tissues easily and safely. The bins will be emptied and cleaned regularly throughout the day.

### Accidents and First Aid

If a child has an accident at preschool, a member of staff will provide any necessary first aid away from the other children. The member of staff will be required to wear disposable gloves and an apron.

### Medication

We continue to ask parents to administer medication at home where possible. Due to its ability to mask symptoms of COVID-19 we will not be administering children's paracetamol and ibuprofen at Pre-school during this pandemic. If a child requires paracetamol and ibuprofen medication then they must be kept at home, or will be sent home.

### If a child is upset

Although staff are required to minimise physical contact with the children where possible, appropriate comfort and care will be given if a child is upset whilst at preschool.

### Well-being

We recognise that these are confusing, unknown and difficult times and there may be times when children may be unsettled. Staff will do everything they can to try to keep the children as settled and happy in their routines at preschool. Please let us know if there are any issues which may affect your child's behaviour or ability to settle at preschool e.g. family member illness, bereavement, new home or new baby. You can do this via email, telephone or in person at drop off.

### Clothing

Children should continue wearing comfortable clothes to preschool, that they can manage for themselves (if age appropriate). As doors and windows are open during sessions, we recommend that children wear several layers to keep them warm, and bring a coat, hat and wellington boots to ensure they can play outside - whatever the weather. We advise that the children's clothes are put straight into the wash when they get home and that they wear a clean set of clothes each day to preschool.

### Cleaning

We have increased our already stringent cleaning procedures throughout the day and in between sessions. With regularly used contact surfaces, such as toys, books, doors, handles, sinks, toilets, light switches, being cleaned more than usual. We have also increased our cleaning processes for the food preparation areas, dining areas and table coverings.

Any essential items that are brought from home will be cleaned on arrival.

Any items that require laundering e.g. tea towels will be washed in line with **Guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings**.

As well as the cleaning during the day, a deeper clean of the setting, equipment and resources will be carried out each evening and at the end of the week by our staff team.

We follow the **Actions for Early Years and Childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak** guidance in relation to infection prevention using the systems of control.

### Toys and resources

All unnecessary items and toys that are hard to clean have been removed from the learning environment. For example, toys with intricate parts, soft toys, cushions and rugs. The resources and materials on offer to the children have been selected as they are easier to clean whilst continuing to provide valuable play experiences.

### Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs and Disability, child well-being and welfare requirements

We will be liaising with the parents and any professional involved with children who fall into these categories, in order to arrange the best possible support plan for them during these times.

### Travelling abroad and within the UK

Families travelling abroad must follow the current government guidance when returning to the UK and, where necessary, quarantine for the required period of time. It is the parent's responsibility to research the current travel guidelines at the time of their return. Parents must not bring their children to preschool until the quarantine period has elapsed.

Families must also follow Government guidance when travelling within the UK, please make sure you are aware of the Tier that the area you and your family are travelling to is in. If it is a higher tier than that of West Sussex, your child will need to isolate before returning to preschool. In the event of a national lockdown you must follow the rules and not travel except for work, education, medical and safety purposes.

### In the event that a child or member of staff becomes unwell

Staff or children, showing symptoms of Covid-19 **MUST** stay at home and follow the current government guidance for **Households with possible or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID 19) infection**. They are not permitted to attend preschool until the appropriate isolation period is complete or they have had a test that comes back negative. We would ask that parents inform us if a child is showing symptoms and / or awaiting the results of a coronavirus test. Please see Harting Preschool's **Quick Guide for Parents and Carers** for further guidance.

Scientific advice regarding Covid-19 states that children are often asymptomatic or may display very mild symptoms including tummy upset and headaches. If a child starts showing any symptoms whilst at preschool, they will be sent home immediately and asked to follow the government and PHE latest guidance for **Households with possible or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID 19) infection**. Parents **MUST** be able to collect their child immediately in these circumstances.

Whilst a child is waiting to be collected, they will be moved to a designated area away from the other children and cared for by a member of staff. The staff member caring for the child will be permitted to give close care to them, however, they will be required to wear a mask, apron and gloves.

If the child needs to use the bathroom whilst waiting to be collected, they will be taken to the adult toilet. The adult toilet will then be cleaned thoroughly after use.

The setting will be cleaned following the **Guidance of cleaning in non-healthcare settings**.

We are required to notify the LEA Early Years team when a child or member of staff has displayed symptoms and is isolating or getting a test. We have to provide the child and their parent's personal details including name, address, telephone number and email address. Other parents will not be informed that someone has been displaying symptoms unless we are advised to do so by the LEA or Local Health Protection team. They will however be told if we receive notification of a positive test result.

### Test and Trace

The guidance says staff and children who are attending a childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus. We will ask anyone displaying symptoms to go and get a test.

Staff and parents should be willing and ready to book a test if they or a family member in their household / bubble are displaying symptoms of COVID 19. All children, including those under 5, can be tested.

Anyone testing positive must be willing to provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if asked to by NHS Test and Trace. They must also be willing to self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive.

Parents must inform us immediately of test results regardless of the result. Should the test be positive we may ask for written evidence of the results, as we might have to close the preschool for everyone's safety.

Where there has been a confirmed case of Covid-19 directly linked to the preschool, parents will be informed and they should be aware we may have to close the preschool at short notice.

### Personal Protective Equipment

All staff have had training in using PPE.

A PPE kit is available to staff if a child becomes unwell whilst at preschool and needs close personal care. PPE will be disposed of in line with government guidance if a child or member of staff becomes unwell.

Masks will not be routinely worn in preschool by staff and are not advisable for young children. This is due to the fact that children are more likely to keep touching the mask which renders them ineffective and possibly more likely to spread infection.

Staff have been provided with a visor and a mask should they wish to use them. They are asked to wear masks if they are approaching parents and at other times where necessary, along with gloves and a disposable apron, e.g. when providing close personal care to a child such as when changing nappies, if a child is unwell and when giving first aid.

### Contractors, suppliers and visitors

Where possible any necessary maintenance and work requiring contractors to visit the site will be arranged for out of hours and social distancing measures will be adhered to by both parties.

All visitors to the setting are currently only on an essential need basis only. Visitors including parents who enter the preschool building will be asked to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser immediately and they will also be asked to wear a mask.

### Activities and learning

Although we have reduced our toys and resources, we will continue offering the children a wide variety of activities and learning opportunities that reflect their development and interests. Children will still be able to self-select resources and toys and choose activities they want to do. There will also be adult-led activities carried out with the children such as music and movement and group games. We will continue to follow the EYFS as closely as we can.

### Fees and funding

In the event of unexpected closure of the preschool due to COVID-19, we do not intend to charge parents during this time. If fees have already been paid, then a credit will be made to your account once we re-open.

If a parent chooses to keep their child at home during a time that preschool is open and accessible to the children, our usual fees policy and terms and conditions apply. This means parents will be charged fees during this time. Non-payment of these fees may compromise your child's place at the preschool.

We will continue to review the financial situation of the preschool and will notify parents of any changes that occur regarding fees and funding.

### Complaints

Any complaints related to Covid-19 and the preschool should be made in line with our usual complaints policy.

### Temporary closure of the Pre-school

If for any reason we need to temporarily close the preschool, parents will be notified as soon as possible either via telephone or email.

This Covid-19 policy is a working document and will be reviewed in line with changing government advice. Please note that we will be reviewing the safety and procedures

included in this policy regularly and reserve the right to make any necessary changes for the safety of our children and staff.

By bringing your child into preschool, you are acknowledging and agreeing to the information in this policy.

Anyone who has been reminded and continues to disobey any of the content of this policy will be asked not to send their child to the setting, and it may compromise their place.

Anyone found to not be adhering to the appropriate government guidelines, may also be asked to self-isolate their child before returning to preschool.

Policy Date: Spring Term 1 February 2021

Next Review Date: Spring Term 2 March 2021