

4th January 2021



Happy New Year!

We hope you all had an enjoyable & safe Christmas and new year break.

Thank you all so much for the very kind cards, words and gifts, they are very much appreciated.

Coronavirus update

As you are aware, Early Years settings are staying open, at the moment. The evidence would seem to suggest that transmission between this youngest group of children is less than for other age groups. We've put the text from the a letter to the Early Years Alliance at the bottom of this letter, so you can see the rationale from the DfE, if you wish to!

We have updated our risk assessment as a result of the increase in infections and the latest government guidance.

The majority of our measures to minimise the risks are the same as before (reiterated below), however we have also decided that children with colds and coughs should not attend pre-school.

Our rationale is that while the children are generally fine, when adults catch the cold & cough, they often then need to have a coronavirus test before they can return to work safely. With the high number of parents who are critical workers (NHS or Education) we feel that this is a prudent step to reduce the pressures on the testing system and the impact on people's work lives.

We will continue to review this as infection levels change and the vaccination programme progresses.

These are unprecedented times and we hope you understand our decision.

School Applications

If your child is due to start school in September 2021, please apply for your place if you haven't already done so.

Home Learning

For those families who are learning at home this term, we will provide the children's individual targets for the term by early next week, along with a few ideas for topics and activities to explore, which will be weekly. They won't be in the same detail as during the March lockdown, but will provide a link with the activities going on here to ensure continuity for the children when they return later in the year.

Speeding in Pitton & Farley

The Parish Council are concerned about the speeding traffic in the villages and have asked us to share this link in order to get your views and opinions on potential traffic calming measures. Even if you don't live in the villages, your views are important as you frequently travel to pre-school.

<https://www.pittonandfarley-pc.gov.uk/category/speeding/>
(it will take about 5 minutes, video & survey, many thanks)

Diary Dates

Monday 4 th January	Start of Term 3
15 th January 2021	Application deadline for school applications
Friday 12 th February	End of Term 3
Monday 22 nd February	Start of Term 4
Thursday 1 st April	End of Term 4 (Training day to be confirmed in T4)

Best Wishes, Carrie, Emma, Laura, Danni, Wendy & Becky.

Measures in place to reduce the risks of infection:

- Anyone who is displaying coronavirus symptoms, or who lives with someone who does, must not attend pre-school, and should self isolate according to the latest guidance. This includes children and staff.
- Please socially distance yourselves from each other and the staff as far as possible.
- Drop off and pick up on the patio at the back. A member of staff will collect / bring your child, so that parents / carers do not enter the building as it is difficult to socially distance in the corridor and around the baskets.
- A one way system will be in place from the car park - come down the steps nearest the building and go back up to the car park using the grass steps further along. (Please let us know if you need a more accessible route and we can use the front door.)
- Only one adult does the drop off. If you have other siblings with you, please leave them in the car if it is safe to do so and you can see the car.
- Please limit conversation with staff on drop off. If you have lots to tell us please use email as you have been doing or arrange another time.
- A member of staff will sign your child in and out.
- Please do not bring in toys from home (unless it is an essential comforter)
- We ask that children wear clean clothes in, and recommend that they change when they get home and you wash the clothes straight away.
- Please pack a change of clothes and own hat, coat, waterproof etc in a single bag if possible.
- Lunch boxes: please try to pack lunches that the children can manage themselves. Of course we will help if needed, but the fewer contacts between staff and children's lunches the better.
- Letters and forms will be emailed rather than printed.
- the children will wash their hands more often than usual, including as soon as they get to pre-school, and immediately before leaving. We have routines to ensure that children understand when and how to wash their hands. Children will be supported to do this effectively. We will use a standard anti-bacterial hand wash, rather than an alcohol based gel.
- We will ensure that children understand good respiratory hygiene - "catch it, bin it, kill it", with an ample supply of tissues and bins.
- Resources that are difficult to clean will be removed for the time being.
- Shared resources will be avoided as far as reasonably practical. For example, children will have their own playdough, rather than a shared tub which is kept for a few days.

With regard to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). There is no requirement at the moment for staff to wear PPE other than normal use such as nappy changes. However, if a child displays coronavirus symptoms, the staff member who stays with the child while we wait for them to be collected will wear an apron, gloves, a face mask and a face shield (if the child is coughing).

From the Early Years Alliance:

"The Department for Education has provided the below response to queries on why early years providers have been asked to remain open while schools have been instructed to close, following our meeting with children and families minister Vicky Ford earlier today:

- The reason schools have been restricted is not that they are unsafe but because additional measures are needed to contain the spread of the virus. The wider restrictions in place as part of the national lockdown to contain the spread of the virus in the community enable us to continue prioritising keeping nurseries and childminders open, supporting parents and delivering the crucial care and education needed for our youngest children.
- Early years settings remain low risk environments for children and staff. 0-5 year olds continue to have the lowest confirmed rates of coronavirus of all age groups, and there is no evidence that the new variant of coronavirus disproportionately affects young children. Evidence shows that pre-school children are less susceptible to infection and are not playing a driving role in transmission. There is no evidence the new strain of the virus causes more serious illness in either children or adults and there continues to be strong evidence that children are much less susceptible to severe clinical disease than older people.
- PHE advice remains that the risk of transmission and infection is low if early years settings follow the system of controls, which reduce risks and create inherently safer environments.
- Early years settings have been open to all children since 1 June and there is no evidence that the early years sector has contributed to a rise in virus cases within the community. Early evidence from SAGE showed that early years provision had a smaller relative impact on transmission rate than primary schools, which in turn had a smaller relative impact than secondary schools.
- Early years childcare providers were one of the first sectors to have restrictions lifted last summer, in recognition of the key role they play in society. Childminders and nursery staff across the country have worked hard to keep settings open through the pandemic so that young children can be educated, and parents can work. The earliest years are the most crucial point of child development and attending early education lays the foundation for lifelong learning and supports children's social and emotional development. We continue to prioritise keeping early years settings open in full because of the clear benefits to children's education and wellbeing and to support working parents. Caring for the youngest age group is not something that can be done remotely."