

COVID-19: Updated Guidance and Procedures

On the 24th of February 2022 the Government published new guidance on COVID-19.

As we all continue to learn to live with COVID-19, at The Little Learners Montessori, limiting the disruption to our children's education as much as possible remains our priority. Accordingly, to prevent the spread of infection and protect children, parents, and staff, we find that it is imperative that our COVID-19 policy continues to implement risk control measures within all our nurseries in the following manner:

- Only children and Staff who are symptom free should attend any of our nurseries.
- Staff and children (over the age of five) are no longer required to take daily COVID-19 tests. However, if an individual within any of our settings, be it Staff or a child, develops COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, they will be sent home and will need to take a PCR test.
- Staff or children with a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss/change of smell or taste must not attend any of our nurseries and must immediately take a PCR test. Upon receipt of a negative PCR test result they can return in line with our Sickness Policy.
- Following a positive COVID-19 test, any return to nursery for both Staff and children, will be on completion of a five-day isolation period and the provision of two negative LFD COVID-19 tests taken in consecutive days following the isolation period. Should the tests taken after the five-day isolation period return positive, the individual will need to remain in isolation for a complete ten days or until they return a negative COVID-19 test result (whichever comes first).
- Should anyone in a staff member's or child's household present with COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, the Staff member or child(ren) must immediately take an LFD test. In the event the test returns a positive result, the staff member or child(ren) must follow the isolation guidance stipulated above.
- Staff reserve the right to record children's temperatures on arrival at nursery and will not admit any child with a high temperature.
- All children will be supported in age-appropriate ways to help them understand the steps they need to take to keep themselves, other children, and Staff safe from COVID-19. These steps will include mandatory handwashing on arrival at and departure from the nursery, regular handwashing throughout the day and sneezing into a tissue and discarding it.
- Whilst it will now be at the discretion of individual staff members whether they wear face coverings, as a precaution, the following measures will remain mandatory for all Staff:
 1. All Staff will need to undertake weekly COVID-19 tests.
 2. Mandatory handwashing on arrival at and departure from the nursery, after wiping children's noses, after cuddling children, after handling items brought in from outside the nursery and before and after touching their faces.

- 3. Where it is practically possible, Staff members are to avoid all close contact with each other and are to maintain social distancing from parents/carers and visitors.
- 4. All staff members are responsible for ensuring that children, parents/carers, visitors, and other staff members follow all COVID-19 measures in full.

- To further safeguard Staff and children from COVID-19, the following routine protocols will be implemented within all our nurseries:
 - 1. All frequently used surfaces (e.g., tables, counter tops, toilets, sinks) will be cleaned and disinfected regularly using an antibacterial cleaner.
 - 2. All waste will continue to be disposed of in a safe and hygienic way.
 - 3. Bedding will continue to be washed between use by every child.
 - 4. Whilst current Government guidelines no longer make PPE a mandatory requirement in general practice within nurseries, The Little Learners Montessori will continue to make aprons and gloves mandatory during nappy changing and the administration of First Aid.
 - 5. PPE will also be mandatory when supervising a child who has been identified as presenting with COVID-19 symptoms when it is not possible for the staff member to remain distanced from that child.
 - 6. The Little Learners Montessori will continually maintain adequate stock of PPE, disinfecting materials and cleaning products within all its nurseries.
 - 7. Where possible, windows will be kept open to ensure good ventilation.
 - 8. Children are not permitted to bring into the setting items from home, such as toys and lunchboxes, unless it is essential for their wellbeing. When this is the case, items will be disinfected on arrival.
 - 9. Any toys or resources accessed and used by children during their sessions will be cleaned and disinfected prior to being stored away at the end of every day.
 - 10. To reduce the risk of infection outbreak and manage cleaning resources, difficult to clean items will be limited or removed from nursery rooms.
 - 11. Staff equipment, such as tablets and stationery will be allocated to individual staff members where possible and will be disinfected daily.

- Where there is a suspected case of COVID-19, the nursery will adhere to the following mandatory protocol:
 - 1. If a member of staff or a child becomes ill with a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss/change of smell or taste in the nursery, they will be sent home and advised to follow the isolation and testing guidance set out in this policy.
 - 2. If a child is waiting to go home, they will be isolated in a separate room with appropriate adult supervision. Where it is not possible to isolate them, the child will be kept socially distanced from other children and staff.
 - 3. Staff will call 999 if a child becomes seriously ill or their life is at risk. When practically possible, the staff member responsible for the child during this time will be one who was already working with that child.

- Parents/Carers and visitors will not be able to enter the nursery except for limited and exceptional reasons, such as visits due to our invitation, visits in an official capacity, parent/carer's accompaniment of a new child for a settling-in session, and parents/carers need to settle a child who may have become distressed. During this time the following precautionary measures will be followed:
 1. Parents/Carers and visitors' temperatures will be checked before entering our nurseries.
 2. Parents/Carers and visitors must sanitize their hands when entering any of our nurseries unless they are wearing a fresh pair of disposable gloves.
 3. Where practically possible, the parent/carer or visitor will maintain social distancing from members of staff for the duration of their visit.
 4. All surfaces touched or objects handled by parents/carers or visitors will be sprayed with antibacterial disinfectant and wiped down immediately upon their departure.
 5. All visits into our nurseries will be kept to a strict minimum length of time, and will take place, as best as possible, when there are minimal numbers of children in the nursery.
 6. To reduce the numbers of people visiting our nurseries, where parents/carers have any enquiries, they should communicate with the nursery via telephone, email or the Family messaging portal.

The Little Leaners Montessori will continue to review and update its COVID-19 policy as it deems necessary to safeguard children and staff or to comply with official regulations and guidance.

Thank you for your continued support.