

Frequently Asked Questions

Attached is a copy of our Updated Covid 19 Policy which we have been working to since the beginning of the lockdown

Why are you opening now?

The government have identified as part of the “Plan to Rebuild” that early years settings should prepare to reopen on 1st June 2020. We have been asked to welcome back all children below statutory school age, however, the anticipation is that demand for childcare is likely to be lower than usual at first and we will exercise our professional judgement in ensuring the highest standards of care can be provided. If demand is higher than we feel confident in providing childcare for, then we are permitted to prioritise care for children transitioning to school this September in order to support them with school readiness.

Risk assessments and safety compliance checks have been conducted at all settings that have been closed during the lockdown period, and these are available for parents to review.

Have you had a case of Covid-19?

This is a very difficult question to answer as until recently testing has been unavailable. We have however been operating since the lockdown was implemented providing care for the children of frontline workers and, to date, we have not had any cases of Covid-19 confirmed at any of our settings with either children or staff. We have had staff and children tested as they displayed symptoms, however, tests came back negative, we have also sent staff home with symptoms prior to testing being available, however, none of these resulted in a confirmed case of infection.

Should a child or adult display symptoms whilst at nursery we do, and will always follow the procedure set out in the Covid-19 policy.

Should a confirmed case occur as part of the national test and trace programme, and if other cases are detected within the cohort in the wider setting, Public Health England’s local health protection teams will conduct a rapid inspection and advise us accordingly.

Will the staff be wearing PPE?

Government guidance updated 12th May 2020, states that “Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended.” Only when dealing with a child that is isolating when a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained will a face mask be worn. Changing habits, cleaning and hygiene are effective measures in controlling the spread of the virus. At the outset of this pandemic we put in place a Covid-19 Policy which followed guidance set out by Public Health England and the World Health Organisation to limit the risk of infection. A copy of this policy is attached for your reference.

Staff training

We have had a team of 41 staff remaining at the two settings that have stayed open, and these team members are up to speed with our new policies and procedures. All staff that are returning to work will attend training prior to starting back at the settings to ensure that they are up to date with enhanced policies and procedures that have been put in place to mitigate the risk of infection.

Social distancing

We recognise that social distancing in the early years is almost impossible. What we are able to do is implement the following protective measures; (these are also detailed in the Covid-19 Policy):

- Age groups will not be mixed at any time.
- Children will not share communal areas at any time.
- Outdoor space will be limited to one age group at a time.
- Large group activities will not be offered, such as circle time, group activities.
- Drop off and pick up will be done outside the nursery settings to ensure social distancing guidelines are met with parents.
- Room layouts will be revised to ensure there is more circulation space for children.
- No visitors will be permitted within the settings unless the setting is closed to children.
- We are considering staggered drop off and pick up times minimising adult to adult contact and will make a final decision on this once we know demand for spaces on 1st June.
- Staff room facilities have been expanded to ensure social distancing between childcare members of staff is adhered to and staff do not have contact with team members outside of their age groups.

What enhanced cleaning and hygiene is in place?

We have followed from the outset the Covid-19 cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance and currently the settings close an hour earlier than normal to allow for deep cleans to be carried out every evening. We have removed all items from the nursery that are difficult and more complex to disinfect and no items will be brought into the nursery from home.

Enhanced hand washing practices are in place for both adults and children and the children are actively encouraged to practice 'catch it, bin it, kill it' along with other measures all outlined in the Covid-19 Policy.

Are you regularly taking the children's temperature?

Until 12th May 2020, we were taking both children and staff temperatures upon entry to the setting and regularly throughout the day. Government guidance updated on 12th May 2020, states "Parents, carers and settings do not need to take children's temperatures every morning. Routine testing of an individual's temperature is not a reliable method for identifying coronavirus."

Instead we are now following the standard national advice on the kind of symptoms to look out for and where appropriate, seeking further advice.

What changes, if any, have been made to catering arrangements?

There is no change to our policies and procedures this respect and all our settings are awarded a Level 5 Environmental Health rating so we work to the very highest standards. We are sometimes limited in the food we are able to source and have had to make daily adjustments to our regular menus and we ask for your patience and understanding with this. Staff wear disposable gloves at all times when they are serving food.

What if I do not want my child to return to the nursery on 1st June?

We understand that life looks very different for many families with insecurities over the risk of infection and the economic consequences of the pandemic. At all times we have prioritised the

welfare of our children, staff and families that make up the Hopscotch community and we will continue to do this. We have not raised any invoices for April or May and we will only raise invoices for June if you choose to bring your child/ren to nursery.

We have been overwhelmed by the offers of support by so many of the families since the Government announced they wanted early years settings to reopen. Many of you have offered to continue to pay full fees whilst your children are not attending and others have offered to pay what is affordable in these most unusual circumstances. For those of you that have been furloughed and are able to support us, we would ask, if you are able, to make a contribution of 25% of your normal monthly childcare invoice value for the month of June if you are not planning on attending during that month. We are doing our very best to ensure that Hopscotch comes back from this stronger, however it is indeed a challenging time for everyone.

What if I want my child to attend for fewer sessions upon return to nursery?

If you have the capacity to accommodate reduced sessions, we completely understand that you might wish to join in the middle of June or to reduce your child's sessions.

We will, however, raise an invoice for your regular sessions as our ability to bring our staff back part time under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme does not commence until August. We have to ensure that we have the staff ready from the 1st June to provide the level of care that Hopscotch consistently provides, particularly in these circumstances with the enhanced procedures and policies in place.

What if my child is due to go to school in September and I do not want them to come back?

We will be incredibly sorry, as I know both your children's friends and the childcare team will also be, if this is the case. Of course, it is your decision and we do understand completely and, in these circumstances, no invoices will be raised. We would very much like to see them back at nursery to enjoy the last months before they start their onward journey but appreciate the situation we all find ourselves in.

Rest assured we have already been in contact with your children's local schools and we will continue to support them with their early years journey. At this stage, as far as we know, transition visits will still take place with their friends that are also going to the same school.

What if due to financial circumstances I do not know when I need my child to return?

To guarantee a place when your child returns we require one full month's fees paid in advance. This would ensure we keep your space for a maximum of a 6 month period. Should you then need to extend this period, a further payment on account would be required, both of which would be credited off invoices raised when your child starts back at nursery.

If, due to the situation we find ourselves in, you are unable to make a payment in advance to secure your child's place, we will make every effort to retain a space for your child when you need it but we are sadly unable to guarantee availability.