

Little Swans Day Nursery
Coronavirus (Co- Vid 19) Safeguarding and Child Protection
Amendments
August 2020

Reviewed by: Samantha Tranter – Nursery Manager / DSL – August 2020

Introduction

With social distancing measures in place across the UK, Little Swans Day Nursery and early year's providers as a whole have had to change the way they operate.

Children's safety still remains a priority so we have pulled together key guidance to help support practice at the nursery during these unprecedented times to ensure children are safeguarded and protected whilst they continue to attend the nursery. Where necessary the nursery will also contact the Birmingham local safeguarding board for advice on specific safeguarding procures.

Can nurseries continue to provide childcare?

Across the UK nurseries, pre-schools and child-minders were asked to close to everyone except vulnerable children and the children of key workers in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

In England, nurseries and other early year's providers have been asked to welcome back all children below statutory school age, starting with 3- and 4-year-olds who will be transitioning to reception after the summer break. The guidance from the government stated that the nursery should prioritise the care of the children of key workers and vulnerable children.

The DfE has published guidance on what action early years and childcare providers should take if there is a local lockdown (DfE, 2020c). To prepare in advance should this happen the nursery will:

- Have early discussions with parents to alert them to the possibility that we may be advised to limit places available i.e. for key workers and vulnerable children. We will check the status of parents and children accordingly
- Smaller bubbles will be reintroduced where it is practical to do so. This will be dependent on current numbers and staffing levels.
- Remind everyone of hygiene measures and limit play activities and equipment which may increase risk of transmission
- Take all other enhanced precautions as previously undertaken during national lockdown
- Promote and encourage test and trace to parents and staff where this is available

- Information about local lockdowns will be available on the local lockdown page on Gov.uk where there will separate and differing guidance for each local area affected, which the nursery will follow

Who are vulnerable children?

In England, vulnerable children are those who have a social worker and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans. This includes children who have a child protection plan or are looked after.

Children may also be deemed vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (Dfe, 2020a)

During the pandemic government guidance stated:

- Children who have a social worker are expected to attend their early years setting provided they don't have an underlying health condition that puts them at severe risk of coronavirus".
- Nursery Management, DSL and SENCO will carry out risk assessments for children with an EHC plan, taking parents and carers views into account to decide whether they need to be offered childcare provision

If parents/ carers are vulnerable children decide that they do not want to send their child to nursery the following will apply;

- Nursery along with the child's social will work together and will explore the reasons with the parent / carer for why they do not wish to send the child to nursery
- Nursery and social worker will support parent / carers and encourage parents/ carers to allow their child to attend
- All eligible children those with a social worker or EHC plan should be encouraged where possible to continue attending the nursery

Who are key workers?

Key workers are defined as those whose work is critical to the CO- Vid 19 response. This includes those working in the following sectors:

- **Health and social care** including doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers and staff required to maintain the health and social care sector.
- **Education and childcare** including teachers, support staff, social workers and specialist education staff.
- **Local and national government** including only those administrative occupations essential to the delivery of the COVID-19 response or delivering essential public services.
- **Food and other necessary goods** including those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery, and those involved in the provision of hygienic and veterinary medicines.
- **Public safety and national security** including police, support staff, contractor and armed forces personnel, fire and rescue service employees,

Those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles.

- **Transport** including those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating and those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.
- **Utilities, communication and financial services** including those working in banks and building societies, the oil, gas, water and electricity sectors, the information technology and data infrastructure sector, the civil nuclear, chemicals and telecommunications sectors, postal and delivery services, payment providers and waste disposal.

Other workers essential to Key public services – includes:

- those essential to the running of the justice system
- religious staff
- charities and workers delivering key frontline services
- those responsible for the management of the deceased
- journalists and broadcasters

All eligible children will be encouraged to continue attending nursery if their parent is a key worker/ essential worker.

What if the nursery closes / or a child's usual registered childcare provider is closed?

The following will apply:

- Little Swans will work with the local authority to agree on what provision can be used locally to support the needs identified
- It may be necessary for the nursery to introduce a temporary cap on numbers to help with keeping children in smaller group sizes or make arrangements with other settings to reduce the number of children in their care, if demand for places is too high
- If demand is low for places at the nursery they it may be necessary for the nursery to use shared provision through early years hubs and clusters
- In the event of changes to childcare/ childcare provider then the nursery will provide relevant child protection information to any alternative settings, before the child starts attending or as soon as possible afterwards
- The nursery has a duty to ensure that anyone providing childcare follows safe recruitment practices to help ensure the people caring for children are safe to do so

Changes to early years childcare standards during the coronavirus pandemic

In England, temporary amendments have been made to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. Early Years settings won't be required to meet the learning and development requirements of the EYFS, although they should use 'reasonable endeavours' to do so.

Other temporary changes include:

- Flexibility over the requirements for qualified first – aiders

- There is currently a three month extension to the validity of paediatric first aid certificates coming up for renewal on or after 16th March 2020
- Changes to staff ratios
To ensure staff / child ratios are managed to keep children safe the nursery will ensure:
 - At least half of staff (excluding managers) hold at least a full and relevant level 2 qualification, although this is not a legal requirement

Social distancing measures

- The nursery will where possible keep groups small
- Parents will not be allowed in the nursery and drop off / collection will be done at the main gate with allocated times, to maintain child/staff ratios and to safeguard children already in nursery at these times

Changes to safeguarding / child protection policies and procedures

The nursery will continue to follow the statutory guidance, working together to safeguard children (2018) and keeping children safe in education.

- Children, their well – being and safety is paramount at all times and we continue to adopt child centred practice
- The nursery has reviewed its child protection / safeguarding policy – reviewed August 2020. This policy and the weekly risk assessment carried out by nursery management will keep child protection/ safeguarding updated as these circumstances evolve and change
- The nursery has a Co – Vid 19 addendum which also reflects changes to all practice, policies and procedures as a result of Co- Vid 19
- All parents, carers will be made aware of the Co- Vid 19 addendum
- All staff are aware of new policies and changes in practices and kept up to date weekly of any changes to these or risk assessments
- The nursery will review its current policies for supporting children for whom safeguarding, mental health, or wellbeing issues have arisen during the pandemic and how we will keep children safe online
- The nursery will also plan how best to support high needs groups when the setting fully reopens and has children begin to return, this includes children with educational needs and disabilities (SEND), vulnerable children and disadvantaged children

What happens if nominated child protection leads need to self –isolate or become ill?

- In the event that the nursery's DSL Samantha Tranter and in her absence Rose Boulton become ill or need to self-isolate the nursery will ensure that at least one of them is contactable via phone
- Elaine Boulton proprietor would also be available in the event of Samantha Tranter- Nursery manager / DSL's absence
- In the absence of Samantha Tranter and Rose Boulton a senior leader will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site:

- Elaine Boulton – proprietor
- Atikha Khan – Senior Supervisor
- There will be clear reporting route for any member of staff who is concerned about a child

Monitoring attendance

In England it is not a requirement for early year's providers to take an attendance register.

To monitor attendance the nursery will:

- Sign children in and out each day recording times of arrival and departure – staff will complete and sign due to the restrictions of drop off and collections for parents
- Base room attendance registers will be completed by staff as children will remain in 'bubbles' and not necessary in their normal class
- Registers will enable the DSL to keep track of attendance for safeguarding purposes
- Nursery will share information with the DFE to enable them to track capacity
- The DSL will keep a list of vulnerable children who should be attending the nursery and share this with the local authority
- Nursery will make contact with parents/carers, the local authority and/or children's social care as appropriate if children who are expected to attend nursery do not

Can children who aren't defined as vulnerable but who may be at risk stay in nursery?

In England, the guidance states that nursery managers of registered childcare settings and nominated child protection leads will know who their most vulnerable children are. Nurseries have the flexibility to offer places to children who are "on the edge" of receiving support from children's social care.

How will the nursery support and protect children who are not attending?

- The nursery will work with the local authority to ensure arrangements are in place to keep in touch with children who are vulnerable but who are not attending nursery
- The nursery will establish clear reporting routes for staff who have child protection concerns and these will be regularly reviewed
- Staff will be supported by nursery management and the DSL to sign post practical support for children who may need it

Staffing and Recruitment

The nursery will continue to follow safer recruitment practices set out in the statutory guidance when we are recruiting new staff or volunteers.

- any member of staff who has not undergone safer recruitment checks will not be left unsupervised with children.

- the nursery will continue with their legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.
- records will be maintained of all staff and volunteers working at the nursery
- staffs ongoing suitability to work with children will continue to be monitored and managed

Staff Training

- All staff have received safeguarding training and are kept up to date with new child protection information and developments.
- Staff are made aware of any new local arrangements so that they know what to do if they are worried about a child.
- New staff / volunteers will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction and shown / given an up to date policy

Infection Control

The main features of effective infection control remain in place and all staff at the nursery are aware of these measures to reduce the spread of COVID 19. Children attending the nursery should be encouraged to follow effective procedures that are modelled by the adults caring for them. These include:

- Frequent hand washing for no less than 20 seconds
- Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products
- Practicing social distancing and where possible stay at home!

Children moving to other schools or early years settings

It is vitally important that receiving schools or settings have relevant welfare and child protection information about child coming to them from our nursery.

The nursery will:

- ensure that the receiving school/ setting is aware of the reason why the child is vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
- they will be given access to a vulnerable child's EHC plan
- they will be given access to a child in need plan
- they will be given access to a child protection plan
- for looked after children their personal educational plan and be made aware of who the child's social worker is
- Information is normally shared with other settings by the nursery's DSL – Samantha Tranter. If during Co- Vid 19 this is not possible a member of the management team will take responsibility for these arrangements.

Information Sharing

We will continue to have appropriate regard to data protection and GDPR, however they will not prevent the sharing of information for the purpose of keeping children safe.

Mental Health

The nursery recognises that during this difficult time children are understandably anxious and worried. The following principles should be considered:

- how children react can vary depending on their age
- some children will show stress and anxiety straight away, some will react later
- negative reactions may include worrying thoughts about their health or that of family and friends, fear, avoidance, problems sleeping, or physical symptoms such as stomach ache
- when adults can stay calm and confident they can best support them

To help children with stress during these uncertain times some of the following should be considered:

- Listen and acknowledge
- Provide clear information about the situation (age appropriate)
- Be aware of your own reactions and responses to situations and changes
- Connect regularly with children to provide emotional warmth, having regular contact this may be via telephone
- Create new routines
- Limit exposure to media and speak and talk about what they have seen or heard (age appropriate)

Online Safety away from the nursery

It is important the staff continue to be aware of potential abuse of children online. They should continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns will be dealt with following the nursery's child protection policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as require the police.

The nursery will ensure:

- any use of online learning tools and systems are in line with privacy and data protection/ GDPR requirements
- the nursery will support parents to manage their child's on-line safety, through sign posting them to online resources and organisations, enabling them to make the home and outside of nursery a safe place for their child to engage safely in online activities.