Practicalities around re-opening of settings for 3-5-year olds on the 01st of June 2020

This guidance is for settings who operate from one space, for example, pack away settings and settings with big rooms to ensure children’s health and safety regarding COVID-19. The assumption is that children will have a phased return to the setting focusing first on continuing to provide places for priority groups and 3- 4-year olds in early years settings, including Nursery and Reception in Infant and Primary school.

Below we refer to the “learning hub/ area” as a possible way of organising the space to ensure social distancing between different groups of children (bubbles) within the same room. The idea is that the setting will divide their resources between the number of groups they have in a room and create a learning hub within a self-contained space. This space can be defined by using a low-level furniture/ tape on the floor/ rug etc. The resources can be positioned within the defined area and create different and varied learning opportunities which remain consistent for that particular learning hub/area and for that particular group (bubble). Baskets and containers, which can be disinfected, can be used to store and display resources.

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| Theme | Possible strategies | Rationale / link to guidance | Considerations |
| **Organisation of environment**  **and social distancing** | | | |
| * Need to zone areas within a hall | Create self-contained learning hubs/area – children have access to a variety of resources to support their learning within the group  Tape off sections on floor  Use furniture/chairs/low fencing  Leave spaces between different hubs  Ensure that you adhere to the space requirements as they are specified in the EYFS:   * children under 2 years need 3.5 m² per child * 2 year olds need 2.5 m² per child * children aged 3 to 5 years need 2.3 m² per child | To create social distancing between small groups – children stay in their hub  To minimise contact with children and resources from other groups  To give walkways between hubs for access to toilets/outside space/ social distancing between different groups of children (bubbles) etc | * Trip hazards * Footprints on the floor to show children how to access different parts of the setting (when needed, e.g. toilets) rather than walking across the space as previously * Cleaning of dividers, storage and resources at end of session * Ensure fire exits are not blocked |
| * Entrances/exits | Identify way in/out points for each hub so these are not next to/directly opposite each other  Consider different entry/ exit points to the setting for different groups if possible  Staggered drop off /pick up times if possible for example limiting drop off and pick up to one parent or carer per family  Do not allow parents or carers into the setting unless this is essential, and arrange for children to be collected at the door if this is possible  Work with parents whose children may need support in settling in the setting to ensure that physical distancing is maintained | To minimise social mixing  To minimise time in any shared spaces such as entrance halls  To minimise waiting times and avoid social mixing of families | * Consider ways to communicate the new arrangements with the parents before hand * Mark 2m lines on the ground to indicate where child/parent should wait * Use of visual clues to remind parents around social distancing |
| * Storage of coats/bags/lunchboxes | Groups access cloakrooms at different times  Different places for groups to store their belongings  E.g. a specified table for each group (bubble) in entrance hall to store coats on and shoes/wellies underneath etc  E.g. separate box for each group for lunchboxes etc | To minimise time in any shared spaces  To avoid possible spreading of infection through personal items between groups | * Visual clues for children e.g. photos of themselves on their group box etc. * Consider storing personal belongings within the learning hub/area or each group of children (bubble) |
| * Using outside space | As much as possible.  Timetabling slots for different groups  Consider dividing resources between the different groups of children (bubble) or you may wish to use different resources for each group (bubble) | To minimise social mixing  To reduce risk of transmission between resources | * Outside resources need to be cleaned daily * Large fixed resources such as climbing frame – needs to be cleaned between each group and at end of day or not used * Consider developing a bank of games which may require very few physical resources, such as “what’s the time Mr Wolf”. |
| * Using shared facilities – handwashing and toilets | If possible use a portable hand washing sink for each group- please, be aware that a shared bowl with water is not an acceptable practice on health and safety grounds.  Stagger group use at set times such as snack, before lunch | To avoid cross – contamination  To minimise contact between different group of children (bubbles) and maintain cleanliness | * Cleaning toilets/ hand washing facilities between individuals and groups * Ensure zoning of space allows children from each hub to access the area easily without crossing through a different hub |
| **Resources** | | | |
| * What is appropriate to use and what is not? | Risk assess resources to ensure they meet government guidelines  Consider – can it be effectively cleaned or not? If not, use an alternative or use within the group only and then replace daily.  Consider floor covering - one rug per group or individual carpet tiles | To maintain cleanliness | * Use of rugs, floor coverings – how can they be cleaned each day? * Consider quantity of resources by reducing clutter and removing unnecessary items. |
| * Setting up for each group/ Meeting children’s interests | Divide the resources between each hub to ensure a variety of experiences and learning opportunities  In the event of resources being shared between groups of children (bubbles) these need to be thoroughly cleaned before a different group of children (bubble) are allowed to use them. | To maximise the range of experiences using minimum amount of resources | Some suggestions regarding the learning hub environment/ resources:   * Use lots of open-ended resources that can be easily cleaned for example: lids, bottle tops, hair rollers etc. in order to stimulate interest and engagement * Consider learning boxes with resources such as mark making materials, small world play, puppets which can be easily washed etc. * Consider offering chatter boxes/ story bags to promote language and communication development. * Consider resources that can promote discussions around feeling and emotions. |
| * Cleaning during and at end of session | Ensure sufficient time is taken into account for this additional cleaning to be implemented  Ensure an enhanced cleaning schedule is in place; all frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, toilets, sinks, light switches will need to be cleaned thoroughly several times a day using disinfection as appropriate.  Ensure equipment and resources are cleaned more regularly than usual following your enhanced cleaning schedule as above. | To prevent cross-contamination and spread of the virus. | * Timing of sessions and availability of hall space to allow for cleaning time. * Staff time and cleaning materials |
| **Routines** | | | |
| * Frequent and regular hand washing * Snack time/Lunchtime | Implement a consistent approach across staff team regarding handwashing throughout the day; for example, agree set times for hand washing in line with guidance such as on entry, before snack, after toilet, before lunch, coming in from outside etc.  Staggered times for snack/lunch depending on your facilities and risk assessments. Ensure that children from different groups are not mixing during these times | To ensure children’s health and safety  To maintain enhanced standards of hygiene  To minimise social mixing between different groups of children (bubbles) | * Consider offering snack/ lunch within the boundaries of each learning hub/area * Consider cleaning routines after snack/lunch times for each group of children * Ensure that staff maintain good hygiene practices as well as social distancing rules when using cleaning resources which might need to be shared such as dustpan and brush |
| * Story/rhyme times | For individual groups hold within hubs | To maintain social distancing between groups | * Ensure that as much as possible, current selection of books includes children’s favourite stories within each learning hub/area * Ensure that books are not shared between home and setting * Consider practicalities such as quantity of books on offer within each hub and how hygiene is going to be maintained |
| **Staffing** | | | |
| * Ratios * Qualifications | Ratios remain as in the EYFS statutory framework  Please, be aware that keeping group sizes to a maximum of 8 children, while adhering to EYFS ratios, is preferable so groups are as small as possible. Providers are expected to ensure that there are no more than 16 children in a group in early years settings. Please, see the link to the guidance below:  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings#Section2>  The setting needs to make reasonable endeavours to meet the qualification requirements in line with current government legislation regarding temporary changes to the EYFS in response to Covid-19- please see link below:  [**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2/early-years-foundation-stage-coronavirus-disapplications**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2/early-years-foundation-stage-coronavirus-disapplications) |  |  |
| * Key person allocation | Key person to remain with key group in a learning hub if possible  Use of buddy system to support if required  Consider the most appropriate adult to provide consistent care for the group, in the event that the key person and their buddy are not available. | To minimise social mixing  To foster trusting relationships and promote children’s personal, social and emotional wellbeing | * Ensure information is passed on for individual children if a different key person is in place * Especially medical information, allergies, behaviour strategies or significant family information * Communicating approach clearly to parents |
| **Further support for settings regarding the learning environment** | | | |
| How we can support you? | Via email  Via telephone conversation  Via Whats App/facetime  By sending us photos of problematic areas for us to consider and respond |  |  |
| Practice related queries | Please, in the first instance refer to:    The preparation for setting reopening framework  The checklist to support the reopening framework  FAQs document  **If you have any practice related queries, please, contact your Early Years Advisor;** for all other queries please, contact the free entitlement team |  |  |