

Explore Learning Ltd COVID-19 Guidance – November 2021

Written in line with government guidance: **‘Guidance for childcare and playwork: coronavirus’**

This guidance explains the actions Explore Learning will take to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in their centres. This includes public health advice, endorsed by Public Health Wales (PHW).

We have updated our Covid guidance in line with revised government guidance 29/11/21.

Updates are highlighted below:

- **Adults and children over the age of 11 (including staff), wear a face covering when in communal areas (i.e. centre reception) and moving between different parts of the centre. They are not required to be worn by staff or children they are working in a zone. A poster to display in reception is [available here](#).**
- **All individuals who have been identified as a close contact of confirmed case of the Omicron variant of Covid-19, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will be contacted directly and required to self-isolate immediately and asked to book a PCR test. Follow latest isolation rules.**

We will continue to monitor the current guidance for out of school settings & update parents and staff where needed and have in place further contingencies and measures in the event of an outbreak.

A reminder below that we should have the following measures in place at all times:

- Any child, staff member, parent or visitor with coronavirus symptoms must not attend the centre and must isolate, while they await a coronavirus test result. They may return if this is confirmed as negative.
- Any person who tests positive must complete the required isolation period before returning to the centre.
- Children are not accepted into the centre with a fever or are ill or infectious, as per our Infection Control Policy.
- Increased cleaning processes remain in place, especially in high contact areas
- Anti-bacterial wipes are provided for cleaning areas and equipment between usage
- Hand sanitiser, soap and tissues are freely available
- Regular hand washing is encouraged alongside the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ protocol
- Booked sessions allow capacity to be managed, and no large groups gathering in the old ‘Surf Club’ area
- Children remain seated in their zones and movement around the centre is limited
- Parents meetings continue to be delivered online the majority of the time.
- Doors/windows remain open where possible and safe, whilst balancing a comfortable temperature for everyone.
- Plastic screens in reception
- Staff & children encouraged to bring water bottles to minimise use of water fountains.
- A risk assessment that reflects the current Government Guidance
- Encouraging all staff and secondary school children to take two lateral flow tests each week, at least 48 hours apart.

Who can attend our centres?

Explore Learning can offer provision to all children, without restriction on the reasons for which they may attend. All staff are invited to return to work in centre where this is an option.

Staff, children and their families must only attend a centre if they are symptom free, and only when they are not required to isolate in line with Government guidance.

Those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable

Clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) people are no longer advised to shield, but may wish to take extra precautions to protect themselves, and to follow the practical steps set out in the following guidance to minimise their risk of exposure to the virus: [Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19.](#)

All CEV children and young people can attend Explore Learning unless advised by their GP or clinician not to. CEV staff and those who are pregnant should raise any concerns regarding returning to the workplace with their line manager. HR will conduct a risk assessment in line with the Management of Health and Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations 1999 to ensure the working environment is safe for them. Explore Learning closely follows the Government's advice to those who are CEV and will respond to any changes in order to keep staff, members and their families safe.

Social distancing

Guidance no longer advises that providers limit parent/carer access to settings. Staff accompanying families will manage the number of people waiting in reception and direct them to where they can safely wait.

Families should use their discretion on sharing lifts with other families, but Explore Learning recommends that maximum occupancy is one family at a time. Hand sanitiser is provided for the operation of lifts and we encourage the use of stairs wherever possible.

Children will not be required to distance with staff or other attending children. Brief, transitory contact, such as passing to visit the toilet, is considered low risk.

Sessions will continue to be pre booked, and where possible, children will work within the same small group with the same Tutor at each session, however, it is no longer necessary to keep children in consistent groups 'bubbles'.

In the event that local restrictions are introduced, Explore Learning will address outbreak management guidance and where necessary will reintroduce 'bubbles' for a temporary period, to reduce mixing between groups.

Group sizes

Each individual centre's capacity is recorded in their Policies and Procedures folder stored on Reception. Government guidance outlines that organised activities for children may take place in groups of any number. Explore Learning operates at a ratio of 6 children to 1 Tutor.

When an individual develops COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test

Children, staff and other adults should follow public health advice on when to self-isolate and what to do. They should not come into the centre if they have symptoms or other reasons requiring them to stay at home due to the risk of them passing on COVID-19 (for example they are required to quarantine or have a positive test).

If anyone attending the centre develops COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, they will be sent home immediately and should follow public health advice. For everyone with symptoms, they should avoid using public transport and, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household. If a child is awaiting collection, they should be kept in a ventilated location, away from other children and staff if possible and safe to do so. Appropriate PPE should also be used if close contact is necessary. Any areas they have been or used must be thoroughly cleaned after use.

Tracing close contacts and isolation

In the event that a member of staff or attending child tests positive for COVID-19, NHS Test, Trace and Protect will work with the positive case to identify close contacts – Explore Learning will support NHS Test, Trace and Protect with this process upon their request.

Explore Learning management are required to report any positive case within staff and members via the Bubble. This allows us to monitor case numbers and monitor if thresholds are reached to report to public health.

29/10/21: Self-isolation has changed when somebody in your household has coronavirus symptoms or has tested positive for coronavirus:

Fully vaccinated or aged 5 to 17: If someone in your household has symptoms or has tested positive and you are fully vaccinated or aged 5 to 17 you should self-isolate and take a PCR test. If your test is negative you can stop isolating.

Not fully vaccinated: If someone in your household has tested positive and you are not fully vaccinated you should self-isolate for 10 days. You should take a PCR test on day 2 and day 8. You should self-isolate for 10 days even if your tests are negative.

Children aged under 5 do not have to self-isolate or take a test if they have been a contact of a positive case in their household or otherwise.

Settings will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is an outbreak in a setting or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a setting to temporarily reintroduce some control measures.

Stepping measures up and down

Explore Learning will issue revised outbreak management guidance to centres if local restrictions are reintroduced, or we are aware of a spike in infections within a local area. Given the detrimental impact that restrictions on education and childcare can have on children and young people, any measures in out-of-school settings should only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of settings or groups possible, and for the shortest amount of time possible.

Safeguarding

Staff recognise that the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak may have caused significant mental health or wellbeing difficulties for some children and they may be at increased risk of harm or abuse. Staff will ensure relevant training is up to date and the team are supported by a Designated Safeguarding Officer at all times to respond appropriately to child welfare concerns.

Staff also recognise that some children may have found the long period at home hard to manage and / or developed anxieties related to the virus, and will provide opportunities for children and their families to talk about their experiences over the last few months and direct to support and advice where appropriate.

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups

There is emerging evidence that black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) individuals may be more severely affected than the general population by coronavirus (COVID-19). Explore staff will be especially sensitive to the needs and worries of BAME children and young people, parents and carers, and staff, and will consider if any additional measures or reasonable adjustments may need to be put in place to mitigate risk.

Control Measures

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone

Hand hygiene

Frequent and thorough hand cleaning should now be regular practice. All children and staff must wash their hands/use hand sanitiser upon arrival at the centre and after sneezing or coughing. Staff must always wash/sanitise their hands before and after eating, including on return from any rest breaks. Staff will wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly regularly throughout the day.

Respiratory hygiene

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important. Centres display posters remind all staff and children to build awareness. Disposable tissues, hand sanitiser and a lined bin will be available in every zone. All waste will be disposed of in a safe and hygienic manner. Staff will empty bins at the end of every day.

2. Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, additional PPE is only required if an individual child, young person or student becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. The guidance on the [use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\) in childcare settings](#) provides more information on the use of PPE for COVID-19.

3. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes (inc. use of water fountain)

Cleaning of zones (including desks/keyboards/screens/headphones/mice), reception and toilets will happen between use. The water fountain remains out of use until further notice. Staff are able to use the fountain to refill water bottles providing it is wiped after use. Communal areas like the reception desk and office, touch points such as light switches, stair handrails, lift buttons, door handles and handwashing facilities will be cleaned and sanitised regularly throughout the day. Staff are provided with cleaning guidelines according to [cleaning guidance for non-healthcare settings](#). Centres are visited weekly by external cleaning company GCC.

4. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

Centres will have the ventilation system (bringing in outdoor air) on continuously when occupied (turns on and off with our last-man-out switch). Toilet ventilation will stay on continuously when occupied. The air con system will be set on an 'Auto' setting to ensure limited touch point of the control panel and temperature is kept consistent in the centre. The Air con system will be turned off at night to aid the system to reset, but to be turned back on when a member of staff first opens up the centre each day.

5. Follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19 Asymptomatic Testing

Testing remains important in reducing the risk of transmission of infection within settings. Staff and secondary age children should continue to test regularly using lateral flow tests if they are attending Explore Learning centres. The recommended time frame for testing is twice per week.

Confirmatory PCR tests

Staff and children with a positive lateral flow test result should self-isolate in line with the stay at home guidance. They will also need to get a PCR test to check if they have COVID-19. Whilst awaiting the PCR result, the individual should continue to self-isolate. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive lateral flow test, and is negative, it overrides the lateral flow test and the child or staff member can return to centre providing they do not have symptoms.

6. Centre Attendance

Any child, staff member, parent or visitor with coronavirus symptoms must not attend the centre and must isolate. Children are not accepted into the centre with a fever or are ill or infectious, as per our Infection Control Policy. Any person displaying symptoms must not return to the centre until they have completed the required isolation period and/or received a negative coronavirus test.

7. Travel

All persons travelling outside the UK must adhere to instructions and testing in line with the government guidance.