

Explore Learning Ltd COVID-19 Guidance – March 2022

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 03/03/2022. Updates are highlighted below:

- **Adults and children over the age of 11 should continue to 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 when 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
- Cleaning of zones (including desks/keyboards/screens/headphones/mice), will happen twice a day. Anti-bacterial wipes are provided for cleaning areas and equipment.
- 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
- The ventilation system will remain on in the centre and toilets when occupied.
- Plastic screens in reception remain in place
- Staff & children encouraged to bring water bottles to minimise use of water fountains
- Staff and secondary aged children should continue to test twice weekly at home, with lateral flow device (LFD) test kits, 3 to 4 days apart. Testing remains voluntary but is strongly encouraged
- All persons travelling outside the UK must adhere to instructions and testing in line with the government guidance.
- Explore Learning has a risk assessment that reflects the current Government Guidance

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.

Those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable

Those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Following expert clinical advice and the successful rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme, people previously considered to be particularly vulnerable, clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), and high or higher-risk are not being advised to shield again. Children and young people who were previously identified as being in one of these groups, are advised to continue to follow [Guidance for people previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19](#). Children and young people over the age of 12 with a weakened immune system should follow [Guidance for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk from COVID-19](#). Children and young people previously considered CEV can continue to attend out-of school settings should follow the same COVID-19 guidance as the rest of the population. In some circumstances, a child or young person may have received personal advice from their specialist or clinician on additional precautions to take and they should continue to follow that advice.

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.

Social distancing

Guidance no longer advises that providers limit parent/carer access to settings. Social distancing is no longer required. Sessions will continue to be pre booked, and where possible, children will work within the same group, with the same Tutor at each session, however, it is no longer necessary to keep children in consistent 'bubble' groups.

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. Staff and families should follow self isolation guidelines at all times.

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 place to mitigate risk. Click [here](#) for more information