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**COVID-19 Return to Nursery Plan**

**How will my child be supported on their return to Nursery?**

We are aware that all children’s experiences during lockdown will have all been quite different, some children may have thrived from being at home, whilst other may have missed the social interaction.

All children will need a gradual process to their return and practitioners will need to consider various stages of the EYFS starting with PSED (Personal, Social and Emotional Development).

All Children will be given opportunities to talk or express through play and any feelings they have in regards to their recent absence or return to nursery will be managed in a professional manner ensuring we create a supportive environment to achieve this and provide any resources which may help e.g. books, comforters, posters photographs etc…

We will inform Children of our temporary changes within the Nursery and we will try our best to help them to understand why these have been put into place with your support we can ensure they feel comfortable. We will continue to communicate with you about your circumstances and keep you up to date with the current guidelines to our temporary changes.

Together as Parents/Carers and Early Years Practitioners we are hoping that every child gets the best support that enables them to develop to their full potential, with a safe, secure and happy environment, children should settle back into nursey life a little easier.

It will be difficult for younger children to observe full social distancing and It is unrealistic for us to believe that we will always be able to keep children 2 metres apart. However, we will ensure the same small groups remain together for indoor and outdoor play, eating and toileting.

The DfE (Department of Education) guidance states that:

***“Where the physical layout of a setting does not allow small groups of children to be kept at a safe distance apart, we expect practitioners to exercise judgement in ensuring the highest standards of safety are maintained.”***

**What happens next?**

* We are expecting to open our doors to all who require childcare from June 1st following the government guidelines.
* Parents/Carers must notify the nursery as soon as possible of their intention to return, with a minimum of 48 hours notice before their intended return date. This will allow us to maintain our ratios.
* If for any reason you do not contact us but you turn up for your child/children’s normal days of attendance, we may have to advise you of a temporary cap in numbers until we can staff it adequately.
* Our Nursery start and finish times have been adjusted from 7.45am- 17.00pm to 7.30am – 18.00pm from 7/9/20 , however we are asking Parents to only use this if it absolutely necessary as we are not clear of this virus yet we still need to be very careful.
* We are asking Parents/Carers to adhered to the 2 metre safe distancing markings whilst waiting outside the Nursery. To help with this we are asking that only one person from each household drops off and picks up the child from the door.
* We will provide antibacterial hand gel at the entrance, please be sure to use this before ringing the bell and help your child/children to use this before entering the Nursery.
* We are not allowing any Parents/Carers into the Nursery setting until further notice, your child will access the Nursery on their own with guidance from a door monitor.
* If your child is unable to walk, then they will be taken from you at the door by the door monitor.
* Please minimise what your children bring into Nursery. We would advise that you bring their Nursery bag which contains essential items only. (Toys from home will not be accepted unless it is an essential comforter.)
* Where possible we will try to keep children in the same small groups each day, (Maximum of 4/6 per group) and different groups will not mix during the day.
* Where possible the same staff will be assigned to each small group and where possible these will remain the same during the day.
* Lunches for Staff and children may need to be staggered so that social distancing can be observed. (Same small groups will be together for this period.)
* Children will continue their hygiene routine of hand washing before and after any activities by singing their favourite nursery rhyme twice. (Posters are up around the Nursery.)
* The building has been deep cleaned throughout and all soft furnishings and hard to clean toys have been removed.
* The cleaning routine within the Nursery will be maintained throughout the day using disinfectant wipes and sprays. (These will be kept out of reach from the children.)
* Windows will be opened for natural ventilation.
* Toys/Activities will be limited to assist with minimising any spread of germs.
* Your children will still be achieving their learning goals but as stated previously staff will be focusing on the prime areas of learning to begin with especially PSED.
* Only children from the same group accompanied by their adult will go to the toilets at anyone time.
* Room layouts will remain the same, however have been adapted so we can keep a little social distancing when playing and learning.
* Visitors to the nursery have been stopped at present, unless an emergency. (We are looking at other ways to present the nursery to potential new starters e.g. video tours/pictures. Please be assured no children will be in any footage if we should do this.)
* PPE will be provided for our staff when required, but we will not use masks throughout the day as recommended buy government guidelines.
* We are asking that (as normal) you do not send your child/children into nursery if you suspect they are unwell. Please refrain from giving them Calpol or any other medication that might mask any symptoms. Please see below COVID-19 symptoms that must still be adhered to:
  + High Temperature
  + New persistent cough
  + A loss or change to smell or taste
  + Shortness of breath
  + Sore throat
  + Muscle aches or pains

This also means that if you suspect your child/children or anyone within your household has any of the above symptoms then you **MUST** follow the government guidelines and isolate at home. (PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR CHILD TO NURSERY.)

We are pleased and proud to be opening our doors and we look forward to welcoming some of you back to Nursery but please ensure you abide by the above to help keep us all safe.

Many thanks

The Merritime Team