**Pandemic Policy**

*This is in response to the COVID-19 outbreak*

Pegasus Childcare Centre intends to use this policy to provide precautionary measures to minimise transmission risk of disease in the setting during an epidemic or world pandemic.

Legislation and leading authorities which have guided and influenced this policy are:

*Coronavirus Act 2020, Health and Safety at work Act, Health and safety Executive, Public Health England, Local Authority and Department for Education. The policy also has regard to Ofsted and Early Years Foundation Stage guidance where appropriate.*

**Aim of Policy**

This policy defines and assists the operating arrangements in places within the setting that assures compliance to the Government and leading bodies requirements with relation to the outbreak of a pandemic such as Covid-19. This information builds upon our current procedures for areas such as Safeguarding, Child Protection and Equality and Diversity, however new practices may emerge as the situation continues. The policy and considerations may evolve and be built upon as the situation deepens and new precautionary measures have been introduced and practices have been reflected upon.

**Procedure**

As early years providers we ensure to offer a continuum of very high standards of practice of childcare and education. The fundamental principles to be outlined in this policy are set out to ensure reasonable social distancing is enabled and that good hygiene practices are implemented as well as avoiding coming in contact with infected children and adults or anyone displaying symptoms.

It states that the protective measures put in place for children, parents, carers and staff reduce the risk of transmission. We will continue to follow all our other policies as long as they do not conflict with this policy and are guided by the EYFS as best as we can.

The main areas we will be considering are:

* Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell
* Maintaining personal and respiratory hygiene (handwashing, catch it, kill it, bin it)
* Ensuring cleanliness of the environment (especially frequently touched surfaces)
* The use of Protective and Personal Equipment (PPE)
* Testing

**Attendance -Children**

* Only children who are symptom free or have completed the required isolation period should attend the setting
* Providers will take temperatures of children and staff when they are ‘not right’ and will risk assess any children/staff who are returning after a period of isolation.
* Extremely vulnerable children should continue under government advice (to shield)
* Families who attend at least two settings should choose only one (When the government says)

**Attendance - Staff**

* Staff should only attend nursery if they are symptom free, have completed the required isolation period or achieved a negative test result. All staff and their household are eligible for testing if they display symptoms.
* Providers will take the temperature of staff if they are ‘not right’ and a risk assessment with a health questionnaire will be completed for staff returning from isolation.
* Staff hours, days they work and length of day may change in order to meet child care demands and considerations within this policy.

**Social Distancing - Families**

* Only parents/carers who are symptom free and or have completed the required isolation periods will be able to drop off or collect their child.
* We aim to minimise long conversations with parents/carers during the day and limit drop off and pick up to one parent/carer per family.
* Parents/carers will be called forward to the conservatory in Pegasus playground  to drop off and collect their child.
* When parents/carers are waiting to drop off or collect their child, social distancing should be maintained in a safe area sticking to the government social distancing policies.

**Social Distancing - Staff**

* Staff will be aware of risk assessment before opening to address any risks from the virus and ensure appropriate safety measures are in place to control risks.
* Staff to be informed of measures in place and sign a disclaimer to state they have read and understood the nursery policies and procedures.
* Emergency revisions to the EYFS may have been implemented which provides some flexibility on ratios and qualifications to make it feasible.
* Staff have been advised by the government not to wear PPE such as face masks during the day, but should continue to wear PPE  at the usal times such as intimate care which includes wearing disposable gloves and an aprons.

**Wellbeing and Education**

* Children should be supported in age appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe including regular hand washing, coughing into an elbow, using a tissue and adopting a catch it, bin it, kill it regime.
* Children should be supported to understand the changes and challenges they may be encountering as a result of Covid-19 and staff need to ensure they are aware of children's attachments and the need for emotional support at this time.
* EYFS framework will continue to be delivered through play and adult led activities,
* Parents/Carers will be asked to provide a water bottle with their child’s name on.

**Communication**

* Parents/Carers should receive clear communication regarding the role they play in the safe operating procedure and all measures being taken to ensure the safety of their children and themselves.
* Parents/Carers should inform the nursery of their circumstances and if they plan to keep their child away, this helps the nursery to conform to our safeguarding policy.
* Parents/Carers will receive the latest COVID-19 risk assessment termly via email.
* A risk assessment will be displayed in the families notice board.

**Visitors**

* Attendance to the setting will be restricted to only children and staff as far as practically possible and visitors should not be permitted to the nursery unless essential.
* Where essential visits are required these should be made outside of the nursery open times.

**Travel**

* Wherever possible staff and families should travel to nursery alone, using their own transport or if possible walk.
* If public transport is necessary, current guidance on the use of public transport must be followed.
* Parents/Carers and staff should avoid visiting any shops on the way to the setting

**Hygiene and Health and safety**

**Hand washing**

* All children and staff must wash their hands upon arrival at the nursery for at least 20 seconds.
* Hand sanitiser will be available for families on their arrival on the outside table and available for staff throughout the day. Out of reach from children at all times.
* Children and staff members should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently, this includes before and after eating food, after visiting the toilet, after sneezing, blowing nose or coughing into their hands and dealing with unwell people
* Bodily fluid spills should follow the correct procedures as normal.

**Cleaning**

* An enhanced cleaning schedule has been implemented that includes furniture, surfaces and children’s toys and equipment and all staff are responsible for all areas of work.
* Communal areas, touch points and hand washing facilities must be cleaned and sanitised regularly and cleaned throughout at the end of every session.
* A deep clean may be needed after a child has become ill in the area they were waiting.

**Risk Assessment**

* Pegasus Childcare Centre has their own Covid-19 risk assessment and is always getting reviewed and updated.
* This risk assessment is shared with all staff, committee and families

**PPE**

* Government guidance is that the PPE is not required for general use in early years settings to protect against COVID-19 transmission.
* PPE should continue to be worn and disposed of as normal for nappy changing and administration of first aid.
* If a child shows symptoms, staff should wear a facemask/visor, disposable gloves and apron if a 2-meter distance cannot be maintained at all times. PPE should be disposed of following government guidelines

**Responding to a suspected case**

* In the event of a child developing suspected covid-19 symptoms whilst attending the setting, they should be collected as soon as possible and isolated at home in line with the current NHS guidance.
* Whilst waiting for the child to be collected they should be isolated from others in a different area/room. If possible a window should be opened for ventilation.
* The staff member responsible for the child during this time should wear PPE - Masks, visor, disposable gloves and apron.
* The area should be thoroughly cleaned immediately once the child has left. If the area cannot be cleaned, it must be left unvisited for 72 hours and then it should be cleaned.
* The person responsible for cleaning ideally should be the person dealing with the unwell child and should continue to wear PPE. This should then be disposed of according to current government guidelines.
* In the event of a staff member developing suspected COVID-19 symptoms whilst working at a nursery, they should return home immediately and isolate at home in line with the NHS guidance.
* They should also follow current testing advice for themselves and their household
* All children who are attending a childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of COVID-19 and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario. The aim is to enable children to get back to childcare and their parents/carers not to need to self-isolate any longer than necessary, if the test proves to be negative, a positive test will ensure rapid action can be taken to protect other children and staff at Pegasus Childcare Centre
* We ask all parents and carers to ensure they organise a test for their child, in the event that they develop COVID-19 symptoms and notify us immediately of a positive test.
* Parents/Carers can access a test for under 5’s by contacting 111
* If a child has symptoms of COVID-19 then families will be called and asked to come and collect them. The symptoms are a temperature of 38c or above, regular coughing, sore throat etc
* The child will be isolated anyway for the other children and staff in a different area/room along with one member of staff
* The staff member who is caring for the child should wear PPE and clean the affected area with disinfectant once the child has left
* Social distancing must maintained during break times for staff
* The staff member who was with the child doesn't have to go home unless they are developing symptoms themselves.
* Advise staff to remove their work clothes before they enter their home and take a shower immediately to remove any germs they may have picked up.

**Staff training**

* Where possible, meetings and training sessions should be conducted through virtual conferencing
* All staff members must receive appropriate instruction and training in infection control and the standard operating procedures and risk assessment within which they will be operating.
* Online training may be available to allow their training levels to be maintained if appropriate.

**Payment**

* We do our best if Pegasus Childcare Centre has to close due to the world pandemic.
* An agreement on payment and fees will be made my the committee and they will inform all families of the outcome.

**Setting Closure due to COVID-19**

* If Pegasus Childcare Centre gets at least 2 children that attend the nursery tested positive with COVID-19. The setting will close for a period of 10 days so that we can all self-isolate.
* The 2 confirmed cases of the nursery children  will be confirmed by completing a PCR test.
* An email, letter and poster will inform parents/carers of the closure and why this has to happen
* Staff will still keep in touch with families through the Pegasus Childcare facebook page and Tapestry,  staff will upload activities, videos and stories to help the children’s development at home.
* A risk assessment will be updated and completed before the setting reopens along with a COVID-19 deep clean.
* Families will be informed of the return date of when the setting will be reopened.

***This Policy and Procedure has been adopted by Pegasus Childcare Centre***

**Signatures on behalf if the setting by:**

…………..………………………. **Chairperson**

…………Paige Shackleton……………………. **Manager**

…………Emma Thornalley……………………. **Deputy Manager**

**Date of Implementation** - December 2019

**Date  Reviewed and updated**- January 2020 **Date Reviewed and updated -** April 2020 **Date Reviewed and updated** - July 2020 **Date Reviewed and updated -** Sept 2020

**Date Reviewed and updated -** Dec 2020  **Date Reviewed and updated -** January 2021 **Date Reviewed and updated** -April  2021 **Date Reviewed and updated -**July 2021

**Date Reviewed and updated -** September 2021 **Date Reviewed and updated –Sept 22-**             **Date Reviewed and updated -**