

1 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I write to you to set out the arrangements we have made to reopen St John's Nursery Playgroups **from 22 June 2020**

Thank you.

Before I set out these arrangements, I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents and carers for their understanding and cooperation since we had to close from 23 March. I know that this period has been challenging for many families, in particular when you have had to juggle work commitments with managing childcare, if you have children with special educational needs or disability, or if you are a single parent.

I am pleased to let you know that, further to the government's announcement that early years and childcare providers can open from 1 June (subject to scientific advice), we are working hard to take the necessary steps to be ready to welcome back our children. We will open only if the government confirms that their five key tests justify taking this step.

Which children can attend from 22 June?

From the week beginning 1 June, some early years and childcare providers will welcome back all children, if the five key tests set by government justify the changes at the time. **We are planning to open from 22 June.** For the vast majority of children and young people, coronavirus is a mild illness. Some categories of children with specific serious health conditions should not attend their early years setting. If you are unsure whether your child should attend the setting due to a health condition that they or someone they live with has, please contact us so we can discuss the details with you.

Protective measures we are taking in light of coronavirus (COVID-19)

First and foremost, it goes without saying that the safety of your child and of our staff is our top priority. We are working hard, following the latest government guidance, to develop and implement a number of new ways of operating. This will allow us to open as safely as possible, focusing on measures that will help limit the risk of coronavirus transmitting within our setting.

We are following guidance from the Government and also taking advice from Herts for Learning who have issued a large document, as well as from the Early Years Alliance who have been very proactive in keeping us informed and providing practical supporting advice throughout this pandemic.

Some of the steps we are taking in readiness for reopening include:

- The staff team will all be spending the week preceding opening on cleaning the premises. Carpets, walls, tables, chairs, climbing and play equipment will be thoroughly cleaned as will anywhere the children or staff touch such as in the toilet areas, doors and handles etc. We will select easy to clean toys and resources to be used so we can clean between each group of children.
- Staff will have available to them the necessary personal protective equipment such as gloves, aprons, face masks and goggles. These will primarily be used when changing nappies or if a child is displaying symptoms.
- Hand sanitisers, both personal and throughout the playgroup, will be provided for easy access and will be used regularly alongside thorough handwashing.
- The staff will not routinely wear facemasks, unless they chose to.
- Cleaning will be carried out throughout the session, with regular wiping of surfaces, resources and equipment.
- Asking that anyone who is displaying coronavirus symptoms, or who lives with someone who does, do not attend the setting. That includes children and staff who work here.
- Keeping our children in small groups with consistent staffing as much as possible, and minimising contact with other groups around the setting.
- When we rotate the children to another area (ie to the garden) we will ensure minimum contact and ensure we follow our cleaning procedures before each move.
- Cleaning our hands more often than usual. We have developed routines to ensure children understand when and how to wash their hands, making sure they wash them thoroughly for at least 20 seconds using running water and soap and dry them thoroughly, or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.
- Ensuring our children understand good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach and ensuring a good supply of tissues and bins throughout the setting.
- Implementing an enhanced cleaning schedule, ensuring surfaces touched by children and staff are cleaned regularly and throughout the day, including table tops, door handles and play equipment.

- Asking parents and carers to physically distance from each other and staff when dropping off and collecting their children. Please observe the distancing lines outside the setting.
- We need you to **limit drop off and collection to one parent or carer** per household if at all possible. This should be the same adult every day
- Asking children not to bring toys or other items from home to the setting, unless this is essential to their health.
- Arranging for staggered start and departure times to avoid large groups of adults and children within the building. We ask that you respect this arrangement. Please observe the 2 metre distancing rule
- We ask you to not enter the playgroup area but deliver your child through the designated entry points where a member of staff will take your child to their small group/bubble. (this will be outside the gate at Oakmere); (this will be the side door from the carpark at St John's Methodist church)
- Please wash/sanitise your child's hands before entry. We will provide hand sanitiser and a wash station at entry points.

What can parents and carers do to help?

There are a number of things parents and carers can do to help us make these arrangements effective, in addition to the points listed above concerning arrival and departure and not bringing toys to the setting.

1. Please explain to your child that it will be different at playgroup when they return; they will not be able to play with all their friends; they must listen to the rules which the staff will be implementing. It is important that we keep everyone as safe as possible and if a child refuses to stay within their group/bubble we may not be able to accommodate that child.
2. If you need to speak with a member of staff we ask that you wear a facemask to protect yourself and staff member
3. Anyone who begins to display coronavirus symptoms while in the setting will be sent home immediately following government guidelines. While a child is waiting to be collected, they will be separated from their group and isolated with one member of staff if this is possible.
4. If your child, or anyone in your household has or displays coronavirus symptoms you may not bring your child to the playgroup. You must follow Government guidance on self-isolation. Please inform the playgroup immediately.
5. If a child who is attending playgroup is a suspected coronavirus case you will need to immediately collect your child if they develop symptoms while at the setting.

Testing

Once early years and childcare providers open to more children, all children who are attending a childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus, and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario. The aim is to enable children to get back to childcare, and their parents or carers not to need to self-isolate any longer than is necessary, if the test proves to be negative. A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect other children and staff in their setting.

We ask all parents and carers to ensure they organise a test for their child, in the event that they develop coronavirus symptoms, and notify us immediately of a positive test. Further guidance is available online through the [coronavirus.gov.uk](https://www.coronavirus.gov.uk) website.

Conclusion

We are attaching a form for you to complete before returning to playgroup; this will be an opportunity for you to let us know how your child has coped during lockdown and the sorts of things they have been doing. We feel that will help us to get to know the 'new' children who are returning after a long absence. We will also try to set up an opportunity for your child to speak with their keyworker before returning. Please let us know if this is an option for you.

I hope that this letter has given you the information you need to understand what arrangements we have made to enable children to return to us from 22 June. We are looking forward to welcoming your child back and I hope that you are assured that we have taken all possible steps to ensure safety for all in our setting. If you have any questions or suggestions, please let us know.

PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED AND UNDERSTOOD THIS LETTER, BEFORE 15 JUNE, BY REPLYING TO THE EMAIL.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTACHED FORM BEFORE YOUR CHILD RETURNS as that will help us to resettle your child back into playgroup.

Kind Regards

Celia Mills, Manager, on behalf of
St John's Nursery Playgroups Teams