

— COVID-19 —  
**OPERATING  
PLAN**





# STAYING SAFE AT NURSERY DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



**The safety of our staff, children, and families are of paramount importance to us here at Tommies Childcare.**

While Covid-19 continues to pose a threat, adapting our processes and procedures will enable us to minimise the risk and spread of infection, allowing children to attend our settings safely.

The procedures outlined in this guide will apply to all nurseries in the Tommies Childcare group and will be followed by our management and nursery teams.

Tommies Childcare has and will continue to follow and act upon the guidance and advice issued by the Department for Education, while also building upon this guidance where deemed necessary.

So that we can reduce the risk of spread of coronavirus in our nurseries, our usual procedures have been modified. These steps have been taken to ensure that unnecessary mixing of both staff and children is limited and effectively managed.

We are confident that our revised processes and procedures will provide the best possible levels of protection for both our children and our employees.

Please take some time to familiarise yourself with the information provided in this guidance. This guidance is regularly updated, so please ensure that you are aware of the most current information.

**DANIELLE BUTLER**  
Operations Director



## ATTENDANCE AT NURSERY

- Only children who are symptom-free or have completed the required isolation period may attend our nurseries.

**Following recent updates to Government guidance concerning those children who may have previously been identified as 'high risk', our operating guidance has now been updated. The Government has now advised that, as there is more information about COVID-19 available than in March 2020, fewer children will be required to shield.**

- All children who usually access childcare are strongly encouraged to attend their nursery so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of early years' education.
- A small number of children will still be unable to attend in line with Public Health England advice because they are self-isolating and/or have had symptoms or a positive Coronavirus test results themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has Coronavirus.
- Shielding advice for adults changed in January 2021; however, the guidance for children has not. This means that even the small number of children who remain on the shielded patient list can return to nursery settings, as can those who have family members who are shielding.
- Some children no longer required to shield, but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional, may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to their nursery setting, usually at their planned clinical appointment.
- Every attempt to accommodate children within these groups will be made to enable them to return to their nursery; however, this may require the nursery setting to conduct a risk assessment before their return to ensure that staff and parents can work in partnership to ensure children's safety.



## DROP-OFF AND COLLECTION

- Only parents who are symptom-free and have completed the required isolation period will be able to drop-off or collect their child.
- Drop-off and collection is limited to one parent per family to reduce the number of people congregating outside of our nurseries.
- To avoid unnecessary entry to, and traffic inside, our nurseries drop-off and collections will take place in a pre-designated area. Your Nursery Manager will be able to tell you where your nursery's drop-off and collection point(s) are. We may use additional access points to help limit the size of queues during our busier periods.

Naturally, with these changes to our procedures, drop-off and collection will take longer than usual. Parents are politely asked to be patient when dropping off or collecting their children at the nursery.

- Where parents are waiting to drop-off or collect their child, social distancing should be maintained at all times. **Parents must wear a face mask when dropping off or collecting their child** (unless you have a valid medical exemption).
- All children will have their temperatures checked upon arrival to the setting. Where children have a high temperature (37.8 degrees or higher), parents will be advised to return home with the child and arrange for their child to have a Covid-19 test, or until their temperature drops below 37.8 degrees. We understand that not all raised temperatures are not Covid-related; however, we hope you can understand that we must follow strict guidelines to ensure that our nurseries remain safe for other children and our staff teams.
- If parents wish to stay with their child to help settle them, we will require you to wear a face mask. Parents are to provide their own face masks.
- A change of clothes for all children attending must be provided and left at their nursery. Your child's bag should not be collected. Refills of items can be brought in with children when needed, and a member of staff will place these items in your child's bag.



## ROOM NUMBERS/OCCUPANCY

Current Government guidance advises that normal group sizes are to remain in place within our nursery settings. There is currently no requirement for Early Years providers to contain children in small bubbles.

However, the following steps will still be taken to reduce unnecessary risk:

- Children will be kept within their nursery room groups and refrain from mixing unnecessarily with children from other room groups. Unfortunately, this will mean that children will not be able to transition to another room for the foreseeable future.
- Care routines, including the provision of meals, nappy changing, and toileting, will be administered within the space allocated to each room where possible.
- The use of internal communal spaces will be restricted as much as possible.
- Outdoor areas will also be utilised to support additional space for children to play separately in the summer months and where it is safe to do so.
- Where possible, beds/cots will be situated with social distancing measures in place.
- Show around's/nursery visits for new children will continue to be conducted virtually. Where parents wish to visit the nursery, this may be accommodated for a scheduled time or out of operating hours. All parents or visitors entering the nursery will be asked to wear a face covering and use the hand sanitising stations provided.



## MAINTAINING CHILDREN'S WELLBEING

As part of our commitment to minimise risk and support effective hygiene procedures, the following processes will apply where possible:

- Children will be supported in age-appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe, such as regular hand washing and sneezing into a tissue.
- Children will be supported in understanding the changes and challenges they may encounter as a result of COVID-19. Staff will ensure that they are aware of children's attachments and their need for emotional support.
- Opportunities for children to experience social distancing will be provided as part of our role-play and daily routines. This should support children's emotional wellbeing as they come across changes in their day-to-day lives.



## COMMUNICATION

Communication during this critical time is a crucial aspect of maintaining the relationships that we here at Tommies Childcare have with our parents. In light of the current situation, changes to how parents are communicated with. We are hoping that, while some of these changes have not been introduced to you previously, you can understand and support these new methods. These include:

- Digital paperwork will be increased. Daily Feedback Sheets and information about general care will be communicated via Parentzone.
- Staff will provide verbal feedback to parents where required; however, this may sometimes be provided via telephone.
- Medication forms will be exchanged via email to minimise paperwork transmission. Parents need to advise your Nursery Manager prior to your child attending their nursery if medication is required and ensure that the correct paperwork can be emailed ahead of your child attending.
- Parents will be advised of any accidents that have occurred via telephone. This will give parents the opportunity to discuss or ask any questions. Parents will then be asked to sign an accident form upon collection and a duplicate copy will be issued.
- We will continue to provide all parents with regular communication so that we can work together in ensuring safe operating procedures for your child and family.
- Our procedures and practices will be reviewed and updated regularly in line with government guidance.



## TRAVEL

- Staff and parents should travel to the nursery alone using their own means of transport.
- If your only means of transport is public transport, please follow the current guidance for the safe use of public transport (which includes wearing a face mask for the duration of your journey):
  - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>
- Pushchairs, car seats, and scooters can only be left where there are external pushchair areas available.



## HYGIENE PROCEDURES

Hygiene procedures in our nursery settings are robust, even in 'normal circumstances'; however, it is recognised that these will need to be further strengthened as outlined below:

- All children and staff must thoroughly wash their hands upon arrival at the nursery and frequently throughout the day, particularly before and after toileting, eating, and handling of resources (toys/equipment).
- All waste will be disposed of in a hygienic and safe manner.
- Tissues will be disposed of immediately following use.
- Used personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, gloves, aprons etc. will be disposed of into a closed bin.
- Any new activities will be risk assessed, and usual practice will be continually reviewed and adapted where necessary. Any activities where strict hygiene procedures cannot be followed, such as sand or water play, will not take place until further notice.
- Children will not be allowed to bring in items from their home to the nursery unless it is essential for their wellbeing, such as a comforter. Where necessary, such items will be cleaned upon arrival.
- All resources required for play and learning experiences in the nursery will continue to be regularly washed and sterilised.
- Equipment such as stationery, tablets (iPad's) etc. will be allocated to individual colleagues where possible and will be cleaned before and after use.

### Cleaning

- A nominated colleague will take responsibility each day for ensuring continuous cleaning across the nursery. The cleaning schedule will remain a priority and will include communal touch-points such as doors/handles, bathrooms, hand-washing facilities, stair rails, garden equipment, hard surfaces, and toys.
- Toys which cannot be easily cleaned have been removed from the nursery.
- All items within the nursery which require laundering will be laundered in line with NHS laundry guidelines.



- Items such as towels, flannels, and bedding will not be shared between children.
- Windows will remain open where possible to provide ventilation.



## NHS TEST & TRACE SYSTEM

Tommy's Childcare will be supporting the Government/NHS Test & Trace system by following the guidance concerning those individuals with suspected symptoms or those testing positive for COVID-19.

All of our Nursery Managers will be required to communicate with the Public Health Protection Team, where necessary. It is important to note that staff members and parents/carers must be ready and willing to:

- Book a coronavirus test if they are displaying symptoms. Staff and children must not come into the nursery setting if they have symptoms. Staff and children must be sent home to self-isolate if symptoms are shown in the nursery setting. All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children under 11 will need to be helped by their parents/carers if using a home testing kit.
- Provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus or if asked by the NHS Test and Trace team.
- Self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who has coronavirus symptoms or someone who tests positive for coronavirus.

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119. Parents and staff will be required to inform their Nursery Manager immediately of the results of the test:

- If someone tests negative, and they feel well and no longer have coronavirus symptoms, they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu - in which case it is best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can also stop self-isolating.
- If someone tests positive, they should follow the [Stay At Home: Guidance for Households with Possible or Confirmed Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection](#) and must continue to self-isolate for at least ten days from the onset of their symptoms. They may only return to the nursery setting if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste. A cough can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The ten-day period starts from when they first became ill or the day that they tested positive. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue to self-isolate for the full 14 days.



## WHEN TO SELF-ISOLATE

The following information is taken directly from the NHS. You should self-isolate immediately if:

- You have any symptoms of coronavirus (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste). Please visit the NHS website to learn about the symptoms of coronavirus.
- You've tested positive for coronavirus - this means you have coronavirus.
- Someone you live with has symptoms or tested positive.
- Someone in your support bubble has symptoms and you've been in close contact with them since their symptoms started or during the 48 hours before they started.
- Someone in your support bubble tested positive and you've been in close contact with them since they had the test or in the 48 hours before their test.
- You've been told you've been in contact with someone who tested positive. Please visit the NHS website to find out what to do if you're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS Covid-19 app.
- You arrive in the UK from a country with a high coronavirus risk. Please visit [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) to find out how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK.



## CONFIRMED CASES OF CORONAVIRUS OR CHILDREN/ STAFF DISPLAYING CORONAVIRUS SYMPTOMS

The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) according to the NHS are as follows:

- A high temperature (37.8 degrees or higher) - this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back.
- A new, continuous cough - this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours.
- Loss or change to your normal sense of smell or taste - this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

### Procedure in the event a child displays symptoms of coronavirus

- In the event a child displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) when at nursery, parents/carers will be contacted immediately and must collect their child as soon as possible.
- Families will be advised to self-isolate at home in line with the NHS guidelines and not return to nursery until the isolation period is over, and your child is no longer symptomatic.
- A child displaying coronavirus symptoms in nursery will be isolated with a member of staff from their room in a previously identified room or area. If possible, a window will be opened for ventilation.
- Suitable PPE will be provided to the member of staff so that they are able to isolate themselves with the child safely. PPE includes a surgical face mask, apron, and gloves.
- Once the child has been collected from the nursery, the room/area used to isolate the child will be thoroughly cleaned by the member of staff wearing PPE.
- In the event a colleague displays symptoms of coronavirus when at work, they will be provided with a face mask and advised to return home immediately.
- Staff will be reminded of NHS guidelines regarding isolation and personal care and will not be allowed to return to work until the isolation period is over, and they are no longer symptomatic.
- The government encourages staff and children attending an Education or Childcare setting after 1st June 2020 to get tested if



they display symptoms of coronavirus. Government guidance states:

*Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 10 days. The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.*

- Any confirmed cases of coronavirus, either in a member or staff or a child, and/or the nursery is advised to close as a result, should be swiftly reported to Ofsted.



## STAFF SAFETY AND MANAGEMENT

We understand the important emotional connection that our children have with our colleagues and have considered this when planning the reopening of our nursery settings. However, due to the lower than usual occupancy, your child's key person or regular member of staff may not be present.

Our nursery management teams will be following the below guidance regarding our colleagues:

- Colleagues will only attend the nursery if they are symptom-free, have completed the required isolation period and achieved a negative coronavirus test result.
- Those who fall into the category of Extremely Clinically Vulnerable will not be able to work within our nursery settings at this time. Those who are defined as Clinically Vulnerable will be spoken to by their Line Manager and a personalised Risk Assessment will be put in place.
- The nurseries will have a plan for social distancing during breaks for colleagues. Where this cannot be accommodated, staff will be required to go off-site.
- Colleagues will avoid physical contact with each other, e.g. handshakes, hugs etc.
- Staff meetings and training sessions will be conducted online through video conferencing.
- Staff are required to wear a face mask when they move around the nursery (unless they have a valid medical exemption), this includes when walking around corridors or communal areas. The use of face masks will also apply where staff are having to work in a room which is not defined as their 'base room'. Where staff are working in their 'base room', they are not required to wear a mask.



## TRAINING & PPE

- All colleagues have received appropriate instruction and training in infection control and the standard operating procedure and risk assessments within which they will be operating.
- Government guidance is that PPE is not required for Early Years settings beyond that which is usually worn such as gloves and aprons for toileting procedures and first aid.
- PPE will continue to be worn as usual for nappy changing and the administration of first aid.
- PPE is available for colleagues to use where a child is displaying symptoms and awaiting collection. This includes aprons, vinyl gloves, and masks.
- Colleagues who use public transport to get to and from work will be encouraged to find an alternative means of travel. If this is not possible, then the company will be supplying masks for these colleagues to wear during their commute.



**We understand that this has been an emotionally and physically challenging time for our children, colleagues, and families. We hope that this guide has answered all or most of the questions you may have and eased any concerns you may have about your child returning to nursery.**

**Our Nursery Managers are on hand if you have any other questions, so please contact them should you need to. In the meantime, we look forward to welcoming you and your child back to Tommies Childcare.**

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## **TOMMIES**CHILDCARE

Head Office, Four Brooks Day Nursery & Pre-school, Parkville Highway,  
Coventry CV6 4HZ

**[tommieschildcare.co.uk](https://tommieschildcare.co.uk)**

**t.** 01676 540 244

**e.** [info@tommieschildcare.co.uk](mailto:info@tommieschildcare.co.uk)