

# Coronavirus Policy: updated September 2021

## Statement of Intent

In order to welcome our children & families back to Footprints CEC safely, we have considered relevant guidance from:

- The Department of Education (DfE) - Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for the lifting of restrictions from 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021
- The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) – Management of face-to-face interventions in private practice and independent clinics in the UK
- Public Health England (PHE) - COVID-19 infection prevention and control (IPC) guidelines.

We have considered this guidance when developing new operating procedures to help protect our staff, children, parents and other visitors. These procedures will be continually reviewed, in line with all current and changing government guidance and from ongoing input from the Covid-19 Working Group and our staff team.

All aspects of our service delivery have been risk assessed in order to develop our operating procedures. This assessment directly addresses risks associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) and the measures put in place to control those risks for staff, children, parents, and other visitors. This includes the measures set out in the DfE guidance **Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings** to ensure that we are 'Covid-19 Secure'.

In our setting, preventing the spread of coronavirus involves dealing with direct transmission (for instance sneezing and coughing whilst in close contact) and indirect transmission (via touching contaminated surfaces). Further essential measures include:

- Avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms of coronavirus
- Frequent hand washing and good respiratory hygiene practices
- Providing and using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) with systems and policies in place that govern its use
- Regular cleaning of our premises
- Minimising contact (e.g. hands-on facilitation) and mixing (allocation of 'bubble' teams/groups)

Please be aware that by accessing conductive education services provided by Footprints CEC or by returning to work, you accept the charity cannot take any responsibility for any incidence of Covid-19. You also agree to act in accordance with this procedure and understand your responsibility in the current circumstances of the pandemic to ensure compliance with the measures as set out by the latest government guidance.

We appreciate that this situation is ever changing, so some reminders may be required. However persistent failure to follow the procedures set out in this document may lead to support services being withdrawn for families or disciplinary actions being taken against team members.

## 1.0 Methods

### 1.1 Face to face or virtual support

Whilst Footprints CEC centres were closed, our education team introduced a number of remote support services including homework programmes and Zoom sessions. These were offered to all our families.

During the last lockdown period, it was found that virtual support was not suitable for all our children and as time has passed, a number of our families have reluctantly withdrawn from the online provision preferring instead to wait until we were in a position to offer conductive education in a classroom setting and face-to-face. We believe these families are now, where possible in face to face classes again.

However, we will consider where our families are travelling from, and may withdraw access to face-to-face sessions in relation to local spikes and localised restrictions.

### 1.2 Attendance

Staff, children, parents, and any other visitors, must not approach or enter Footprints CEC if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)<sup>1</sup> unless they have had a negative test result for that episode of symptoms. If symptoms reoccur, even if a negative test was carried out, a further test will be required before an individual can return to the centre.

If anyone is displaying symptoms of coronavirus or living in a household where someone has symptoms or is a known positive case, then the required isolation period must be completed before they are allowed to return to work/sessions. All individuals entering the premises must report any symptoms of coronavirus that they or a member of their household are displaying immediately. It is each individual's responsibility to report this information and this is critical to the safety of our children, families and staff members.

Individuals that have been identified as 'Extremely Clinically Vulnerable' can now attend sessions at Footprints without any further restrictions placed upon them.

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<sup>1</sup> The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal



### 1.3 Physical distancing / Grouping

Only one parent/carer per child will be permitted to enter Footprints CEC and join in with the session. The paper signing-in sheet will not be completed by the parent/carer. A separate Fire Register clipboard will be prepared for each group in advance.

A different member of the education team may work with the child in any given session. Physical contact will be limited wherever possible but is a necessary part of conductive education and so social distancing is not achievable for the conductor/conductor's assistant and the child during the session.

The use of communal internal spaces must be restricted as much as possible, however brief transitory contact such as walking through areas to gain access to others is acceptable and identified as low risk.

All adults must have limited physical contact with one another including handshakes, hugs etc.

Social distancing cannot be maintained in the classrooms or the main office and the staff now work within one bubble. However, there is space in the adjacent office if anyone would prefer more room. Windows should be opened where possible. Staff will be encouraged to take some time outdoors during their break to get some fresh air.

Parents must bring in their own eating and drinking utensils and take them home after each session.

### 1.4 Wellbeing and Education

Children must be supported in age and ability appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe and carry these out. This includes regular hand washing, coughing, or sneezing into a tissue or elbow and binning the tissue ('catch it, bin it, kill it') and encouraging them not to touch their mouth, eyes, and nose.

Children will be supported to understand the changes and challenges they may be encountering as a result of Covid-19.

### 1.5 Training

All staff members will receive appropriate instruction and training in infection control, this Coronavirus Policy and Procedure and risk assessments within which they will be operating according to latest government guidelines. They will also be required to complete online training on Infection Prevention and Control and Preventing COVID-19 as well as the correct use of PPE.

Training will be ongoing and all staff will be advised of the importance of asking for clarification if they are unsure about anything relating to the COVID-19 Secure guidance. Staff must raise any questions or concerns they have as soon as possible and speak with their line manager immediately if they feel practices could be improved or need to be reviewed.

### 1.6 Communications

Parents will receive clear communication regarding the role they play in the safe operating procedures and all measures being taken to ensure the safety of their children and themselves.

Communications sent via email (to the email address they have provided) to parents outlining any changes to restrictions will require a read receipt to acknowledge understanding and agreement to all measures prior to their child attending Footprints CEC.

Signs remain in place to remind all individuals entering the centres of the operating procedures and measures in place to ensure these procedures are followed at all times.

### 1.7 Visitors

Access to the centre will be restricted to children, their parent/carer and staff as far as practically possible.

Visitors will not be permitted access to the centre unless essential (e.g. essential building maintenance). Where essential visits are required these will be made outside of the usual operational hours wherever possible.

Siblings are included in the visitor category and remain unable to join sessions during school holidays.

Any areas where a visitor has been will be cleaned thoroughly immediately following their departure.

### 1.8 Travel

Wherever possible staff and parents/carers should travel to the centre alone, using their own transport. If public transport is necessary, current government guidance on the use of public transport must be followed. If staff have to travel to work together, this should be in groups of no more than 2 and they should sit diagonally in the vehicle with one in the front and one in the back to maximise the distance between them.

### 1.9 Hygiene

All children, staff and visitors must wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser upon arrival at the centre, before and after eating, and after coughing and sneezing.

Hands must be washed with soap and water regularly and for at least 20 seconds, paper towels will be available and there will be no multi-use hand towels for drying in use. Alternatively, hand sanitiser gel can be used if soap and water is not available for any reason. Children, parents/carers and staff members will be actively encouraged and reminded of the need to wash their hands frequently.

Staff and children will be encouraged to follow the 'bare below the elbows' procedures (as used routinely in hospitals for infection control). They should wear clothing that ends at the elbow, however waterproof watches, a plain wedding band and small stud earrings will be accepted. The forearm and wrists should be included in handwashing and evidence shows this to be a very effective method of infection control.

Touch points such as door handles and light switches should be wiped down frequently, anti-bacterial wipes will be available around the centre for this purpose.

Tissues must be immediately disposed in a pedal bin with a lid and then hand washing must take place. All internal bins must be emptied frequently (if the centre is in use) and disposed of in a hygienic and safe manner. Each staff member will be responsible for emptying their bin, tying up the bag, taking this to the external bin and replacing it with a new bin liner. All staff must wash their hands immediately after emptying bins.

## 2.0 Health and Safety

Appropriate Health & Safety checks are conducted prior to every reopening of Footprints CEC, including legionnaires' checks.

Windows should be kept open, where possible, to ensure good ventilation.

An enhanced cleaning and sterilising schedule will be implemented that includes furniture, surfaces, children's toys, equipment, and communal areas. Each child will have their own, labelled plastic box (with lid) to hold their own equipment. Touch points such as light switches, door handles etc<sup>2</sup> and hand washing facilities must be cleaned and sanitised regularly. All cleaning must be recorded on the relevant checklist as appropriate.

Classroom areas must be cleaned down after each session and all touch points sprayed and wiped with antibacterial cleanser before the next session can start.

To ensure effective cleaning throughout centre: soft furnishings, soft toys, toys with intricate parts, and all unnecessary items must be removed.

All items requiring laundering must be washed on the warmest water setting possible in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Anything used for transporting laundry must be disinfected in line with our cleaning procedure.

Children are not permitted to bring items from home into the centre unless absolutely essential for their wellbeing and mobility. Wherever possible, any additional items brought in should be appropriately cleaned upon arrival.

### 2.1 Risk Assessment

All regular activities within the session routine must be risk assessed and due consideration given to any adaptations to usual practice and recorded on the COVID Secure Risk Assessment.

Where deemed necessary, practices must be adapted and any adaptations clearly communicated to staff, children, and parents/carers.

Higher-risk activities will be carried out once again, including but not limited to messy play, eating, toileting, dressing, or any personal care. Staff and parents should ensure that scrupulous hand washing is carried out before and after the activity to reduce contamination.

Should anyone feel that further consideration is required regarding any activity at any time then the Lead Conductor must be informed immediately. The Lead Conductor must speak to the Management Team to discuss any adaptations and agree these before their implementation.

### 2.2 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE will be used where close contact is required, for example when a member of the education team is facilitating a child. Conductive staff will wear a visor when in direct contact with children and an apron, visor and gloves when undertaking any feeding, toileting, personal care or cleaning activities.

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<sup>2</sup> NB: The office telephone must be antibacterial wiped after use.

Adequate training will be provided on what PPE is required (i.e. gloves, visors, aprons) and the correct practice for donning/doffing of PPE.

### 2.3 Supplies

The Manager must ensure that each centre has an adequate supply of essential supplies.

Management/Covid-19 Working Group will ensure that contingency plans are in place to minimise the impact of any shortages of supplies.

The education team must monitor the usage of PPE and cleaning supplies used in the classroom, and must inform the Manager when additional supplies are needed to ensure that an adequate supply of stock is available to meet operational needs. Footprints CEC will not be able to operate without essential supplies required for ensuring infection control.

### 2.4 Responding to a suspected case

In the event of a child/parent/carer developing suspected coronavirus symptoms whilst attending Footprints CEC, they must leave the premises as soon as possible and isolate at home in line with the NHS guidance.

Emergency contacts will be updated prior to recommencement of sessions in case previous emergency contacts are in a shielded group or circumstances have changed.

If possible, the area must be left unvisited for 72 hours and then the area must be thoroughly cleaned. The person responsible for cleaning the area must wear appropriate PPE.

In the event of a staff member developing suspected coronavirus symptoms whilst working at the centre, they should return home immediately and isolate at home in line with the NHS guidance. The usual absence reporting procedures will continue to apply, ensuring their line manager receives regular updates on the welfare of any staff member absent from work, along with evidence of a PCR test result as soon it is available.

### 2.5 Testing and tracing

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus is asked to take a PCR test at the earliest opportunity. Although not a legal requirement, it is Footprints' duty to safeguard the children, families and staff who attend. For government guidance on how to arrange a test visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/>.

Where the child/parent/carer or staff member tests negative, they can return to the centre and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation. If the child/parent/carer tests positive, the staff and other session/group members that have been in contact with them should be advised to follow current government guidance. This also applies if a staff member tests positive. It is imperative that Footprints is notified of any potential positive cases of Covid 19. This is to ensure that appropriate action is taken within the setting and anyone affected can be alerted. Footprints must also contact other families from the affected group to advise them to check government guidance and follow the instructions accordingly. The other household members of those advised to self-isolate, do not need to self-isolate unless the child, carer or staff member they live with subsequently develops symptoms (but will not be permitted to access Footprints services until the isolation period has elapsed).

As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the setting, Footprints CEC will contact Public Health England's local health protection team, who will conduct a rapid investigation

and will advise on the most appropriate action to take. In some cases, a larger group may be asked to self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure. Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.

I have read and understood this Coronavirus Policy and I agree to act in accordance with the procedures and measures outlined above.

**Print name:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

OTHER CHANGES to be included

### 3.0 Expectant mothers of children accessing the service

An email will be sent to all expectant mothers as follows:

We want to keep you all as safe as possible and as such, we are sending through this advice (albeit written for employers) from The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

As a precaution, pregnant women are included in the list of 'clinically vulnerable' (e.g. those at 'moderate risk' from Covid-19) because pregnancy, in a small proportion of women, can alter how their body handles severe viral infections, especially from 28-weeks pregnant and beyond.

So, for pregnant women in their third trimester, after 28 weeks' gestation, and those at any stage of pregnancy with an underlying health condition – such as heart or lung disease – a more precautionary approach is advised, along with a recommendation to work from home and significantly reduce unnecessary social contact.

**We felt we needed to make you aware so that if you choose to keep attending sessions at Footprints with your child after 28-weeks of pregnancy, you are making this decision with knowledge of the risks and current guidance.**

**Please reply directly to this email confirming that you have read and acknowledged the guidance and are choosing to attend at your own risk.** However, if you would prefer to stop attending your face-to-face sessions based on this information, please let us know as soon as possible, and we will do our best to offer you an alternative session (via Zoom).