COVID-19 policy

These changes have been made to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID 19 in our setting. These are informed by the requirements of the most recent Public Health England guidance.

- Guidance: Preparing for the wider opening of early years and childcare settings from 1 June
- Guidance from PACEY our insurer and the Norfolk Local Authority.
- More guidance for parents and carers can be found here,


Ending contracts

If we feel that a family has sent a child knowing they are displaying symptoms or do not work with us to follow this policy and help keep members of our setting safe, we reserve the right to end care immediately.
Social Distancing children and childminders within our setting

“We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff.” – Public Health England

“It is still important to reduce contact between people as much as possible, and we can achieve that and reduce transmission risk by ensuring children, young people and staff where possible, only mix in a small, consistent group and that small group stays away from other people and groups.” – Public Health England

At Apple Tree Childminding we do not expect non-symptomatic children to social distance from one another or us. The setting will be one bubble and therefore we will not require children to kept in smaller groups. We believe that this is the best way of supporting positive mental wellbeing whilst also reducing the risk of transmission.

Your child will be given hugs and physical contact where required and sought from us.

School age children will be encouraged not touch one another in line with their school rules.
**Arriving and leaving our setting**

Parents and carers must maintain social distancing with us, this means:

- Only children who are symptom-free or have completed the required isolation period may attend the setting, please do not ask us to make doorstep decisions, please call us ahead.
- Please remain two metres from the front door when open.
- Please arrive at the allocated time to drop off and collect your child, we will be staggering these times to ensure that only one family is doing drop off and pickups at that time. If someone is already at our door when you arrive please remain at least 2 meters from them.
- Parents and carers will not be able to enter our setting.
- Drop off and pickups will be kept short, you should confirm that your child has been well since they've last been with us and has not had any pain relief or medication. If this is not the case, please let us know **before** arriving, by phone.
- Any information passing can be done via WhatsApp.
- We will encourage all children to come into the setting independently, where this isn’t possible, we will first put a mask and sanitize our hands before we come to collect your child from your arms. We understand this may draw the situation out in time, but it is vital we keep everyone as safe as possible.
- You should travel to the setting ideally by foot, or car, but avoid sharing cars with people outside your family bubble and public transport where possible.
- Only one adult should bring your child/collect your child, if you have another adult or other children (siblings) with you please ask them to remain in the car. If you would prefer us to bring your child to the car, please call us on arrival to let us know and we can do this.
- Please keep your child close to you and do not allow them to touch our neighbour’s property.
- We will have your child ready to leave with their hands washed and shoes on, they will not be able to return to play once their shoes are on so, please ensure you arrive on time.
- Adults showing symptoms of COVID-19 must not come to the setting, this may mean you need to consider who will collect your child if you become unwell during the day. If you do become unwell with COVID-19 symptoms while your child is with us you
must arrange for them to be collected by someone else straight away, as they need to isolate along with the rest of your household.

Items from home - Early Years

We will be following a stringent cleaning and disinfection procedure therefore it is vital that we reduce the number of items coming into our setting. On your child’s first day of return please bring the following to be left here:

- A pair of shoes ideally croc style with closed toes. These will be cleaned regularly and only worn in the garden and inside the setting.

- A full change of clothes, including pants and socks. If you feel your child may need them, please pack a few changes but all children must have at least 1 change.

- A bottle of sun cream.

- A sun hat

These things should arrive in a plastic bag and we will transfer to your child’s new washable bag to stay here (which we are providing).

Children should come wearing clean clothes that are suitable for outdoor play.

Please do not bring, any food, bags, drinks bottles, toys, books. As the above will stay here we are asking your child does not bring anything at all day to day.

We will provide a drink bottle for each child.
Items from home - School wrap around care and holidays

We will be following a stringent cleaning and disinfection procedure therefore it is vital that we reduce the number of items coming into our setting. On your child’s first day of return please bring the following to be left here:

- A pair of shoes ideally croc style with closed toes. These will be cleaned regularly and only worn in the garden and inside the setting.

- A full change of clothes, including pants and socks. If you feel your child may need them, please pack a few changes but all children must have at least 1 change.

- A bottle of sun cream.

- A sun hat

These things should arrive in a plastic bag and we will transfer to your child’s new washable bag to stay here (which we are providing).

Children should come wearing clean clothes that are suitable for outdoor play.

Please do not bring, any food, bags, drinks bottles, toys, books. As the above will stay here we are asking your child does not bring anything at all day to day.

We will provide a drink bottle for each child.

We understand that your child will need to bring school bags in please keep these to a minimum where possible and these will stay in the coat area.
Washing hands
Children will be washing or sanitising their hands:

- On arrival at the setting – after school, in the morning, and any other time.
- Before leaving setting – going home, to school or any other time
- Before and after eating
- After using the toilet or nappy changes (washing)
- After coughing or sneezing into a tissue – (catch it, bin it, kill it).

Please also encourage washing hands before leaving their home.
There will be adequate hand soap and hand towels. Hand towels will be placed in a foot operated bin with a lid and emptied regularly.
We will gently discourage touching of our face and adapt songs and games where this is the case.

Toys and resources
Some of our toys and resources have needed to be removed for the time being due to the difficulty of regularly cleaning them. Any fabric used for play will be washed at the end of the day following use or isolated for 72 hours where this is not possible. Books and other paper/cardboard resources which cannot be cleaned will be removed for at least 72 hours following the day they are used to reduce microbial load. All toys and resources will be cleaned regularly. Doors, handles, toilets and handwashing areas, furniture etc will be disinfected regularly. Soft furnishings will either be washed, or steam cleaned daily.
Tissues and bins with lids are provided for use.

Outside
There has been a great deal of research into how well-ventilated areas and outdoors can help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 therefore we will be using the garden as much as possible. A window will be kept open if we are inside. Children will wear their croc style shoes or the shoes that stay here which we have cleaned in the garden and not the shoes that are worn outside of our premises. Outdoors helps improve children’s wellbeing and health. Fresh air can help prevent children getting sick, as well as giving them an extra boost of vitamin D which is important to healthy bones and immune systems.

Updated 22/4/2021
Visits off site including taking early years on school runs.
We will be taking outings in outdoor public places in line with PACEYs guidance.
We will not be able to use public toilets, we will change nappies and take all children to the toilet prior to going out. We will take a potty with us should a child become in need of the toilet and cannot wait until we return. We will ensure that they use them in a way that gives them maximum privacy.
We will take hand sanitizer with us and use, as necessary.
We will not be using play park equipment at the moment and instead will make use of walks, and resources we take with us such as balls etc. which will be disinfected when we return.
PPE will be taken with us along with our usual first aid kit.
Please ensure children are sent with shoes for outings (the set they arrive in) and a coat/jacket should the weather require.
We will keep the group 2 meters from everyone else wherever possible.
We may also need to take Early Years on school runs.
We have a risk assessment for outings in place.

Visitors to our home
We will not be having visitors to our home while the children are here. Should we need maintenance people to come to the house we may need to close during this period or risk assesses this.

Meals
We will continue to provide lunch for our Early Years children, for school age children lunch will continue to be charged at £2 but there will be no option for them to bring it from home.

Suspending Care
Should Local Authority or Government request we may be required to temporary close again. i.e. if cases of COVID-19 rise again

Social distancing outside the setting
Please help us to keep everyone safe by observing social distancing rules outside of the setting i.e. friends and family etc.
Symptoms

COVID-19 symptoms 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.

You or your child may not get all three symptoms, if someone has one or more of these symptoms it should be treated as possible COVID-19.

What will happen if an adult or child show symptoms

If a child starts to show symptoms while they are with us, we will move them to the hallway by the front door, we will contact parents and we expect the child to be collected as quickly as possible but within 1 hour.

We will wear PPE while caring for the child. When they leave the area will be cleaned, including any resources they have had contact with. We will reassure the child throughout. If we feel we need further medical help we will call 111 or 999, as necessary.

If an adult starts to show symptoms while at work, they will move to upstairs where possible, we will contact parents to collect all the children. We will wear PPE while caring for the children while waiting for the parents. We will reassure children throughout. “If you are unsure, your child is exhibiting COVID-19 like symptoms always be cautious, a sick child should be at home.” This is guidance from our insurer PACEY. We will be asking parents/carers to provide regular updates on the health of their family/household to protect others that are using our service and our own family. We will share updates about our own family’s health.

PPE

Masks and gloves will be worn when giving personal care i.e. nappy changing.

We may also wear masks when opening the door to you, or any other time we feel necessary.

Should someone in our setting show symptoms of COVID-19 we have PPE which we will use while caring for the child and waiting for the child to be collected and to clean the setting.

Updated 22/4/2021
Testing

Should your child or someone in your household or show symptoms please take them for testing as soon as possible. Your household must isolate while you await results.
If a child in our setting is awaiting results for COVID-19 we are able to continue to care for everyone else who is not showing symptoms.

If any person in our “bubble” (children and staff) tests as positive than all children and Apple Tree staff must isolate for 10 days. The other household members of those advised to self-isolate do not need to self-isolate unless the child they live with subsequently develops symptoms.

It is vital we are informed if a COVID-19 test is accessed.

Routine Testing
We test ourselves using lateral tests twice a week. Should these show a positive result our setting would close, and we would follow government guidelines.

Medication
If your child needs medication for a cold, cough or temperature control they cannot attend our setting during that time. We can only care for well children.
If they have needed medication while not in our care it is important we are told, by phone, prior to you traveling to the setting, and they may not be able to come to us, please do not ask us to make door step decisions.

For example, if a child has Calpol Saturday for a temperature they cannot come that week as they will be isolating. We realise that this may cause some families difficulties as they juggle work and childcare, but we really must ensure that everyone here is well so that we avoid any chance of transmitting COVID-19 in our setting.

This policy does not include inhalers and epi pens or other routine medication like this needed for an ongoing health need.

Emergency contact details
Please check that we have up to date contact details for yourself in case of emergency, and also please ensure that any other contacts are not those of, for example, shielding who would not be able to collect.

Updated 22/4/2021
Safeguarding

● We have regular contact with each family, risk assessed and maintained based on individual family and changing needs.
● New safeguarding information is recorded confidentially and processed appropriately during the pandemic in line with existing policies.
● We share useful information with ALL families about how to access help and support - by WhatsApp, telephone calls, our setting parent/carer Facebook page or email as appropriate.
● Even if families are not attending the setting at the present time, they have our full support and we are very flexible in receiving contact out of work hours for advice or signposting.

Supporting children’s wellbeing

Wellbeing continues to be a focus of Apple Tree Childminding; we spend a lot of time supporting the wellbeing of the children. Cheryl has completed an Introduction to supporting children through trauma course, and resilience in the Early Years Course. We recognised that every families story of this time will be different and that children may have a range of emotions and questions; they may have had someone close to them die or be missing relatives and friends they usually see. They have spent many months close to you and getting back into the routine of being away from parents/carers can be challenging. Trauma may not just be caused by someone dying or becoming very unwell but also be triggered by many other life changing events. They may have regressed in some skills which is normal during trauma, we will be supporting children in an encouraging way. We will allow children to talk about Coronavirus in a way that is suitable for their age and stage of development and answer questions honestly but in a way not to encourage alarm or distress. We will find out from parents/carers what children already know. We recognise for some children this time will have caused no negative impact on their wellbeing.

Continued Personal Development and reflection

We will continue to regularly review our skills and practice to keep up to date with this ever-changing situation. Our policies will be regularly reviewed, and families updated with these.