

TIGERS
Childcare



COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN

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COVID-19 – RESPONSE PLAN

Introduction

This document is a guide to a safe re-opening of Tigers Childcare services following the mandatory shut-down due to the Covid-19 crisis and will aid our practices once we re-open. It should offer guidance to our colleagues and users of our services and show that we are taking all the necessary safety steps to operate safely in the current environment.

This document has been created using the Return to Work Safely Protocol which is designed to support employers and employees to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace. The protocol incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE).

The Covid-19 situation is constantly evolving and this policy should be treated as a live, working document which will be updated on an ongoing basis to ensure we are up to date with the latest public health advice and to ensure we identify and implement suitable control measures to mitigate the risk of Covid-19 in the work place.

While we await advice from the Department of Children & Youth Affairs (DCYA) and Tusla in terms of what, if any, amended or new regulations will be in place when we re-open, we are looking towards practices which have been put in place internationally in countries where childcare services have already re-opened. Any amended or new regulations put in place will be included in this document when they are made available to us.

Finally, in services where we are located within community centres or school buildings, we will liaise with the community centre/school management individually in terms of what their re-opening policies will be and we will work together to ensure that all requirements, both ours and theirs, are met.

Scope

This document is for all colleagues who physically work at our services. Additionally, it is essential that colleagues who work remotely or at locations other than our childcare services read this plan to ensure that we collectively and uniformly respond to this challenge.

Lead Worker Representative

The manager of each service will be the lead worker representative. They are responsible for ensuring that Covid-19 measures are strictly adhered to in their place of work. In absence of the manager the deputy manager will take responsibility. It is important that all managers & deputy managers know and understand what is expected in this regard and training will be provided prior to the re-opening of our services. Ongoing support will be available from the office and quality teams together with our Health & Safety advisors.

Preparing to Re-Open

The following steps will be taken in each of our services prior to their re-open.

1. Risk Assessments & Checklists

Risk assessments and checklists specific to Covid-19 will be created and issued. We will work with our Health & Safety consultants, Peninsula Business Services to put together the risk assessments & checklists. Each service must be evaluated individually to see what measures need to be put in place to ensure the safeguarding of colleagues, children and visitors. Risk assessments should be amended to reflect the requirements of each service and a 'one size fits all' approach should not be used.

Risk assessments will include:

- Checking premises prior to re-opening.
- Social distancing compliance.
- Hygiene & cleaning.
- Dealing with confirmed case of Covid-19.
- Risk assessment for older colleagues and those with underlying medical conditions.
- Risk assessment for lone working.
- Risk assessment for control of waste.

Checklists will include:

- Covid-19 Return to Work Questionnaire – to be completed by all colleagues at least 3 days prior to their return to work.
- Covid-19 Return to Childcare Questionnaire – to be completed by parents for all children prior to their return to the service.
- Visitors Health Questionnaire – for use when essential visitors must visit the premises e.g. Tula inspectors, essential/emergency maintenance work.

It is important to note that these risk assessments/checklists are **additional** to the current risk assessments/checklists that are in place.

2. Contact with Colleagues

Managers are to contact each member of their team to discuss the re-opening of our services. Per government guidelines, all colleagues are required to complete a 'Covid-19 Return to Work Questionnaire' before they return to work. Managers should send the forms to their colleagues before making contact with them. The forms must be completed and returned to the manager **at least 3 days prior** to the service re-opening. The following information is sought on the form:

- Colleagues to disclose if they currently have Covid-19 symptoms - cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu-like symptoms – or have experienced these symptoms in the previous 14 days.
- Colleagues to disclose if they have been diagnosed with or have suspected Covid-19 infection in the last 14 days.
- Colleagues to disclose if they are a close contact of a person who has a confirmed case or is a suspected case of Covid-19 .e. less than 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day.
- Colleagues to confirm if they have travelled outside of the state, including UK within the last 14 days.
- Colleagues to disclose if they have an underlying illness which places them in the 'high risk' category.

All information will be treated as highly confidential and sensitive as per the General Data Protection Rules (GDPR).

3. Contact with Families

Managers are to contact each family who uses their service to advise them of the date the service will be re-opening and the policies and procedures that have been put in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Managers are to ascertain if/when the child/ren will be returning to the service.

In addition, a 'Covid-19 Return to Childcare Questionnaire' will need to be completed for each child. The following information is sought on the form:

- Parents to disclose if they, their child or a member of their household currently have Covid-19 symptoms - cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu-like symptoms – or have experienced these symptoms in the previous 14 days.
- Parents to disclose if they, their child or a member of their household have been diagnosed with or have suspected Covid-19 infection in the last 14 days.
- Parents to disclose if they, their child or a member of their household are a close contact of a person who has a confirmed case or is a suspected case of Covid-19 i.e. less than 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day.
- Parents to disclose if they, their child or a member of their household have travelled outside of the state, including UK, within the last 14 days.

The completed forms **must** be returned to the manager prior to the child re-starting at one of our services.

All information will be treated as highly confidential and sensitive as per the General Data Protection Rules (GDPR).

4. Assign Child Groups or 'Bubbles'

Physical distancing within childcare settings will be hard to maintain, particularly with younger children. In order to reduce the size of groups within the service, children will be organised into small groups ('Bubbles') or rooms (where possible). These small groups will help to make sure children are adequately spaced between different rooms and activities, and will facilitate contact tracing if required. The following points need to be considered when creating the bubbles:

- Effort should be made to group friends and familiar practitioners together.
- Our key-worker system can be used to create the bubbles and should help to keep children with practitioners they are familiar with.
- Wherever possible, these bubbles should not mix together during the day.
- Care routines including meals, nappy changing and toileting should be within the space allocated to each bubble wherever possible.
- Outdoor spaces should be used by different bubbles at different times of the day.
- In order to minimise the spread of infection, 'floating' staff such as lunch and break cover, should be allocated to specific bubbles and should not travel between bubbles.
- Where possible, all colleagues should remain with the bubble of children they are allocated to and not come into contact with other groups.

This exercise should be carried out in conjunction with your teams.

5. Colleague Rostering

The following need to be considered when putting in place the staff roster for your service:

- Rostering is to be organised based on the number of children who will be using the service on a daily basis based on confirmation received from parents in Step 3 above.
- Rostering needs to facilitate the safe operation of child 'bubbles' as outlined above in Step 4.
- In order to limit the number of people attending the service at any one time, consideration must be given to limiting the number of staff in the service at any one time to only those required to care for the expected occupancy levels on any given day.
- Your roster should include adequate cover for breaks, lunches and toileting etc.
- It is important that social distancing measures be maintained in break rooms and communal areas. Breaks should be rostered so that no more than 2 colleagues are in a break room at any one time. If this is not possible then thought needs to be given to other areas on the premises that colleagues can use to take breaks and a rule may need to be put in place whereby colleagues need to take their breaks off-site. It may be necessary to stagger breaks over a longer period to allow for this.
- Staff:Child ratios must be maintained in line with current Childcare Regulations. Any change in ratios due to Covid-19 will be reflected in this document if and when they are announced.
- Rosters must be shared with colleagues in advance of re-opening and as far in advance as possible as the requirements of the service change over time.
- It may be necessary to place some workers on short-time hours. Please liaise with the office/HR team for support in these instances.
- You will need to roster staff to come into the service in advance of the re-opening in order to perform cleaning duties and get their rooms ready for the children's return.

6. Children's Care Rooms/Environments

Each care room and toilet/changing area must be cleaned thoroughly using correct cleaning methods and products. Please refer to Tigers Childcare Policy Number 24, 'Management of Infection Control' in this regard. All toys and equipment that will remain in the room must be cleaned and disinfected. Managers are asked to order any equipment or supplies that they need in order for their teams to carry out this task.

A review of each care room must take place prior to re-opening a service using the risk assessment provided.

a) Room Set Up

- Where possible, care rooms should be separated into more manageable areas for the bubbles using floor markings or other ways to divide indoor and outdoor physical areas so as to support and guide children's safe movement within their bubbles and reduce contact with children in other groups. Plastic tape can be provided for this if required – please liaise with the office team if needed.
- Toys and equipment must be assessed to determine if they can be easily disinfected on a daily basis. If this is not possible e.g. dress-up and soft toys, they must be removed from the care room and placed in storage.

Managers must keep an inventory of any items going into storage and each item must be clearly labelled.

- Mats and rugs that cannot be easily cleaned each day must be removed and placed into storage.

b) Environment

- Look at the spacing of tables and chairs within the room and keep them well apart.
- Think about the set up for table-top activities. Plan to have less children at each table or use more tables and space the chairs out adequately.
- Ventilate the environment as much as possible and within temperature requirements e.g. open the windows while the children are outside.

c) Activities

- Plan individual activities, small group activities, staggered mealtimes and staggered indoor and outdoor play opportunities for the children in their bubbles.
- The use of playdough, slime or other such play items should be limited so as to reduce hand to hand contact between children and potential risk of cross contamination.
- Food preparation activities such as baking, where children take turns in preparing and later eating the food should be limited so as to reduce potential risk of cross contamination.
- Plan to use outdoor space as much as possible when the weather permits. This increases the space for activities to be set up and increases the space between children.

7. Personal Protective Equipment

Managers are to carry out a stock take on the PPE currently in their services and order additional items as required. The following considerations need to be made:

- Are there adequate supplies for each care room in the service?
- Does each care room have a designated space for PPE where it is easily accessible?

8. Handwashing/Sanitising Stations

Handwashing/sanitising stations will be set up at the entrance of each setting. Correct handwashing procedures will be displayed.

9. Covid-19 Signage

Signage will be provided to each service and must be displayed in designated areas. They must be laminated before being displayed. Some posters are available in languages other than English. If you want posters in a different language please let the office know and they can try to source them.

10. 2 Meter Markings

2 meter markings are to be in place outside the entrance of each full-day care service.

Note: we will liaise with schools & community centres with regard to what we can do at these locations prior to re-opening.

11. Designate Isolation Room/Area

An isolation room or area needs to be assigned for use in the event that there is a suspected case of Covid-19 in the service. The room/area will be used to separate the suspected case from other colleagues & children until they can leave the premises.

- The designated room/area should be easily accessible
- It should be well ventilated and away from other staff and children.
- Ensure the designated room/area has the ability to isolate the suspected case behind a closed door. If that's not possible an area away from other colleagues/children must be available.
- Create an 'Isolation Room Bag/Box' to contain as reasonably practicable:
 - Tissues, hand sanitiser, disinfectant and/or wipes
 - PPE – gloves, masks.
 - Clinical waste bags
 - Paper/colours in the event a child has to wait in the area (to be discarded after use).

12. Manager Offices

Manager's offices are to be limited to one person working at a time unless 2 meters space between colleagues can be achieved. Keyboards, touch-screens, printers to be wiped down with antibacterial wipes/spray before and after each use.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment will be available in each service. Equipment will include:

- Disposable face masks/or re-usable masks that can be washed at home
- Disposable gloves
- Disposable aprons for feeding (white)
- Disposable aprons for toileting (blue)
- Disposable shoe covers
- Face Shields will be provided for those who wish to use them. Face shields must be labelled with the colleagues name and disinfected after each use. They are not to be shared amongst colleagues.

A stock take of all PPE is to be carried out twice a week to ensure there are adequate supplies of PPE available at all times.

While PPE may provide additional protection from Covid-19, it is important to be aware that it does not remove the need to observe physical distancing (in so far as possible with children), regularly wash hands and refrain from touching your face and eyes, even when wearing gloves.

When Services Re-Open

The following outline the policies that are in place and procedures that must be followed in all services when we re-open.

1. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection. The current recommended distance to be maintained between people to minimise the risk of transmission is 2 meters. While we understand this will be hard to maintain within

childcare settings, particularly with younger children, there are certain steps that will be implemented to maintain physical distancing wherever possible:

- Strict avoidance of handshakes, hugs and physical contact between colleagues must be maintained.
- Physical distancing must be maintained during breaks and breaks will be organised in such a way as to facilitate maintenance of physical distancing.
- Where possible meetings and training sessions will be conducted through virtual conferencing.
- Where face to face meetings are absolutely necessary, the length of the meeting and numbers attending will be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain physical distancing at all times.
- Colleagues are encouraged not to travel to and from work together – use your own cars or public transport.
- Colleagues must not share pens, cups, plates, and cutlery and should have these items for their own personal use.
- Colleagues are asked to minimise the amount of personal items they bring to work with them.

2. Colleague Entry Procedures

- Colleagues are to enter the building one at a time.
- Colleagues to disinfect 'Bizimply' clock-in system before and after use.
- Clean clothes should be worn each day. Colleagues need to ensure that they have adequate uniform supplies to allow for washing of clothes after each wear.
- Footwear worn outside must not be worn in the service. Inside shoes or slippers only are permitted to be worn inside the service.
- Hands must be washed immediately upon entry and the handwashing procedure must be followed.
- We reserve the right to implement temperature testing in line with Public Health Advice. All colleagues must have their temperature taken and recorded prior to entry to a care room. The temperature will be recorded in the 'Temperature Log'. A colleague who has a temperature of 37.5°C or higher will not be permitted entry.

3. Parent/Child Entry Procedure

- We ask all families to wash their hands appropriately when leaving their home and to use hand sanitiser prior to drop off.
- Where possible parents should wear a facemask when dropping off children.
- Drop-off times will be staggered in agreement with manager and families.
- 2 meter line markings will be in place outside the entrance of the service and physical distancing must be maintained between parents.
- A 'one in, one out' policy will be in place. Parents are requested to adhere to the agreed drop-off time to limit waiting times.
- We ask that one parent per family drops off their child/ren.
- During this time parents are **not permitted** to leave equipment such as buggies, car seats, scooters etc. on the premises.
- Parent's hands must be washed immediately upon entry and the handwashing procedure must be followed.
- Parents are to put shoe covers on at the entrance to the service.
- We reserve the right to implement temperature testing in line with Public Health Advice. All parents must have their temperature taken and recorded prior to entry to a service. The temperature will be recorded in the 'Temperature Log'. A parent who has a temperature of 37.5°C or higher will not be permitted entry.

- We reserve the right to implement temperature testing in line with Public Health Advise. Each child's temperature will be taken and recorded before they can be brought into the care room. Any child with a temperature of 37.5°c or above will not be permitted to attend the service.
- Indoor slippers or thick socks are to be provided for each child. Outdoor shoes will not be permitted and they must be removed by the parent before the child can be brought into the care room.
- Children's hands will be washed as per our handwashing procedures prior to playing in their room.

For services that are based within schools/community centres – we will liaise directly with the school/community centre to find out what their re-open plans are and will put in place the necessary procedures to ensure that all requirements, both ours and theirs, are met.

4. Parent/Child Entry – ECCE Sessional Classes

The very nature of the ECCE sessional classes makes it impossible to assign staggered drop-off times for children. The children are entitled to 3 hours in their classroom each day. As such, the following measures will be put in place and will be strictly enforced.

- We ask all families to wash their hands appropriately when leaving their home and to use hand sanitiser prior to drop off.
- A designated area will be assigned outside the classroom for parents to line-up with their children – much like the class lines in the school yard.
- Physical distancing must be upheld between parents with a space of 2 meters being maintained.
- We ask that one parent per family drops off their child/ren.
- Each 'bubble' group will be called by their teacher to come into the classroom.
- During this time parents are **not permitted** to leave equipment such as buggies, scooters etc. on the premises.
- We reserve the right to implement temperature testing in line with Public Health Advise. Each child's temperature will be taken and recorded before they can be brought into the care room. Any child with a temperature of 37.5°c or above will not be permitted to attend the service.
- Indoor slippers or thick socks are to be provided for each child. Outdoor shoes will not be permitted and they must be removed the parent before the child can be brought into the care room.
- Children's hands will be washed as per our handwashing procedures prior to playing in their room.

5. Visitors

Visitors to services should be limited as much as possible. Viewings can continue to take place but only one parent/guardian can attend a viewing and a time must be arranged in advance. The following must take place for any visitor entering our services, including inspectors:

- Visitor will be met at service entrance by manager.
- Visitor will be given the 'Visitors Health Questionnaire' form to complete before they are allowed access to the premises
- Visitors' temperature to be taken & recorded in 'Temperature Log' book. A visitor who has a temperature of 37.5°c or higher will not be permitted entry.
- Hands to be sanitised at Hand Sanitising Station.
- Visitor book to be completed as normal, using their own pen.

- Shoe covering will be provided to visitor and must be worn at all times while they are in the service.
- Disposable gloves, apron and facemask will be provided and must be worn by the visitor at all times while they are in the service.
- Social distancing measures to be adhered to for duration of visit. Do not bring visitors to the office unless the 2 meter guideline can be adhered to.

6. Deliveries

Where possible delivery times are to be confirmed in advance and to happen outside of hours to avoid unnecessary congregation at the service.

All suppliers should be asked to provide paperless delivery dockets so that there is no contact needed between colleagues and the delivery driver.

Where bulky or heavy items are being delivered, and it is necessary for the delivery person to enter the building, the following steps must take place:

- Delivery person will be met at service entrance by manager.
- Delivery person's temperature to be taken & recorded in 'Temperature Log' book. A delivery person who has a temperature of 37.5°C or higher will not be permitted entry.
- Hands to be sanitised at Hand Sanitising Station.
- Shoe covering will be provided to deliver person and must be worn at all times while they are in the service.
- Disposable gloves, apron & facemask will be provided and must be worn by the delivery person at all times while they are in the service.
- Social distancing measures to be adhered to for duration of visit.
- If requested to sign delivery dockets, ensure that your own pen is used.
- Check items against order/delivery dockets as usual and notify supplier of any errors immediately, particularly when it comes to PPE.

'Close contact' is defined by the HSE as spending more than 15 minutes in face-to-face contact within 2 meters of an infected person or living in the same house or shared accommodation as the infected person. Therefore, the risk of allowing delivery drivers onto the premises to deliver large items is minimal as they will not be on the premises for more than a few minutes at a time.

7. Maintenance/Service Call Outs

Maintenance visits must take place outside of normal operational hours of the service Managers will be notified of the time/date of the visits. Emergency call-outs will be arranged as needed and managers will be notified of the time/date of the call-outs. The following steps should take place for all maintenance and service personnel:

- Contractor will be met at service entrance by manager.
- Contractor will be given the 'Visitors Health Questionnaire' form to complete before they are allowed access to the premises.
- Contractor's temperature to be taken & recorded in 'Temperature Log' book. A contractor who has a temperature of 37.5°C or higher will not be permitted entry.
- Hands to be sanitised at Hand Sanitising Station.
- Visitor book to be completed as normal, using their own pen.
- Shoe covering will be provided to contractor and must be worn at all times while they are in the service.

- Disposable gloves, apron and facemask will be provided and must be worn by the visitor at all times while they are in the service.
- Social distancing measures to be adhered to for duration of visit. Do not bring visitors to the office unless the 2 meter guideline can be adhered to.

8. Parent Meetings

Where possible parent meetings should take place via online communication tools i.e. Skype or Zoom. The office can help managers set up these tools if required. To ensure GDPR compliance, the company laptop/devices must be used if using online communication tools. Personal computer equipment must not be used.

Where absolutely necessary, parent meetings can continue to take place on-site. However, these must be arranged in advance and only one parent can attend. Parents will no longer be able to 'drop-in' to the office. The following steps should take place for parent meetings:

- Parent will be met at service entrance by manager at the pre-arranged time.
- Parent will be given the 'Visitors Health Questionnaire' form to complete before they are allowed access to the premises.
- Parent's temperature to be taken & recorded in 'Temperature Log' book. A contractor who has a temperature of 37.5°C or higher will not be permitted entry.
- Hands to be sanitised at Hand Sanitising Station.
- Visitor book to be completed as normal, using their own pen.
- Shoe covering will be provided to parent and must be worn at all times while they are in the service.
- Disposable gloves, apron and facemask will be provided and must be worn by the visitor at all times while they are in the service.
- Social distancing measures to be adhered to for duration of visit. Do not bring visitors to the office unless the 2 meter guideline can be adhered to.

9. Collection Procedure:

To avoid people congregating at the services, we are asking parents to inform the service of the time they will be collecting their children at.

- 2 meter line markings will be in place outside the entrance of the service and physical distancing must be maintained between parents.
- A 'one in, one out' policy will be in place. Parents are requested to adhere to the agreed collection time to limit waiting times.
- We ask that one parent per family collects their child/ren.
- Child's hands will be washed prior to leaving the care room.
- A staff member will gather the child's belongings and get the child ready for departure.
- Outdoor shoes will be put on the child when they leave the care room.
- The staff member will wear gloves when handing over the child and their belongings. The gloves will be disposed of after each handover prior to the staff member re-entering the care room. Although the passing of a child will involve close contact, we would ask that all families keep a good social distance once this has taken place and while talking to the staff member about the child's day.
- To limit the time spent in the service at collection time, all details of your child's day will be available on Child Paths, and we would urge all parents who have not yet given consent to use Child Paths to do so now.

For services that are based within schools/community centres – we will liaise directly with the school/community centre to find out what their re-open plans are and will put in place the necessary procedures to ensure that all requirements, both ours and theirs, are met.

10. Collection Procedure – ECCE Sessional Classes

The very nature of the ECCE sessional classes makes it impossible to assign staggered collection times for children. The children are entitled to 3 hours in their classroom each day. As such, the following measures will be put in place and will be strictly enforced.

- Parents will return to the designated area/line outside the class room.
- Physical distancing must be upheld between parents with a space of 2 meters being maintained.
- We ask that one parent per family collects their child/ren.
- Child's hands will be washed prior to leaving the care room.
- Each 'bubble' group will be brought out by their teacher and parents will be called one at a time to collect their child.
- Child's hands will be washed prior to leaving the care room.
- To limit the time spent in the service at collection time, all details of your child's day will be available on Child Paths, and we would urge all parents who have not yet given consent to use Child Paths to do so now.

11. Flu Vaccine

Each year Tigers Childcare offer our colleagues a voucher to avail of the flu vaccine. This is always provided free of charge to those colleague who wish to avail of the offer. This year, we are **strongly recommending** that each colleague has the seasonal flu vaccine this winter to minimise the risks associated with a possible resurgence of Covid-19 during the annual flu season.

12. Travel Plans

We will continue to follow government advice with regard to travel in and out of Ireland. Current guidelines are that anyone coming into Ireland must self-isolate for 14 days irrespective of which country they are travelling from (excluding Northern Ireland). Colleagues will need to take this into account when requesting annual leave. For any required period of self-isolation following travel to another country, you will be deemed to be on authorised absence and this time off work will be unpaid.

Colleagues must advise their manager if they are travelling to another country so that their return to work can be managed appropriately.

13. Field Trips / Camp Trips

For the duration of this pandemic, trips or outings will not take place. Such events expose our colleagues and the children to further risks of transmission of Covid-19 which are difficult to predict or control.

Daily Procedures

We are re-opening in very uncertain times. We need to balance health and safety with the well-being and development of the children we care for.

All of our actions need to be age appropriate, and not cause distress to the children we care for. We must remember that play is important part of a child's social and

emotional development and must be allowed to continue. Generally play is a shared event and social distancing does not come naturally to young children. We need to make sure we still continue to foster social and emotional development while remaining safe at this time.

Children should be supported in age appropriate ways to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe including regular handwashing and sneezing into a tissue.

Children should be supported to understand the changes and challenges they may be encountering as a result of Covid-10 and staff need to ensure they are aware of children's attachments and their need for emotional support at this time.

1. Under Twos:

- Face masks should not be used with this age group.
- Play should remain as normal once all safety procedures are followed. Following good hygiene, and hand washing procedures together with frequent sterilisation of toys and management of infection control will be the key for care rooms for this age-group.
- Handwashing for both children & staff should take place in line with our Handwashing Policy as follows:
 - Upon arrival
 - Before eating & drinking
 - After eating & drinking
 - After toileting
 - After using tissues
 - After wiping noses or sneezing
 - After coughing into hands
 - After playing outside
 - After playing with or handling items outside e.g. sand, toys, water.
 - Whenever hands are visibly dirty.
 - Before they leave the service
 - Handwashing will be recorded for each child.
- Staff must be mindful of runny noses and eyes and deal with both immediately. Handwashing should be followed for both child and staff member as outlined in our Handwashing Policy.
- Cots should be **at least** 50cm apart.
- Children should be temperature checked mid-way through the day. Temperatures to be recorded in 'Temperature log'.

2. Over 2's, including After School Age Group:

- Face masks can be used with this age group. Stories and exercises about face masks should take place to explain the use of PPE to children.
- Children should be allowed wear face masks if they are conformable to do so.
- Play should remain as normal once all safety procedures are followed. Following good hygiene, and hand washing procedures together with frequent sterilisation of toys and management of infection control will be the key for care rooms for this age-group.
- Handwashing for both children & staff should take place in line with our Handwashing Policy as follows:
 - Upon arrival
 - Before eating & drinking
 - After eating & drinking

- After toileting
- After using tissues
- After wiping noses or sneezing
- After coughing into hands
- After playing outside
- After playing with or handling items outside e.g. sand, toys, water.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.
- Before they leave the service
- Handwashing will be recorded for each child
- Staff must be mindful of runny noses and eyes and deal with both immediately. Handwashing should be followed for both child and staff member as outlined in our Handwashing Policy.
 - Sleep mats should be **at least** 50cm apart.
 - Children should be temperature checked mid-way through the day.
 - All classrooms should be sterilised every day.

3. Toileting

In line with current guidelines on toileting, colleagues who are providing personal care to babies such as nappy changing or supporting toddlers with toileting should wear PPE i.e. disposable aprons and gloves.

Tigers Childcare Policy Number 29 – 'Nappy Changing Policy' and Tigers Childcare Policy Number 30 – 'Toileting' should be followed in this regard.

4. Outside Play:

Outside play should be encouraged during this time. All children should wear welly boots or other outdoor footwear which stay and are cleaned on site. Parents need to provide appropriate outerwear such as puddle suits/raincoats to ensure children can be outside as much as possible. Our motto has always been 'there's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothes' and this must remain at the forefront of our minds during this time. An outside timetable is preferable and should be used and as much as possible outside play should be preferable to inside play. Children are to remain in their bubbles during outside play.

Buggy walks should take place for the youngest children keeping in mind the rules of physical distancing.

5. Mealtimes

Mealtimes have always been an important part our day at Tigers Childcare. Unfortunately, in light of the current situation our practices will have to change.

- As always, colleagues and children must wash their hands thoroughly before and after cooking and eating.
- Where possible mealtimes/snack times should be staggered to accommodate having less children at each table, or where this is not possible, additional tables and chairs can be used to allow for more space between children.
- Food should not be shared.
- Children can no longer help themselves and meals will not be shared 'family style' – all meals must be portioned for each child, including after school snacks.
- Water stations can no longer be 'self-serve' as there is a risk that children may pick up a cup which has been used by somebody else.

- **Full day & After School Services:** Each child must have their own cup/beaker/water bottle which is kept on the premises and cleaned at the end of each day. All must be labelled.
- Washing of cutlery and plates should be done in a dishwasher immediately after use.

6. Items from Home

During this time, it is strictly prohibited for children to bring toys or equipment into the service from their home. We ask that parents work together with us in this regard as any item that a child brings into the service will have to be taken off them and this will cause distress to the child.

7. Transitions

For new starters or distressed children, parents will be allowed entry to the service but will only be permitted to be in a designated area within the premises.

- Only one parent will be permitted into the service to help their child transition.
- We reserve the right to implement temperature testing in line with Public Health Advice. All parents must have their temperature taken and recorded prior to entry to a service. The temperature will be recorded in the 'Temperature Log'. A parent who has a temperature of 37.5°C or higher will not be permitted entry.
- Parent's hands must be washed immediately upon entry and the handwashing procedure must be followed.
- Parents are to put shoe covers and disposable apron and gloves on at the entrance to the service.
- If you are settling your child into a service and you are extending the time they are there over a number of days, we ask that you leave the premises and return at the pre-arranged designated time.

8. Bedding/Blankets

Bedding/blankets must be allocated to each child and be kept in a named bag/cubby when not in use. Bedding should be washed twice weekly at 80°C or as needed.

If bedding cannot be allocated, it must be washed daily at 80°C.

9. Cleaning

An enhanced cleaning schedule must be implemented during this time and it is expected that **all** colleagues play their part in keeping their services clean. Please refer to Tigers Childcare Policy Number 24, 'Management of Infection Control' in this regard. Cleaning rosters and checklists must be updated to reflect the following:

- Toilets must be cleaned with ordinary detergents at least twice per day.
- Potties to be cleaned as usual after each use.
- Tables and contact points must be cleaned twice per day. Contact points include:
 - Taps/sinks
 - Door handles/push plates
 - Light switches
 - Presses/cupboards
 - Handrails
 - Lifts
 - Machinery & equipment controls

- Food preparation and eating surfaces
- Communications equipment
- Keyboards, photocopiers and other office equipment
- Communal fridges
- Children's rooms, staff offices, kitchens and communal areas should be cleaned twice per day and whenever an area is visibly dirty.
- If disinfection of an area is required this should always be done in addition to cleaning and never as a substitute.
- Toys, both inside and outside, must be washed each day and between bubbles if they are being shared and be allowed to dry.
- Toys used by babies or very young children, which may have been placed in their mouths, should be washed before reuse by another child.
- Bins should be emptied regularly and before they are full – colleagues should never place their hands in a bin and should wear gloves when removing bins.

Cleaning during the day should take place whenever there is a break in action – in the middle of the day, while the children are eating or napping, at the end of the day once all the children have gone home.

It should be noted that usual cleaning procedures will continue in addition to the above and should be followed as normal, including daily sterilisation procedures.

10. Communal Areas & Equipment

As with the enhanced cleaning schedule outlined in Step 9 above, attention needs to be paid to cleaning of communal areas and equipment.

- Shared electronics such as tablets and computers should be disinfected before and after each use.
- Bizimply log-in stations should be disinfected before and after each use.
- Photocopiers and keyboards to be wiped down before and after each use.
- Service phones to be wiped down before and after each use, including internal phones located in the rooms.
- Break/Staff Rooms
 - Lockers must not be shared.
 - Physical distancing to be maintained at all times.
 - Belongings must not be left out on tables or counters.
 - Each person must use their own cup, cutlery and plates all of which must be cleaned immediately after use and put away.
 - Each person must clean the area they were using once they have finished eating, by cleaning and disinfecting the area, including chairs, door handles and vending machines.
 - Half eaten food products are required to be placed in a sealed wrapper, bag or container, if being stored in the communal fridge.
 - The microwave should be left in a clean condition and wiped out after each use.
 - Windows should be left open where possible to allow fresh air circulation.

11. School Drop-Offs / Collections by Car

The following steps must take place when using the Tigers Childcare vehicles when dropping children to/collecting children from school:

- Driver must wash hands before leaving the service.
- Hand sanitiser must be kept in the car for use on the journey.

- When entering and leaving the car the driver will wipe down door handles, seatbelt buckles, door frames and dashboard in the car using antibacterial wipes, which will be left in the car for this purpose.
- Before children enter the car, they must use the hand sanitiser (if children are being brought to school from the service, washing their hands before leaving the service will suffice).
- Windows in the car will be kept partially open for the journey.
- All belongings should be kept separate and in children's school bags.
- Children enter the service as outlined in Step 3 above.

12. Log for Contract Tracing

Per the government's guidelines in their 'Return to Work Safely Protocol' document, we are required to keep a log of contact/group work to facilitate contact tracing. This will be done in two ways;

1. By using our usual sign-in procedures for colleagues and children to ascertain who was on the premises on any given day.
2. By limiting the group sizes of children in our care and ensuring that where possible, all colleagues should remain with the bubble of children they are allocated to and not come into contact with other groups e.g. 'floating staff' for break and lunch cover and toileting.

Logs must also be kept showing which children are in which bubble and which staff members have been in contact with those children during the day. Ensuring that the same cohort of colleagues are working with same bubble of children each day makes it easier to keep a log.

Handwashing Procedure

Handwashing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infections, including respiratory illnesses.

Our Handwashing Policy must be **strictly** adhered to by **all** colleagues at all times.

Staff and children should wash their hands after any contact with blood, nasal secretions, saliva, vomit, urine, stool, skin sores or genital secretions.

Colleagues should wash their hands **before**;

- Upon entry to the premises and prior to entry to any of the care rooms.
- Eating, handling/preparing food or assisting/feeding a child.
- Preparing meals, snacks and drinks (including infant bottles).

Colleagues should wash their hands **after**:

- Eating, smoking, handling/preparing food or assisting/feeding a child
- Preparing meals, snacks and drinks (including babies bottles)
- Using the toilet or helping a child to use the toilet
- Nappy changing/handling potties
- Playing with or handling items outside e.g. sand, toys, water.
- Handling secretions e.g. from a child's nose, mouth, from sores or cuts.
- Cleaning up vomit or faeces
- Handling or dealing with waste
- Removing disposable gloves and/or aprons
- Handling pets/pet litter, animals/cages/animal soil etc.
- Cleaning tasks
- Handling rubbish
- Using public transport
- Moving from one room to another or from outside to inside areas
- Having physical contact with a child from another group or 'bubble' other than their own
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Their shift ends

Children should wash hands:

- Upon arrival
- Before eating & drinking
- After eating & drinking
- After toileting
- After using tissues
- After wiping noses or sneezing
- After coughing into hands
- After playing outside
- After playing with or handling items outside e.g. sand, toys, water
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Before they leave the service
- After direct contact with animals

Both colleagues and children should wash their hands at regular intervals throughout the day.

1. HOW TO WASH HANDS

Handwashing should be performed as follows and should take a **minimum of 20 seconds** to complete.

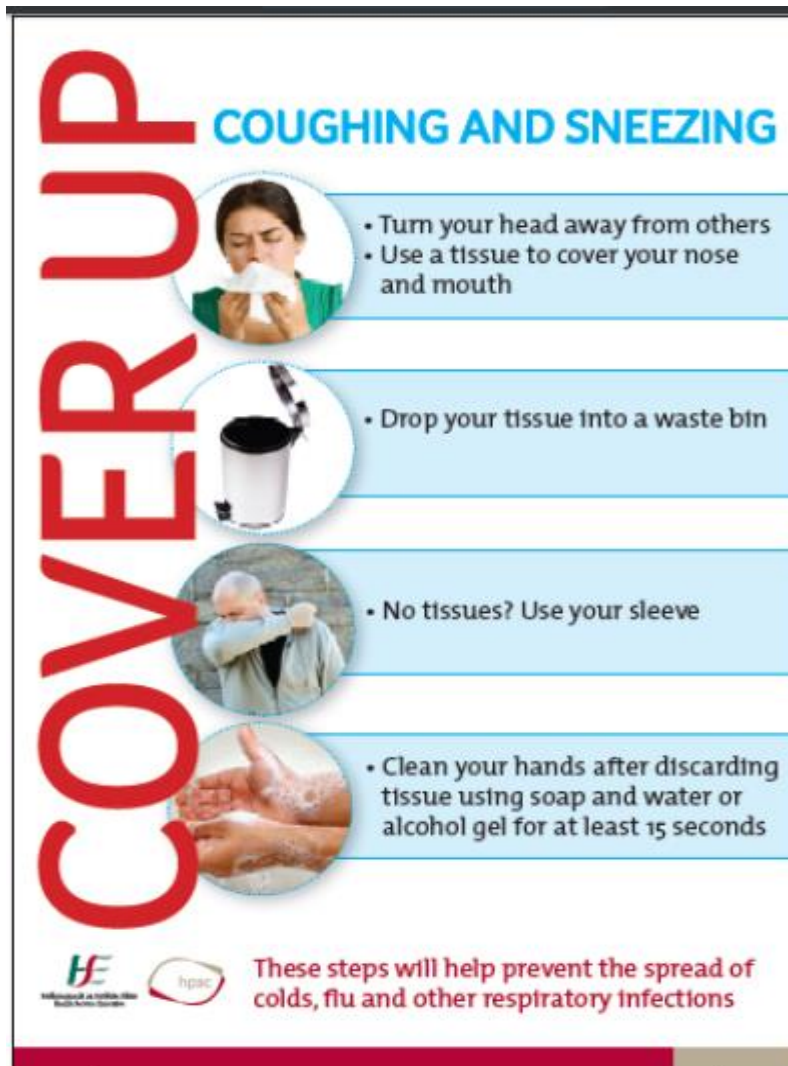
- Wet hands under warm running water to wrist level.
- Apply liquid soap. Lather it evenly covering all areas of the hands for at least 10 seconds. Include thumbs, finger tips, palms and in between fingers, rubbing backwards and forwards at every stroke.
- Rinse hands off thoroughly under warm running water.
- Dry with paper towel using a patting motion to reduce friction, taking special care between the fingers.
- Use the disposable paper towel that has been used to dry hands to turn off taps.
- Dispose of the disposable paper towel in a waste bin using the foot pedal to avoid contaminating hands that have just been washed.



Cough Etiquette

Cough etiquette must be observed by all colleagues. Children should be encouraged to observe cough etiquette and this should be incorporated in to daily circle time (age-appropriate).

- Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Or,
- Cover your mouth and nose using your upper sleeve/elbow.
- Dispose of the used tissue.
- Wash your hands following the hand washing procedure.



Covid-19 Suspected or Confirmed Cases

Tigers Childcare is committed to ensuring the health & safety of our colleagues and all the children in our care. If you or a member of your household begin to display symptoms of the virus, you must follow current government guidance to self-isolate and contact your GP who will advise you on what steps must be followed. You must notify the manager of your service at the earliest opportunity. **You must not attend the service.**

Covid-19 is a 'Notifiable Disease' which means that, per our Illness and Exclusion Policy, you are required to notify us if you or a member of your household has a confirmed case of Covid-19.

1. Suspected Case

- If a colleague or a child becomes unwell at the service with cough, fever, or difficulty breathing, they need to be moved away from other colleagues and children, preferably to a different, well ventilated area – the 'isolation area'.
- 2 meters distance must be maintained between the symptomatic person and the person accompanying them to the isolation area.
- They should be issued with PPE, tissues if necessary and a dedicated waste bin.
- In the case of **colleagues**:
 - They need to leave the premises immediately if possible– transport will be arranged if necessary.
 - They should be advised not to touch any surfaces, people or objects.
 - Contact their GP for further instruction
 - Refer to Tigers Childcare Policy 50 'Coronavirus – Covid-19 Policy' for further information on how the absence from work will be treated.
 - Colleague cannot return to the service until such time as it is confirmed they **do not** have Covid-19 and are not infectious.
 - As close contacts, colleague's children (where relevant) will also be excluded from the service as a precautionary measure.
 - We will require a doctor's letter to confirm that the colleague does not have Covid-19 before we will allow them to return to the service.
- In the case of **children**:
 - 2 meters distance should be maintained between child and staff member accompanying them to the 'isolation area'.
 - Staff member should wear full PPE – mask, apron, gloves.
 - Child should be encouraged not to touch surfaces, people or objects.
 - Child's parent is to be contacted immediately and they are to collect their child from the service immediately.
 - If parents cannot be reached the emergency contact on the child's registration form must be contacted and asked to collect the child immediately.
 - Parent need to contact their GP for further instruction.
 - Child cannot return to the service until such time as it is confirmed they **do not** have Covid-19 and are not contagious.
 - As close contacts, siblings will also be excluded from the service as a precautionary measure.
 - We will require a doctor's letter to confirm that the child does not have Covid-19 before we will allow them to return to the service.
 - Refer to Tigers Childcare Policy 50a 'Coronavirus – Covid-19 Policy' for further information on how the exclusion will be treated.
- A Risk Assessment must be completed following the incident.

- Appropriate cleaning & disinfection of the isolation area and any other area the child/colleague were in must be carried out. See below guidelines for details.

2. Confirmed Case of Covid-19

- If a confirmed case is identified, management and the Lead Worker Representative will provide the relevant colleagues and parents with advice in conjunction with the public health service.
- . These colleagues and parents include:
 - Any colleague or child who was in close face to face or touching contact with the confirmed case.
 - Talking with or being coughed on for any length of time while the confirmed case was symptomatic.
 - Anyone who cleaned up bodily fluids.
 - Anyone within the 'bubble' or group.
 - Any colleague living within the same house as the confirmed case.
- Those who had close contact will be asked to stay away from the premises for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and following government guidelines in terms of self-isolation.
- They will be actively followed up by the HSE contract tracing team.
- If they become unwell within the 14 day time-frame and test positive for Covid-19, they will become a confirmed case.

Anyone who has not had close contact with the original confirmed case does not need to take the above precautions and can continue to attend the service.

Note: Close contact is defined by the HSE as spending more than 15 minutes face-to-face contact within 2 meters of an infected person / living in the same house or shared accommodation as an infected person.

3. Cleaning Guidelines

General tips for cleaning/disinfecting rooms or areas that persons with suspected or confirmed Covid-19 were isolated:

- Keep the door to the room closed for at least one hour before cleaning. Do not use the room until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.
- The person assigned to clean the area should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear household or disposable single use non-sterile nitrile gloves and a disposable plastic apron (if one is available).
- Open the window while you are cleaning.
- Clean the environment and the furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed or combined with Chlorine based product such as sodium hypochlorite (often referred to as household bleach). Chlorine based products are available in different formats including wipes.
- If you are not familiar with chlorine based disinfectants then please refer to the HPSC Management of Infectious Diseases in Schools available at <https://www.hpsc.ie/az/lifestages/schoolhealth/>
- Pay special attention to frequently touched flat surfaces, the backs of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces or items that are visibly soiled with body fluids.
- Place all waste that has been in contact with the suspected case, including used tissues, and masks if used, in a plastic rubbish bag and tie when full.

- Remove your apron and gloves and discard into the waste bag and clean your hands
- Place the plastic bag into a second bin bag and tie it, then clean your hands.
 - Store the bag in a safe place until the result of the test is available. If the suspected case tests negative, place the waste in the normal domestic waste bin. In the event the pupil tests positive, Public Health will advise what to do next.
 - Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be put back into use.
 - There is no need to clean carpets (if present) unless there has been a spillage.

Safety Statement

In line with the requirements of the Return to Work Safely Protocol, our Safety Statement is being updated. Peninsula Business Services are updating our existing statement and this will be shared once it is complete.

Communication Plan

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents/guardian in the Policy Folder located in each facility.

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Related/Supporting Documents/Related Legislation

- [Return to work safely protocol \(Covid-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers & Workers\)](#)
- Management of Infection Control
- Nappy Changing Policy
- Toileting Policy
- Coronavirus (Covid-19) Policy
- Handwashing Policy

Policy Review

Policy Created: May 2020

Policy Reviewed: