

# Skool Is Out Ltd. Policies and Procedures

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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### Health and Social Care Standards

Responsive Care & Support  
Wellbeing



### UNCRC Articles

Article 24: right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health;

### Statement

This policy is based on the Scottish Government's Coronavirus (COVID-19): [Guidance for school aged childcare services](#), published 30th October 2020, as well as [Coronavirus \(COVID 19\): Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues – advisory note on physical distancing in early learning and childcare settings \(ELC\)](#).

### Risk Assessment

Skool Is Out have comprehensive COVID-19 Risk Assessments in place which consider all risks identified in respect of COVID-19 and while taking account of the relevant guidance from Health Protection Scotland and the Health and Safety Executive. Risk Assessments have been compiled collaboratively between our senior management, staff team and representatives from our childcare venues and will be communicated to all families in advance of childcare commencing. Depending on which level of the new Scottish government tiered system we are in, further guidance and advice regarding increased risk for particularly vulnerable individuals may be undertaken.

### Infection Prevention and Control

While Skool Is Out has a specific Infection Prevention and Control policy, further measures will be introduced to minimise risk. In line with the relevant Scottish Government guidance this will include the following enhanced cleaning practices:

- thorough deep-cleaning and professional cleaning of the premises with increased regularity in accordance with venue requirements (including in advance of recommencement);
- Ensuring all surfaces, including door handles, bannisters and intercom systems will be disinfected at least twice per day;
- All childcare equipment will be disinfected according to our equipment cleaning procedures on a daily basis until further notice;
- Children are discouraged from bringing personal effects into the club environments and school bags and other personal belongings will not generally be accessible throughout the session, unless in exceptional circumstances;
- Additional cleaning time will be allocated to staff at the beginning and end of each session to ensure all play spaces are fully cleaned prior to use by groups of children;
- Soft furnishings will be minimised and will be cleaned on a daily basis where used;
- Mandatory hand-washing for all Skool Is Out staff upon arrival for work;
- Mandatory hand-washing for all children upon arrival at the club and when moving between play spaces/areas;
- Promotion of good hand hygiene to all staff and children including increased signage;
- Access to warm water and soap/hand gels through the premises;
- Encourage children and staff to avoid touching their eyes, noses and mouth with unwashed hands;
- All crockery and cutlery is cleaned using a two-stage disinfectant and detergent cleaning process and at high temperatures;

- One way systems will be implemented where possible and freedom of movement of children between play spaces may be restricted in order to minimise contact;
- Communally accessed foodstuffs will now be provided to children by staff adhering to the appropriate procedures relating to the preparation and serving of foods until further notice;
- All staff and children will be encouraged to use disposable tissues for any coughs and/or sneezes and these should be disposed of in the nearest waste bin as soon as possible;
- All baking activities at both clubs will be postponed until further notice;
- Children will not be exposed to any malleable products such as Play-Doh, sand, slime etc. until further notice;
- Certain activities such as singing, music and intensive indoor exercise will not be undertaken until further notice;
- Doors and windows may be kept ajar to ensure improved ventilation at all Skool Is Out premises (while taking into account minimum premises temperature requirements).

### **Outdoor Play**

We will continue to maximise outdoor play opportunities for all children in line with the relevant guidelines. Each group will be given the opportunity for outdoor play daily, although specific outdoor play locations and timings may be limited depending on circumstances. Children may not have the freedom of choice to access outdoor play in the same way as before owing to the necessity to minimise contact, but we will ensure that all children are provided with daily outdoor play opportunities wherever possible.

### **Physical distancing**

While it remains essential that a holistic approach is maintained in caring for children, in order to minimise risks of transmission, staff should remain physically distanced from children where possible and should maintain 2 meter distancing with other adults at all times. Prolonged periods where adults and children are in close proximity should be limited as far as possible and the risk of any required close contact will be mitigated by Skool Is Out staff wearing face masks throughout the session and through undertaking any close-proximity engagement in outdoor environments as much as is reasonably practicable.

The [Strategic Framework for Reopening Schools and ELC](#) states that it is not appropriate for young children or for some children with Additional Support Needs to maintain physical distancing either practically or in terms of child development and this will be taken into account on an individual basis.

As per our risk assessments, children will be expected to maintain safe and appropriate distances from adults, as well as when entering and departing the building and accessing toilet areas etc.

Children will not, however, be required to socially distance from each other in their allocated groups.

Until further notice we request that parents/carers do not access the building at any time to minimise the risk of cross contamination through a general reduction of footfall in the building. From November 2020 we also request all parents/carers please wear a face covering when collecting children from the clubs.

### **Limiting Children's Contacts – "Groups"**

While the cohort model that was in place for childcare services previously will no longer be expected, the Scottish Government have indicated that children's contacts should be limited wherever possible. This will reduce likelihood of direct transmission while allowing for more effective contact tracing through the Test and Protect approach.

Government advice indicates that services should ensure contacts are limited by managing children in groups. We will, therefore, maintain children in their age/class groups throughout the building until further notice, with no mixing of age groups as was previously the case. Each age/class group will be

allocated a specific play space within our premises, and each play space will have the appropriate resources available to all users to ensure everyone accesses a full range of experiences.

Group sizes will be allocated consistent staff (where possible) and groups will be limited to a maximum of 33 children per group (to align with maximum school class sizes), while adhering to the minimum space standards for school age childcare settings should be in line with the [early learning, childcare and out of school care services: design guidance](#).

Sharing of resources between groups will be minimised and resources thoroughly cleaned after use and/or before use by another group if required.

### **Blended Placements**

As outlined in the Scottish Government guidance, where possible settings should seek to keep groups consistent with schools and classes in order to minimise contacts. We would, therefore, encourage parents/carers to limit the number of settings your child/ren attends and to ensure you please notify us of any additional childcare services you are using in the event of an outbreak and to adhere to the relevant Test and Protect requirements.

As Edinburgh is currently in a “Level 3” Area, risk assessments will be undertaken for any employee who works at more than one childcare setting, in accordance with the most recent guidance and peripatetic staffing will not be used unless required to demonstrably support health and wellbeing of children.

### **Physical Distancing between Adults and PPE**

While it is acknowledged that physical distancing between children is not required, and that distancing between adults and children may not always be practical, physical distancing between adults will be maintained at all times.

Skool Is Out staff will remain 2 meters apart throughout the session, and the appropriate spaces will be reconfigured to facilitate this for staff meetings, break rooms etc. Skool Is Out staff will also all be issued with face masks to use throughout the duration of the working day. No additional PPE measures are required and staff will continue to follow existing guidance on the use of PPE and will wear protective aprons whilst in indoor spaces as an additional infection prevention measure.

There will be a reduction of footfall within all of our premises to minimise the risk of cross-contamination and we will request that parents/carers please wait outside when collecting/dropping off children and do not enter the building at any time.

Clear markings and signage will be present at the entry point to both venues to ensure parents/carers maintain 2m physical distancing when arriving to collect children. Parents/carers should please use the hand gel provided before pressing the relevant buzzer and staff will escort children to the exit doors for collection. Parents/carers should wait in a queue until the family before you have safely collected and departed before moving forward and pressing the entry buzzer and should, from November 2020, wear face masks when collecting children from the club premises.

We will regularly review these procedures and may introduce further measures such as staggered or allocated collection times if deemed necessary.

Furthermore, meetings and discussions with parents/carers will no longer occur face-to-face and will be conducted remotely through a variety of methods until further notice.

## **Evacuation Procedures**

In the event of an emergency evacuation of the premises groups should be maintained and should gather at the relevant muster points whilst maintaining the appropriate physical distancing between other groups. Regular Fire Safety Risk Assessments will be undertaken to ensure that muster points are appropriate to accommodate several groups of children and adults whilst still maintaining the necessary physical distancing.

## **If a child or staff member displays symptoms**

If a child displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while in the setting, a specific allocated space with good ventilation will be made available for the child to wait until they can be collected by a parent/carer. Further specific advice is available via [Health Protection Scotland](#).

We will regularly communicate reminders to all families and employees of our procedures and expectations. Individuals who display symptoms, or who have household members who have symptoms, should not attend the setting, and should follow advice to self-isolate and book a test.

If a member of the staff team has symptoms, they must contact the NHS to arrange to be tested and should not return to the work environment until it is confirmed that they do not have the infection.

Thorough deep-cleaning of any used isolation spaces will be undertaken in line with the relevant guidelines. Please refer to the relevant [guidance](#) for further information.

## **Test and Protect and Record Keeping**

In line with the guidance, clear records showing which adults and children spend sustained periods of time together will be maintained in order to support effective practice in following [Test and Protect](#) protocols in the event of an outbreak.

Childcare settings are considered complex settings and cases will be prioritised and escalated to specialist local health protection teams.

If a parent/carer or staff member is contacted by a contact tracer and told to self-isolate for fourteen days, the person should leave the setting to self-isolate at home straight away and, if possible, wear a face covering on route and avoid public transport.

If a child or staff member tests positive, the contact tracer will take into account the close contacts the person has had within the setting.

Skool Is Out will keep clear records of children, adults and staff attending our settings settings, and of the composition of groups undertaking activities. These records will help to ensure rapid response and contact tracing should a positive case occur.

Consideration will be taken by the Skool Is Out management team to minimise the operational impact of individual staff or groups of staff being required to self-isolate.

## **Outbreak Management**

The management of outbreaks of infectious disease in settings is led by local health protection teams (HPTs) alongside partners, such as local authorities and the Care Inspectorate.

An outbreak is considered to be any instance of a setting having two or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 within 14 days, or an increase in background rate of absence due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. Should any such situation arise the Manager will make prompt contact with their local HPT and local authority.

If an outbreak is then confirmed, we will work closely with our local HPT to manage it. Actions that we may take include (but are not restricted to):

- attendance at multi-agency incident management team meetings;
- communications with children, parents/carers and staff;
- providing records of clubs layout / attendance / groups;
- implementing enhanced infection, prevention and control measures (where necessary).

As outlined above, Skool Is Out will maintain appropriate records to support outbreak control measures, for example, keeping detailed and accurate records of child and staff attendance, details of groups, visitors, and clinically vulnerable/extremely vulnerable children who are attending settings.

If there is any confirmed or suspected outbreak then the Manager will notify the Care Inspectorate in accordance with the relevant guidelines and expectations.

### **Child Wellbeing**

At all times the health, safety and wellbeing of children and staff is our number one priority. We are acutely conscious that during this troubling time children may require additional time to reintegrate into the service. Many children may no longer be in groups with friends and may be cared for by different staff members than those they are used to. Staff will offer additional support to help children overcome any issues arising from this new model, as well as offering general mental health guidance and advice.

While no new children will be enrolled in the service initially, we hope to accommodate new P1 children and other children on our waiting lists in the coming months. Under the current restrictions we will not be in a position to offer our usual level of face-to-face induction, but we hope to be able to introduce a virtual tour and induction for families in the coming months.

We will ensure that staff, parents and children are fully supported to ensure full familiarisation with any revised layouts and structures. Clear and regular communication will be undertaken in advance with families outlining the necessary changes, and child friendly maps and/or social stories may be provided to ensure children are comfortable with any of the implemented changes, while child friendly signage and visuals will be utilised throughout the premises.

### **Staff Wellbeing and Learning Support**

We are conscious that there may be numerous additional stressors for our staff team that are linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, including potential illness and bereavement within their own families. As such, staff will have access to the Scottish Government directory of existing mental health, wellbeing and professional learning support services. We will also encourage our staff to access the [Team ELC Wellbeing Hub](#), which sets out vital information for the sector on maintaining wellbeing at this difficult time.

Our senior management team will continue to offer support, guidance, flexibility and consideration to our staff team as we transition back into the working environment.

All employees have completed a COVID-19 Workplace Risk Assessment and any additional protections or considerations implemented for higher risk employees.

### **Further measures**

We request that parents/carers, children and staff please ensure adherence to the relevant guidelines, including the wearing of facemasks in indoor environments and on public transport, avoiding mixing with other households, regular and thorough washing of hands, general good hygiene practice and ensuring physical distancing between those not in your household or support bubble.

**Review**

This policy along with the relevant procedures and COVID-19 risk assessments will be reviewed regularly in line with any changes to the relevant guidance.

Any further changes to service opening or provision will be communicated to families as necessary, subject to local and national guidance and we will adapt these actions and our guidance accordingly following any updated information provided to us by the relevant regulatory and advisory bodies.

Policy updated: November 2020