



## **Pandemic Management Policy**

### **Introduction**

We recognise the incidents of infectious disease are common in childhood and that nursery and pre-school settings have the potential to provide the ideal conditions for disease to spread. At Living Spring Montessori, we work to minimise and control the spread of infection so that we may protect the health and wellbeing of all adults and children in our setting.

We therefore have developed the following Pandemic Policy so that we have clear procedures in place to reduce the risk of infection and also so that we have a written plan in response to the unlikely event of an outbreak of infectious disease. This policy is available to all parents, carers and staff members for reference and it is also available on our website.

### **Methods**

- We actively promote healthy practices in our daily routines with the children. (see Health and Safety Policy).
- We require the parents and carers to keep their child at home in the event of illness. (see Illness Management Policy).
- We keep records of the immunisation status of the children in our care and we encourage parents to ensure that their child receives all appropriate vaccinations when they are due.
- We notify parents if there is any case of infectious disease, such as chicken pox.
- Ofsted, Brent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), and environmental health are to be informed of any outbreak of infectious disease that a qualified medical person considers notifiable.
- Living Spring Montessori management keep up to date with the latest recommendations from Public Health England (PHE) and the World Health Organisation and we review and update our policies and procedures on a regular basis. The Management also ensures that staff members are kept abreast of any changes in legislation. Staff members are also informed of any advice and guide lines from Public Health England.

### **Action to take in the event of an outbreak**

An outbreak can be defined as “two or more linked cases of the same illness or when the number of cases of the same illness unaccountably exceeds the expected number”. An epidemic is defined as rapid spreading of an infectious disease to a large number of people in

a short period of time and it becomes a pandemic when the infection crosses international boundaries, affecting a large number of people.

Outbreaks of infectious disease occur from time to time in nurseries, pre-schools and schools. Their severity depends on several factors:

- The seriousness of the disease.
- The number of children affected.
- The mode of transmission.
- The amount of anxiety they generate in parents and staff.
- Whether any specific action is necessary to stop further cases (for example, immunisation or improving food-handling practices).

### **How do we know there may be an outbreak?**

Nursery staff and Managers are aware of the following indications that they have an outbreak of an infectious disease in their setting:

- Several children may be ill in nursery at the same time with the same symptoms. The symptoms could include signs of general illness which may include shivering attacks or feeling cold, fever, headache, vomiting, sore throat or just vaguely feeling unwell.
- There may be a sudden increase in the numbers of absentees.
- Parents may advise the nursery that their children are suffering from an infectious disease.
- The local health protection unit staff or community infection control nurse may contact the nursery.

### **Actions to follow in the event of an outbreak**

If a member of staff suspects an outbreak, he or she should discuss the matter with the Health and Safety Officer, the Manager or Deputy Manager who will then seek advice from the Local Health Protection Unit (HPU) responsible for Brent. The contact details for our local HPU are found at the end of this policy.

When contacting the local HPU; you may need the following details in order for an accurate assessment to be undertaken:

- How many children and staff members are ill?
- What are their symptoms?
- When did the symptoms first start for each child or adult affected?

The local HPU or the Community Infection Control Nurse (CICN) will assess the situation and decide what action is to be taken. There may be an investigation into the source of the outbreak. If food poisoning is suspected, the Environmental Health Department will be asked to investigate. We will also report any such outbreaks to Ofsted and Brent LADO.

Living Spring Montessori will make every effort to provide necessary information to any investigation which may follow, and we will make every effort to comply with the advice we are given on minimizing risk and controlling the spread of disease. We will encourage everyone involved, including the children's parents, to comply with requests for specimens.

For certain infectious diseases, such as meningitis, the HPU may require letters to be sent home to all parents. Where necessary, the CICN will offer further advice on information for parents and the steps everyone can take to prevent further cases of infection.

### **Steps we will take in the event of an epidemic or pandemic**

#### **Day to day running during an outbreak**

- Rigorous infection control procedures will be maintained (see Health and Safety Policy). We will ensure there are adequate supplies of cleaning materials, alcohol based hand cleaner and personal protective equipment such as gloves and aprons.
- Children and staff members who are showing signs of infection will be sent home immediately. Children will be made comfortable and cared for in an area isolated from their peers who do not have the symptoms until they can be collected. Staff members who are unwell will be sent home; if they are not well enough to return home on their own, they will be isolated in the office until somebody can collect them. Severe onset of symptoms will be treated as a medical emergency.
- The use of certain activities such as play sand or play dough may be suspended.
- Where shortage of supplies becomes an issue, certain activities may be restricted and staff members will plan alternative activities which will meet the children's developmental needs and interests.
- Visits from other agencies and prospective parents will be suspended in order to minimise the risk of infection.
- In the event that a number of staff members falling ill at the same time, we will use agency staff and volunteers in order to maintain appropriate child/staff ratios. We will follow appropriate guidelines on supervision of volunteers (see Suitable Person Policy).
- Where necessary, services will be reduced according to the staff available.
- In the event of the Manager and the Deputy Manager becoming unwell at the same time, a suitably qualified and experienced member of staff will be appointed to manage the day to day running of the Nursery. Ofsted will be informed and action will be taken according to their guidance.
- Where necessary, services will be reduced or suspended, according to staff availability.

#### **Nursery Closure**

If the government authorities decide that the situation is at the stage that schools and nurseries are required to close in the local area, we will follow the guidance of the local authority.

Policy dated: January 2018

Policy updated regularly in line with changes and updates in legislation.

- If we have to shut the nursery, parents will be notified by telephone, and by email to arrange collection of their children.
- We will remain closed until we are instructed that it is safe to re-open.
- There will be no refund of fees as a result of closure due the instructions from the local authorities.

North West London HPT covers the London boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster. The contact details are as follows:

### **North West London HPT**

Public Health England  
61 Colindale Avenue  
London  
NW9 5EQ

Email: [phe.nwl@nhs.net](mailto:phe.nwl@nhs.net); [nwlhpt.oncall@phe.gov.uk](mailto:nwlhpt.oncall@phe.gov.uk)

Telephone 020 3326 1658

Fax 020 3326 1654

Out of hours advice 01895 238 282

### **Legal Guidance:**

Health Protection Agency (HPA): Infection prevention and Communicable Disease Control for Early Years June 2011

### **Links to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage**

#### **Section 3 – The safeguarding and welfare requirements 2017:**

- Child protection
- Risk assessment