

Educational Services

South Ayrshire Local Phasing Delivery Plan – COVID-19 Guidance for Early Years Centres

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South Ayrshire Local Phasing Delivery Plan – COVID-19 Guidance
for Early Years Centres/Version 1



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Introduction

On 21st May 2020 the Scottish Government published ‘Scotland’s route map through and out of the crisis’ and ‘Excellence and Equity During COVID -19 Pandemic – A strategic framework for reopening schools, early learning and childcare provision in Scotland’.

This management guidance takes account of both these publications. Similar to the national guidance for schools, it does not provide all the steps. It is designed to provide information which will assist with the phased re opening and operation of Early Years Centres as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Moving forward it is key that we work together, share and develop the best ways of managing within a changing landscape.

In line with the guidance from Scottish government and public health it sets out the steps that we will take to reopen early years centres. Central to this is the need to continue to observe public health guidance and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, parents and staff.

This means that early learning and childcare services will be different to how they operated before.

From reopening in August 2020 until further notice, early learning and childcare will be a blend of home learning and time in centres. These models may vary in each centre and local area.

At the heart of reopening will be the importance of relationships that respect the challenges and changes we are facing and clear communication that allows us to share information and respond appropriately.

Our priority is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, parents and staff.

1. Physical Distancing

1.1. It is not possible to implement strict physical distancing between young children or between a young child and their key worker in an early years centre. Alternative, age appropriate public health measures and guidance based on international learning will be put in place.

The need to limit physical contact or interaction between adults remains essential. The default position for all centres is that staff should remain 2m apart. It is important to note that the requirement for 2m distancing reflects precautionary judgements based on current scientific advice. As the current situation evolves this is likely to change and any additional measures in place will be eased.

1.2. Physical distancing between adults must be implemented in all areas of the centre including playrooms, staff rooms and outside areas.

1.3. Limit numbers of staff in staff rooms to enable physical distancing. As far as possible staff should use their own crockery and be mindful of cleaning communal equipment such as handles, kettles after use.

- 1.4. Only authorised visitors e.g. education staff and Active Schools should be in the building. No other visitors or contractors to come on site, unless absolutely necessary or in emergencies.

2. Drop-Off and Pick-Up

- 2.1. Parents are asked to respect physical distancing on arrival and collection. Clear marking should be in place at the entrance to stagger arrivals and support physical distancing. Only one parent is to bring child to entrance (younger siblings may be present only if necessary). Put in place clear physical distancing marking at the entrance.
- 2.2. Children should use antibacterial hand gel on arrival.
- 2.3. Children will be welcomed by an appointed member of staff who will greet them, sign the child(ren) in and then escort the child to the appropriate playroom. The reverse will happen at point of pick up. Parents will not be required to sign their child/ren in or out.
- 2.4. Where possible the entry and exit route for parents and children to ensure a clear flow should be clearly marked. Parents cannot enter the playrooms beyond the entry/exit route.

3. Capacities and Key Groups

3.1. Capacities

- 3.1.1 Each early learning and childcare provision is registered with the Care Inspectorate and has a set legal capacity. This capacity is based on 3.7m² for children 0-2; 2.8 m² for children aged 3-5yrs; and 2.3 m² for children aged 2-3 years.
- 3.1.2 From August, early years centres will operate at approximately 50% of registered capacity until further notice.
- 3.1.3 Centres and staff will be encouraged to use outside space as much as possible.
- 3.1.4 Where centres use an outdoor area within the community the capacity may be reviewed and increased.
- 3.1.5 In line with legislation and Care Inspectorate requirements adult to child ratios must be adhered to at all times:

Age Range	Minimum Adult to Child Ratios Required:	Desired COVID-19 Ratios
0 to under 2 years	1 adult to 3 children	1 adult to 2 children
2 to under 3 years	1 adult to 5 children	1 adult to 3 children
3 to 8 years and over years	1 adult to 8 children	1 adult to 5 children (maximum – this may be lower if staffing allows and the current recommendation is 1:5)

3.2. Key Groups

- 3.2.1** A key worker should be assigned to each small key group of children. These key groups should be approx. 5 children for children aged 3-5. Collaboration with schools will be required to ensure siblings attend educational settings on the same days if required by the parents.
- 3.2.2** In most settings two key groups will work together (while maintaining social distancing) and promote socialisation and continuity of staffing over lunches etc. This is where the pairing can be a group of each stage and would allow for shared learning and socialisation with younger children.
- 3.2.3** Children's experiences in the centre will be based on a curriculum pedagogy rooted in play and nurture. There will continue to be a focus on literacy, mathematics and health and wellbeing within a play-based context. Children will need time to adjust to being back in the centre – or being in the centre for the first time.
- 3.2.4** In larger playrooms staff should ensure there are clear defined play areas within playrooms for use by the key groups. Within each play area there should be a range of experiences for children and where possible a quiet area. Clear timetabling of areas and outdoor spaces can help rotate the children between spaces and areas following cleaning. Staff should plan for portable resources to move with them for use by their key group only and cleaned appropriately.
- 3.2.5** To minimise risks there should be no tooth brushing, sand, water, playdough and any shared sensory materials such as gloop at this time. Children cannot bring toys from home.

4. Operating Hours and Patterns of Attendance

4.1. Operating Hours

4.1.1 Some centres will operate 8.30am-4.00pm term time and others will operate 8.00am-6.00pm:

- In centres operating 8.30am-4.00pm term time children will attend Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday.
- In centres operating 8.00am-5.30pm children may attend 8.00am-5.30pm, 2 days a week (Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday)
- In a few centres it will be necessary initially to provide extended mornings and/or afternoons, 50 weeks a year. These centres will operate 8.00am-12.30pm and 1.30pm-6.00pm full year, children may attend for Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday.

4.1.2 Key worker's children may attend the early years centre during opening hours and if required on Wednesdays. Where centres are able to operate reduced numbers on Wednesdays, this will enable refreshing resources and outdoor areas, to plan, update profiles, prepare home learning activities and participate in team meetings and CLPL.

4.1.3 Managers and Head Teachers may work with staff to implement a shift system that suits the new way of operating. Where staff are in agreement they may undertake

longer shifts to reduce the number of changes of staffing. These staff must have a one-hour break at lunch.

4.2. Hours of Operation

- 4.2.1** Term time centres – Operate for children and families 8.30am–4.00pm.
- 4.2.2** Full year Centres – Operate for children and families 8.00am-6.00pm, some centres will operate extended mornings and afternoons 8.00am-6.00pm.
- 4.2.3** Staggered entry and exit times arranged with parents.
- 4.2.4** Staff shift – please link with a member of the Early Years team.

5. Curriculum and Learning

- 5.1.** Quality of experiences, learning and the wellbeing of children and families remain at the centre of decision-making. The early years curriculum must continue to be delivered in a way that is consistent with Curriculum for Excellence and Realising the Ambition with a focus on child-led, play-based pedagogy driving practice. High quality childcare experiences must be age appropriate, rights based and child centred.
- 5.2.** All staff should ensure that there is continuity across the learning model offered. Home learning activities should be play based, activity led and fun. It is not appropriate to provide worksheets for home learning. Early years teachers will continue to support the curriculum planning between the time in the centre and home based learning to ensure continuity and progression.
- 5.3.** During the school closure period staff developed creative and innovative approaches to providing remote learning for children and families. This approach will help to support professional discussions on balancing the learning between the centre and at home. Staff should be clear on the rationale for the curriculum, in the current context, in how they are planning for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing as well as providing a broad general education.
- 5.4.** Managers and head teachers should continue to work with staff to enable, as far as possible, children and staff access to appropriate resources and technology in line with the model offered. This may involve a rotation of resources and IT between home and the centre.
- 5.5.** All children will continue to require a profile and a Personal Care Plan. These will more than ever provide a focus on personalised learning and next steps. Personal Care Plans should be developed in partnership with parents, for setting targets, reflect GIRFEC wellbeing indicators and the range of children's needs particularly at early stages of return.

6. Transitions

- 6.1.** Transitions for children moving to a school after the summer will be very important. Normally, we spend much of the summer term continuing to prepare children for their moves to start school. Schools, in partnership with early years centres, should

arrange for children to visit the school and meet primary staff where possible during June. This is more of a priority for those children are not attending an early years centre in the school where they will be starting P1.

- 6.2. Care should be taken to limit numbers and respect physical distancing during these visits. Where possible arrangements can be made to include the child's early years key worker in the visit.
- 6.3. Equally, there will be transitions for children starting a new early years centre that they may have not yet visited. We need to consider how much of this can be moved online and how much needs to be moved to August. It will be important for children starting in August to have a soft start, slowly allowing them to become accustomed to the new setting. Staff will need to give careful consideration on how to manage children who struggle to separate from their parent and how a parent can safely help settle their child.

7. Snack and Lunches

- 7.1. All staff and children must follow hand washing procedures prior to eating. Staff should establish appropriate measures to ensure social distancing during these times.
- 7.2. Where possible it is recommended that children eat snack at the identified snack area and lunch within their designated key group space in the centre and do not move to school lunch halls. Children do not need to physically distance in their group but the adults should remain 2m from each other where possible and this will apply when serving/delivering food to the groups. Designate a table(s) within your area for lunch. Folding lunch tables could be used in the area if these are available.
- 7.3. One adult should be the designated food preparation person for the session and prepare snacks as required for all the groups in the early years centre.
- 7.4. The food preparation area should be cleaned paying particular attention to worktops, taps and the hand wash sink(s). Appropriate protective clothing to be worn for food preparation (Appendix 2).
- 7.5. A whole group should sit and eat at the same time as far as space allows or where this is not possible be split into 2 smaller groups. There should be no rolling snack.
- 7.6. Food should be plated up for each child by the food preparation person and brought into the area so each child gets their own individual plate. No buffet style or sharing plates. Encourage children to taste foods but allow them to leave unwanted food. Snack menu should be discussed with children beforehand and any choices provided and this along with the staff knowledge of children will allow plates to be personalised.
- 7.7. If children bring their own packed lunch from home staff should ensure that this is decanted into a clean bag and then refrigerated. (you may need to purchase food bags which can be labelled and reused).

8. Wellbeing and Health

8.1. Hand Washing

8.1.1 This is the single most important practice to prevent the viral transfer from person to person. A strict programme must be adopted to ensure regular hand cleaning for staff and children. This should include handwashing on entering the playroom on arrival or following outdoor play, after using the toilet, after coughing and before eating. Consideration may need to be given to hand sanitiser stations outdoors.

8.1.2 Hand sanitiser must be available in every room and at reception.

8.1.3 Regularly revisit correct handwashing with staff and children and discourage touching eyes, nose or mouth as much as possible with small children.

8.2. Personal Hygiene

8.2.1 Staff should ensure that long hair is tied up and that they adopt an extremely high standard of personal handwashing. It is recommended that all jewellery such as rings and bracelets are removed and you change out of your work clothing and shower when you return home.

8.2.2 Health guidelines must be adopted with respect to sneezes, coughs and runny noses:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze;
- Put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards; and
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.

8.3. Cleaning Equipment

8.3.1 Ensure rigorous cleaning of surfaces, equipment, toys and outdoor areas and equipment at least twice a day, lunch and end of day and at times of group rotations. Where appropriate some toys like Lego can be put in the dish washer. There should be no soft furnishings or toys, rugs, cushions, dressing up clothes or low level displays that children can access.

8.3.2 The use of PPE is appropriate to the task and in line with infection control guidelines. Please see Appendix 2.

8.3.3 Ensure that soap remains available for regular handwashing and hand sanitisers are available in each playroom.

8.3.4 Where possible rooms should be well ventilated and windows open.

8.4. Intimate and Personal Care

8.4.1 Staff carrying out intimate care should wear an apron, gloves and a mask if wished, unless a risk assessment has identified that additional PPE must be used. Normal nappy changing procedures should be followed. Staff should have access to

disposable single use gloves for spillage of blood or other body fluids and disposing of dressings or equipment. Local infection control procedures that outline safety and protocols should be stringently followed. This includes procedures for the disposal of soiled items; laundering of any clothes, towels or linen; and cleaning equipment and resources for children.

- 8.4.2** Managers and head teachers should consider how children and staff can safely use toilets, provide supervision and the cleaning between use.

8.5 Children and Anxieties

- 8.5.1** The majority of children will have become used to being with their parents and immediate family for an extended period. Even for those who are excited to regain their freedom and see their friends, this is a potential source of anxiety. There will be children who struggle with this separation and experience anxiety while they are in the centre. Training in attachment (Coast Module) may enable staff to support children. Alternatively contact the educational psychologist or central team for additional advice.

8.6 Safeguarding

- 8.6.1** We will need to be really vigilant about children who may have experienced abuse during the lock down. We need to be aware of this as a possibility for all our children, not just the ones we had identified as vulnerable. Normal child protection procedures should be followed.

9. Management of a Suspected Case of COVID-19

- 9.1.** If a child displays one of the following:

- New continuous cough;
- High fever (over 37.8 degrees); and/or
- A change or loss in taste or smell (anosmia).

One staff member should take the child to identified isolation room, (windows open and stay 2 metres apart where possible). Centre to phone the family/emergency contact.

- 9.2.** Disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a face mask should be worn.
- 9.3.** Parents should be advised to contact NHS for guidance. In principle the child should self-isolate for 7 days and not return to the centre and household members 14 days before returning to the centre. Should symptoms persist child should remain at home and seek guidance from NHS.
- 9.4.** Please contact the central team immediately, to report a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 who will advise you of next steps.
- 9.5.** When the child has been collected the isolation room should be cleaned.

- 9.6.** Staff who begin to feel unwell during the course of the working day should alert their manager immediately and follow COVID-19 protocol, go home and follow government guidance. If you begin to exhibit symptoms at home do not attend the centre and follow NHS protocol (www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus).

10. Notifications

- 10.1.** Care Inspectorate must be notified within 24 hours of any suspected or known case of Covid-19. Please discuss with the central early years team.
- 10.2.** Care Inspectorate do not require to be notified if carers or family members of people you provide care for are in self-isolation as a confirmed or suspected case.
- 10.3.** Care Inspectorate do not require to be notified if carers or family members of people you provide care for are in self-isolation as a confirmed or suspected case.
- 10.4.** Care Inspectorate are required to be notified if any of the following situations that include people who use care services, all staff and any volunteers, visiting professionals, visitors or visiting contractors or suppliers that people within the service have had contact with:
- Any confirmed cases of coronavirus COVID-19;
 - Cases where people have been tested and are awaiting the results;
 - Cases where people have been informed they will be tested;
 - Cases where staff are self-isolating;
 - Any accidents that require hospital treatment; and
 - Any incidents.

11. Test, Trace, Isolate and Support (Test and Protect)

- 11.1.** All centres should familiarise themselves with the Test and Protect (Test, Trace, Isolate and Support) strategy that local health boards and Public Health Scotland are implementing. Test and Protect, as the strategy will be known, has a vital role to play alongside other public health measures such as physical distancing and good hand and respiratory hygiene to enable us together to maintain low levels of community transmission of COVID-19.

Appendix 1 – Draft Task Plan

Preparation for Reopening EYC			
Task	Timescale	Responsibility	Comment
Plan the draft model of attendance/pattern of hours that children can attend the setting taking the play space and staffing into account and including the hours needed by key workers			
Plan roles and responsibilities to support blended learning			
Review individual centres facilities/spaces to confirm operational capacity			
Confirm the number of staff for each setting who are available to work.			
Confirm hours of operation and staff shift patterns			
Children allocated an early years place in a centre to start Session 2020/21			
Provide update communication to parents, staff			
Provide generic risk assessments, food hygiene, lunch, snack, nappy changing, handwashing guidance			
Implement physical distancing protocols for adults and children on arrivals/drop-off and departures/pick-up to avoid crowding at doors. Including implementing a one-way system where possible			
Remove resources (malleable play, soft toys, rugs, dressing up clothes etc.) that might harbour the virus or present a challenge to daily cleaning			
Provide clear and accessible information for parents on arrangements for the setting outlining how they are expected to contribute to infection prevention.			
Ensure that there are sufficient supplies of gloves and aprons, face masks, soap, hand sanitiser and disinfectant etc in each setting			
Transition for children starting school			
Identify number of key worker children in the centre			
Set out cleaning arrangements for areas and equipment			
All staff to participate in infection control training			
Encourage staff to undertake refresher training on nurture principle			
All staff to participate in COVID awareness raising PowerPoint training			
Evacuation procedures to be reviewed in line with any changes implemented Muster points and exit routes should be reviewed in light of any changes and clearly communicated to all staff and children.			
Provide all staff with clear guidance on procedures and protocols should a child or adult within the service become unwell.			
Consider maximising the use of outdoor areas for learning and review/purchase clothing required.			

Appendix 2 – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The PPE Guidance given in the table below is relative to COVID-19 protection measures.

This will be updated to reflect government guidance from the government.

Setting	Context	Disposable gloves	Disposable plastic aprons	Face Masks	Additional Guidance
Delivery of service in schools for pupils of key workers	Day to day working with children	No	No	No	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings
	Nappy Changing and personal care	Yes	Yes	No	https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/1558/nappy-changing-guidance-for-early-years-and-childcare-services.pdf
	Snacks & Lunches	Yes*	Yes	No	*only if serving food
	Contact with bodily fluids	Yes	Yes	No	https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/1538/infection-prevention-and-control-in-childcare-settings.pdf
	Suspected child with COVID-19	No	No	No	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings

Schools and childcare provision operating with any necessary precautions.