
COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Risk Assessment / Infection Control Guidance

SCOPE

The following risk assessment seeks to minimise the risk of the transmission of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). It relates to working directly with a child, in the context of their Nursery setting. The speech & language therapist carries an increased transmission risk, due to the peripatetic nature of the role (travelling across different settings and locations). This document seeks to outline the actions taken to reduce this risk as far as possible.

BACKGROUND

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) spreads through respiratory droplets (e.g. from coughing, sneezing and speech) and contact (e.g. by person, or by surfaces). The main symptoms identified by the NHS are;

- A new, continuous cough
- A high temperature
- A loss, or change to the sense of taste and / or smell

REDUCING THE RISK - Therapist

Speech & Language Therapists have a professional duty of care to work safely and to take measures to reduce the possibility of harm. In the context of COVID-19, I will;

- Follow general Government / Local Authority guidance in relation to social distancing, use of face coverings, avoidance of social gatherings etc.
- Self-isolate if I develop symptoms of Coronavirus or have knowingly been in contact with a person with symptoms (including being contacted via NHS Test & Trace)
- Access testing immediately if I develop symptoms of Coronavirus or have knowingly been in contact with a person with symptoms
- Adhere to Nursery's policies, guidance and working practices in relation to COVID-19 secure measures at all times – **to facilitate this, I need to receive these in advance**
- Travel alone, using my own car, with regular sanitisation of surfaces
- Wear freshly laundered clothes every day
- Retain a 'bare below the elbow' uniform policy
- Provide the cleaning / sanitising equipment needed, along with PPE (as needed)
- Use visual display reminders – social distance, hand hygiene, touching, tissue use etc.
- Keep the overall duration of the session to a minimum, by conducting any extended liaison afterwards, by phone or e-mail

REDUCING THE RISK – Nursery / Child

- It is assumed that the child attending a session is aware of, and able to maintain social distancing, using tissues, and hand hygiene. If this is not the case, additional protective precautions may be used (e.g. PPE / a protective cough screen)
- It is assumed that the child, nor anyone in their household are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (as they should not be in Nursery if this is the case)
- It is expected that if Nursery becomes aware that a child (or anyone in their household) develops symptoms of COVID-19, OR if they are asked to self-isolate under the NHS Test & Trace Protocol, within 14 days of their session with me, that I am notified **immediately**

A session will be ended immediately, if it becomes clear that either the child, or the therapist is unwell; particularly with any symptom of COVID-19.

The transmission hazard may affect;

- the client (Children)
- the speech and language therapist (Therapist)
- a supporting member of Nursery staff
- any adult working in the Nursery (by onward transmission)
- the child's household (by onward transmission)

What are the Hazards	Control Measures in Place
Transmission risk via surfaces	<p>Children and Therapist will wash or sanitise hands at the start and the end of each session</p> <p>Cleanable floor mats will be used, to allocate each child's 'place' and cleaned before and after every use, with a quarantine period of 72 hours after each use</p> <p>All contact surfaces should be cleaned before and after the session (e.g. door handles, light switch, table, chairs)</p> <p>Therapist and children should actively avoid any physical contact or touch, unless becomes necessary, e.g. for personal care or safety</p>
Transmission risk via droplets	<p>Therapist will not undertake any aerosol generating procedures (e.g. no oro-motor / oral examinations) unless deemed absolutely necessary</p> <p>If such procedures are considered essential, PPE will be worn (mask / face shield, apron and gloves)</p> <p>Therapist will have a change of clothing available and will change, should it be suspected that transmission of droplets may have occurred (e.g. a child sneezes, or is unwell in a session)</p> <p>Laundry will be placed in a sealed bag for removal and appropriate cleaning (or disposal) at the end of the day</p> <p>Bubbles (that require blowing) will not be used</p>
Transmission risk via equipment	<p>Minimise equipment use – maximise use of individual paper based resources (used for one group only) and digital resources</p> <p>Use only hard, smooth plastic equipment. Play-Doh will not be used</p> <p>Clean all equipment after every use and only use each item of equipment once per day, to allow for thorough cleaning at the end of the day</p> <p>After cleaning, quarantine each piece of used equipment for a period of 72 hours</p> <p>Resources for the group will be provided and left in Nursery for ongoing use (under local policy guidance)</p> <p>Sets of high frequency, generic items (e.g. dice and counters, pens) should be provided by Nursery and not touched by the Therapist</p> <p>Where single use, individual, or laminated paper resources are not possible (e.g. assessment stimuli manuals) cleanable 'pointers' should be used, which will be sanitised after use and then quarantined for 72 hours</p> <p>Adapted versions of assessments should be used where possible (e.g. digital or laminated) so that sanitisation can be more thorough and quarantine periods can be utilised</p>
Transmission risk due to the environment (e.g. size of space, ventilation)	<p>Wherever possible, a room of adequate size should be available to maintain the two-metre social distance (supported by placement of mats)</p> <p>Wherever possible, the room should have an opening window, which should remain open</p> <p>Where this is not possible, the therapist may wear a mask and / or face shield and / or make use of a protective cough screen</p> <p>Where possible, prop open doors (where safe to do so) to aid ventilation and reduce use of door handles</p>

Transmission risk by inadequate / unavailable hand washing provision	Hand sanitiser and tissues will always be available for the children and therapist in the session Where a tissue is used, disposal will be in line with the Nursery's policy / working practices re. disposal Therapist will always adhere to 'bare below the elbow' dress policy to support hand hygiene. A waterproof dressing will be used to cover any open cuts on the hands
Transmission risk via inability to maintain social distance	Cleanable floor mats will be used, to allocate each child's 'place' and cleaned before and after every use – mats will be arranged to naturally enforce social distancing to maintain a two-metre distance PPE may be used if there is a concern about the maintenance of the two-metre distance
Risk of illness of Nursery staff	Therapist will maintain a social distance of two-metres during any liaison with adults in Nursery Therapist to liaise with staff electronically via e-mail where possible, in order to minimise risk Therapist will restrict movement around the setting to an essential minimum

In order to complete this Risk Assessment, the following documents / resources have been consulted;

RCSLT (29.05.20) – Restoring Services & Keeping Everyone Safe: Framework to support decision making - [Available here.](#)

RCSLT (27.08.20) – Guidance on Reducing Risk of Transmission, Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the Context of COVID-19

ASLTIP / RCSLT (27.03.20) - Joint RCSLT and ASLTIP guidance for independent therapists - [Available here.](#)

Department for Education (28.08.2020) – Guidance for Full Opening: Schools - [Available here.](#)

Health & Safety Executive – Working Safely during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak - [Available here.](#)

Tracey Day (Speech & Language Therapist) has undertaken online training modules, presented by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as follows;

Infection Prevention and Control for novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

COVID-19: How to put on and take off personal protective equipment

Standard Precautions: Hand Washing

Standard Precautions: Waste Management

Standard Precautions: Environmental cleaning and disinfection

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/training/online-training>

07.09.20