

COVID Policy

The Ark Pre-school expects that all staff will be alert to the risks presented by the COVID19 virus and will follow the updating government advice as the situation changes. All employees are expected to know and follow this policy to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all of our children of control that must be followed by all staffmembers.

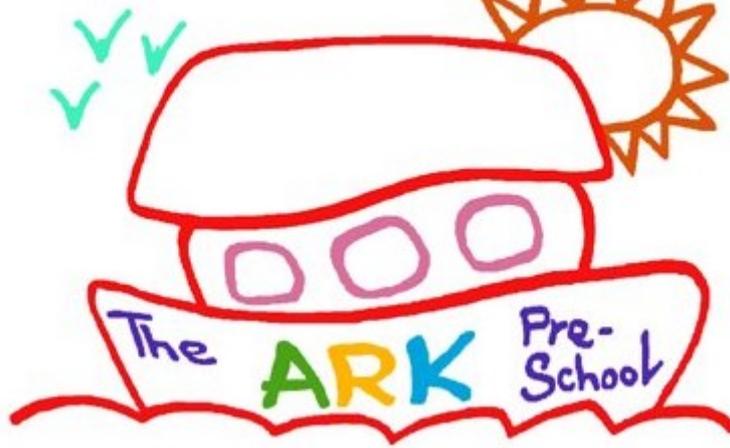
Systems of Control: Prevention

All staff should minimise contact with those who are showing coronavirus symptoms, who have received a positive test for coronavirus, or who are known to have been exposed to a person with coronavirus within their household or via contact tracing, by ensuring that that person does not attend The Ark Pre-school.

Any staff member or child who shows symptoms or who tests positive for COVID19 should not come to The Ark Pre-school, and if symptoms emerge while they are at the setting they should immediately be sent home and follow the government guidance for households with a possible coronavirus infection, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance> This currently mandates 10 days self-isolation and arranging for a test.

If a child is awaiting collection by their parents then they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated from other children and staff, but with one adult supervising. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other children, and from staff with the exception of the supervising adult staff member.

Employees are expected to engage in more regular handwashing, with soap if possible, and as per government advice for a minimum of 20 seconds at a time. Children are also to be encouraged to engage in more regular handwashing for the duration of the COVID19 pandemic.



Employees must follow the government “Catch It, Bin It, Kill It” approach to ensure positive respiratory hygiene in setting.

Immediately put tissues into a disposable rubbish bag and, straight away, clean hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser. Staff must ensure younger children are helped to ensure that they properly wash their hands.

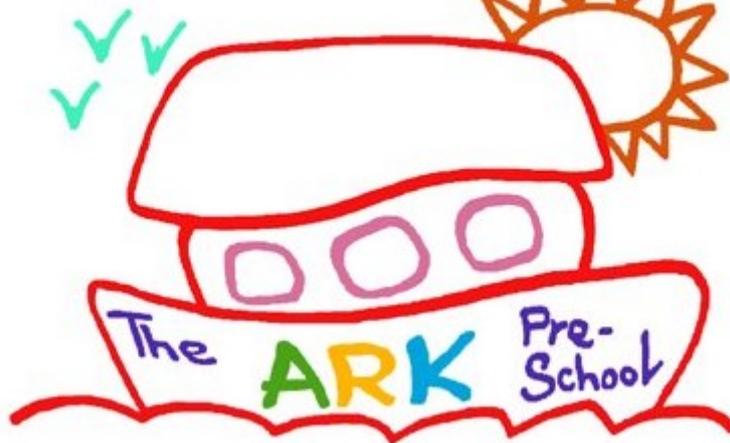
An enhanced approach to cleaning must be used, including more regular use of virucidal sprays, bleach wipes and detergents on regularly touched surfaces. Normal child safety protocols should be followed in the use of such chemicals. Example surfaces include:

- door handles
- handrails and bannisters
- table and counter tops
- play equipment and furniture
- toys
- such electronic devices as are allowed in the setting

Where possible, social distancing should be observed. Although much more difficult with children, this is imperative with colleagues, parents and professional visitors. Regular assessments should be made as to whether the layout of each environment is helping to ensure proper distancing.

Government restrictions on group sizes have been limited. However, as per government advice, groups of children at The Ark Pre-school, such as are organised by age or a differing schedule, should not be mixed to minimise risk of spread. Parents should also be encouraged to minimise the amount of settings their child attends to reduce risk to children, staff and families of those at The Ark Pre-school.

Where necessary, proper PPE is to be worn. As per government guidelines, for childcare settings these are limited circumstances:



- If a child becomes ill with coronavirus symptoms and proper social distancing of 2 metres plus cannot be maintained.
- When engaging in Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGP's) as outlined here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe#aerosol-generating-procedures-agps>

PPE may be able to be sourced via the local authority. The manager should check for such provision regularly via this tool: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-local-contacts-for-care-providers>

Otherwise, it is the responsibility of The Ark Pre-school to provide adequate PPE to cover the above circumstances requiring the wearing of PPE.

Spaces must be kept as well ventilated as possible.

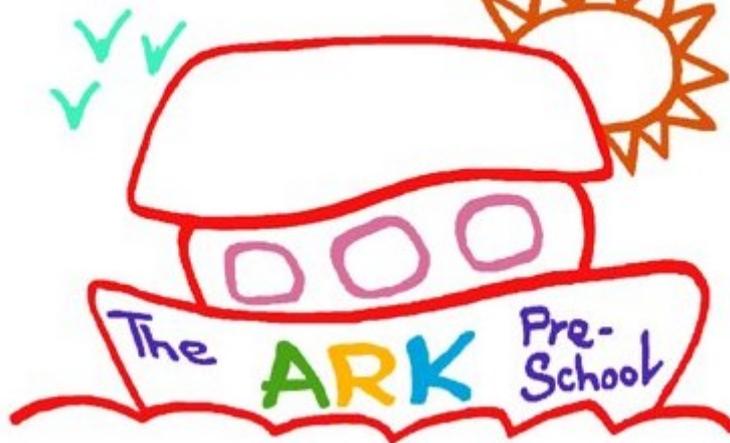
This means opening windows, *when it is safe to do so*. In colder weather windows should be opened just enough to provide constant background ventilation. Where possible, such as when a room has been cleared, windows should be opened more fully to replenish the air in the room. For safety's sake higher windows should be opened before lower windows that are more accessible to children.

Enhanced food preparation and hygiene must be observed, both in terms of food for children and for staff. All staff are expected to engage in thorough handwashing for more than 20 seconds both before preparing food and before and after handling used plates, utensils and other items.

All staff should acquaint themselves with the NHS Test and Trace process at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

Systems of Control: Responding to Infection

If a case of infection is discovered in setting, all staff members must be willing to



follow the full NHS Test and Trace procedure. The Ark Pre-school must ask all staff members, parents and stakeholders to immediately disclose the results of any test.

Staff members are encouraged to download the NHS COVID19 app, although must remember that personal devices must not be on their person whilst at work.

<https://covid19.nhs.uk/pdf/introducing-the-app.pdf>

If somebody in our setting has tested positive for COVID19, the following procedure must be followed:

1. OFSTED must be immediately notified. This is via the usual incidence report link here, but during the process selecting the option "Child or member of staff testing positive for COVID-19, or closure due to COVID-19": <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-childcare-incident>

Important details to include in the report are:

Was there a positive test?

Was this a member of staff or a child?

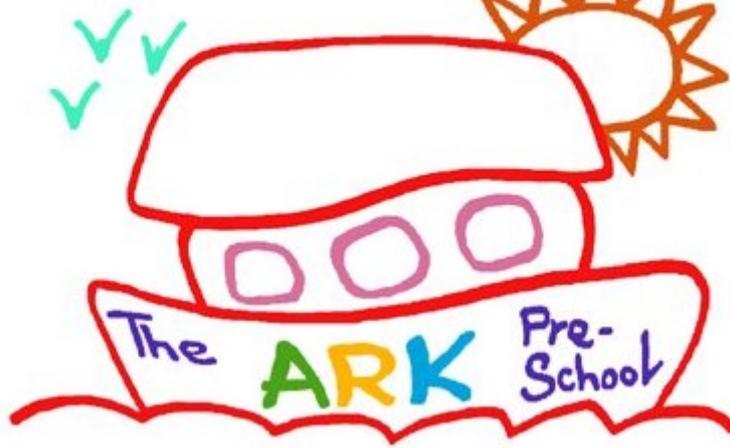
Key dates: When first detected, when confirmed positive for COVID19, When and If the setting is closing and how long for.

Who was there: How many children were in setting at the time, and how many staff?

Whether or not the local authority has been notified, and Public Health England via the DfEhelpline.

2. The manager must telephone the **DfE Coronavirus Helpline**. This can be reached by calling **0800 046 8687** and selecting option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case. You will be put through to a team of advisers who will inform you what action is needed based on the latest public health advice.
3. ALL staff should make themselves aware of the Public Health England (PHE) Action Card, and it should be on display in staff areas and reception:
<https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/reporting-an-outbreak/resources/Education-Action-Cards/>

There is also a reference document on the GOV.UK website that is updated



here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/947315/EY_close_contact_actions_document.pdf

The DfE Helpline will provide insight and advice as to whether The Ark Pre-school is recommended to close or follow other advisory action in the wake of a positive COVID19 test. They will also provide necessary parental contact templates, in line with PHE and DfE protocols. However good record keeping should be maintained to help PHE and DfE make appropriate recommendations, such as of group sizes and any inter-group mixing.

It may be that The Ark Pre-school does not identify a case with a positive test directly, but that we are notified by our PHE local health protection team, who may follow-up if they think somebody in our setting has been exposed to COVID19, and will provide advice at that time.

Admitting Children Back to Setting:

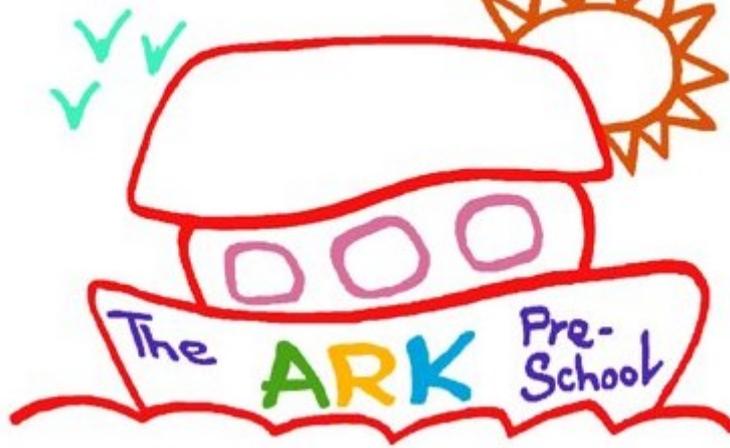
We will not request evidence of a negative test or other medical evidence before welcoming children back. However the manager should refuse to admit a child back to The Ark Pre-school if they think, with reason, that the child carries a risk of spreading coronavirus to others within the setting. This must be balanced according to the latest PHE advice.

If one or more of the following apply:

1. The number of cases at The Ark Pre-school exceeds 2 within a 2 week window
2. Despite all reasonable action there is evidence that cases are spreading within the setting
3. Staff feel that this may necessitate closure of The Ark Pre-school
4. A child or staff member has been hospitalised by the coronavirus
5. We are subject to local media interest

Then a manager should contact the local **Health Protection Team** immediately.

Systems of Control: Visitors



Site visits should be kept to the absolute minimum necessary.

Where possible, we should endeavour to conduct virtual or video call tours for parents and guardians interested in signing their child up for a place at The Ark Pre-school.

Visitors who aren't staff or parents should wear face coverings where possible, unless medically exempt

Visitors should engage in enhanced hand washing procedures and "Catch It, Bin It, Kill It", and be made aware that this is policy. This also means where possible to maintain a stock of hand cleaning gel.

Where possible, visits should be held after our normal operating hours.

Parents may still settle children, but the working policy will limit these periods to an hour and parents should be made aware that this is our general policy on this matter, as per government recommendations. However flexibility can be applied subject to circumstance.

Parental visits to setting should be kept to essential, and they should be purposeful.

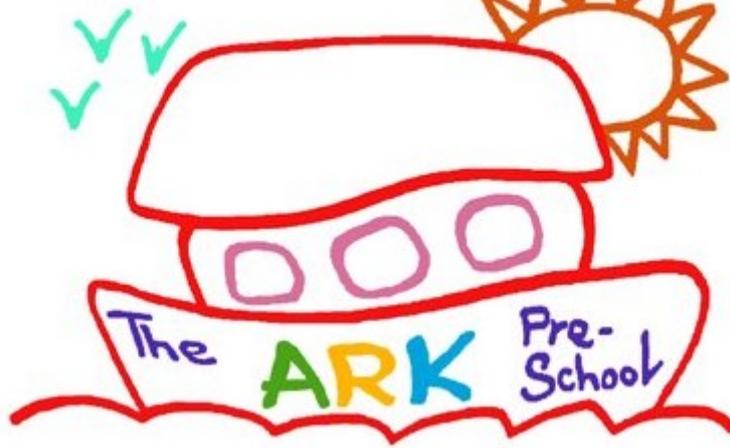
Essential visits from external professionals should continue, such as for SEND therapies. However where possible and where it does not impact the welfare of our children, visits should be virtual.

All visitors must follow the Systems of Control as laid out in this policy, and they should be made aware of the totality of this policy, before attending the setting in-person.

Recruitment

Recruitment should continue as normal in line with the Recruitment Policy. However, to keep all visitors to a minimum interviews and meetings should be kept to video calls and virtual meetings where possible.

All candidates must follow the Systems of Control as laid out in this policy, and they



should be made aware of the totality of this policy, before attending any in-person sessions.

Nothing in this policy can prevent The Ark Pre-school from adhering to existing safer recruitment practices and statutory pre-employment checks.

All visitors must follow the Systems of Control as laid out in this policy, and they should be made aware of the totality of this policy, before attending the setting in-person.

Musical and Creative Play

Musical and Creative Play can continue providing staff ensure that social distancing is followed, and risk assessments are covered for DROPLET and AEROSOL risk.

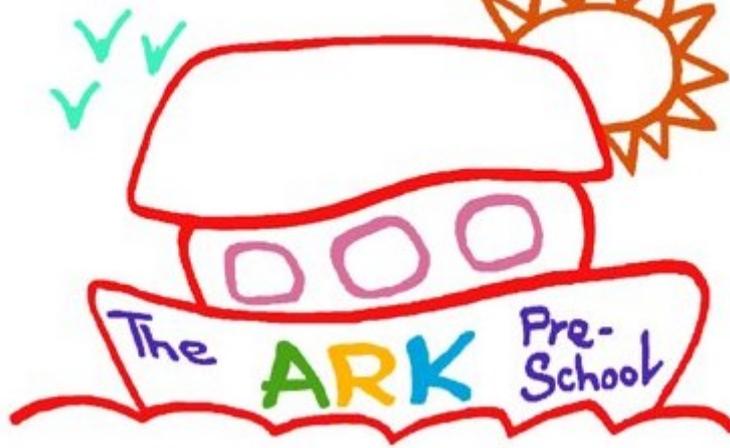
Measures to take include:

- Playing instruments and singing in groups should take place outdoors wherever possible.
- If indoors, use a room with as much space as possible, for example, larger rooms - rooms with high ceilings are expected to enable dilution of aerosol transmission
- If playing instruments indoors, socially distance each child 2 metres apart
- Limit the numbers to account for ventilation of the space, it is important to ensure good ventilation - advice on this can be found at the government resource for air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak
- Avoid sharing instruments where possible, **particularly** woodwind instruments

If at any time our local area is subject to Tier 3, 4 or 5 restrictions then no performances of any sort can be held.

Messy Play

Risk Assessments should be conducted for all Messy Play activities, particularly



those involving mud, water or malleable play activities. These should consider:

- Will these activities involve groups of 15 or more handling the same materials?
- Will anybody outside of the children's group have come into contact with the materials?
- Can the material be cleaned? If so, how?

Children should wash their hands before and after **all** Messy Play activities, as should staff.

Trips and Visits

As per government advice, where possible outdoor space **should be used in preference to indoor spaces.**

Trips are not permitted during this period of National Lockdown.

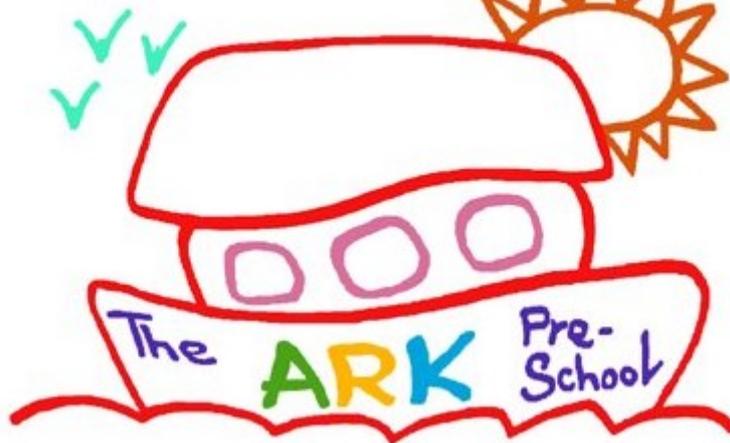
Local Restrictions

The Ark Pre-school and its staff will keep up to date on all local restrictions, such as what is and isn't advised in our local tier. The manager should regularly check, on at least a 2 weekly basis, the latest government guidance on the tiers structure available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>

The manager should regularly check, on at least a 2 weekly basis, for any changes in the government's Contingency Framework for Early Years settings here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-contingency-framework-for-education-and-childcare-settings>

Managing Parental Concerns

All staff are to be mindful and sympathetic to the concerns of parents who do not want to subject their child to risk from COVID19 infection. Particularly if those



children are:

- known to have clinical vulnerabilities, or if they live with a vulnerable or shielding person
- From a BAME family concerned about the increased risk to their person.

Managing Squeezes on Places

Although The Ark Pre-school and other settings are currently permitted to run operate at maximum capacity, this may change. Under those circumstances priority for places should be given, in order, to:

- Vulnerable children and children of critical workers
- 3-4 year olds, most of all those soon to transition to reception
- Going down subsequently in age order

Managing Changes to Operating Hours

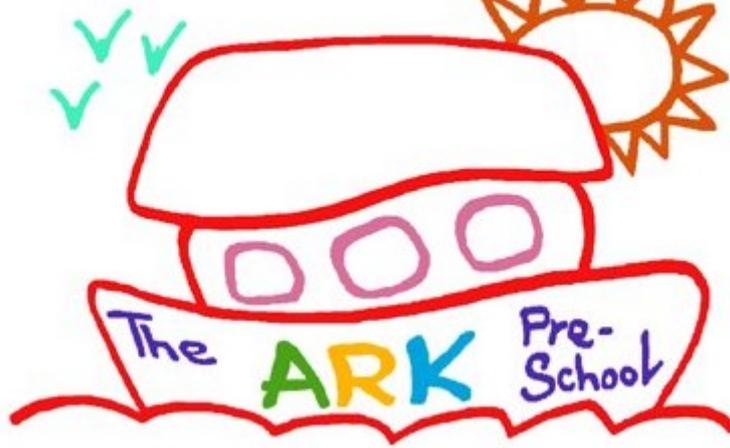
Should the circumstances of the virus force a major change in operation, such as our opening hours, The manager should, as per government guidelines:

- let Ofsted know by sending an email to enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk with 'change in operating hours' in the subject field
- in the body of the email, confirm our **unique reference number** (URN) and the details of the change - the URN can be found on our previous registration, inspection report, and the Ofsted reports page

Managing Staff Shortage

If short of staff, the Manager should contact the local authority to discuss emergency provision.

Staff returning from abroad should self-isolate for 10 days as per government advice. Staff must also make sure to ensure as far as practical that they can return



easily from any overseas travel and will monitor government advice diligently.

Updating Insurance

The manager and the Manager should regularly review as to whether the setting's public liability and other insurances are fully up-to-date and compliant. If in doubt, the ABI can be contacted to ask questions about our compliance by phone on 0207 600 3333 or email at info@abi.org.uk.

Useful Contacts & Links

Association of British Insurers: 0207 600 3333 or email at info@abi.org.uk.

Contingency Framework: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-contingency-framework-for-education-and-childcare-settings>

Current Tier Restrictions: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>

DfE Helpline: 0800 046 8687

OFSTED guidance on reporting incidents: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tell-ofsted-if-you-have-a-covid-19-incident-at-your-childcare-business>

Early Years Action Card: <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/reporting-an-outbreak/resources/Education-Action-Cards/>