



Welcome Back to Little Owls



Dear Families,

The Prime Ministers announcement on May 11th encouraged early years providers to begin to welcome back children to their settings from the 1st of June.

Over the past week a huge amount of planning and careful consideration has taken place between our management team and directors. We have consulted with our staff team and we are delighted that they are all excited to return and have missed your little people very much!

When we return, we will continue to offer high quality provision for your children under the new circumstances. There will be changes, but what will remain is that your children will be loved, cared for and nurtured by the same dedicated, smiling faces you were used to seeing in your settings. They will still enjoy fun, games and laughter. They will still play with their friends, sing and dance, and learn new things with their practitioners and key workers. We will still delight hilarious conversations over meal times. We will do what is needed to make your children happy when they are sad and care for them and nurse their injuries when they are hurt. Many things have changed but the fundamentals of why you chose Little Owls for your children are still and will always be present in our settings.

However, we must be realistic with regards to social distancing as this is something that we all know as parents our little people will not be able to achieve, quoting the Department for Education guidance for early years providers which recognises that:

“unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to early years and schools, we are taking this into account”. DfE 2020

We appreciate and respect that many parents have been unable to decide on whether or not to return to their normal sessions on the 1st June until they had information on the ways we intend to operate. I am therefore pleased to share with you today the first stage of our correspondence with parents around reopening. The following document details the changes to practise, routine and provision which will be implemented from 1st June. These bring our practise inline with the enhanced recommendations from the Department for Education which was released last week.

WHAT WE DID BEFORE	WHAT WE WILL CHANGE
<p>Opening Hours We were open from 7:30-6pm with staff either working an early or late shift.</p>	<p>The Nursery will be open from 8am – 5:30pm. This is to support enhanced cleaning as well as ensure all staff work the same shift and there are no overlaps.</p>
<p>Drop off's & Collections Parents were able to come into the setting with their</p>	<p>The gates will be manned by a manager or deputy at 8am 3pm and from 5pm. They will be supporting theses transition and guiding families so we are able to social</p>

<p>children and speak with their keyperson before dropping off or collecting their child.</p>	<p>distance from parents as much as possible. Just as before our closure parents will not be entering any of the buildings. At busy times the manager may ask families to wait by their car before coming to the gate for their handover. We insist that one adult only comes onsite for drop offs or collections.</p> <p>We will wash your children's hands thoroughly on arrival and before they go home as well as frequently throughout the day.</p>
<p>Car seats and Prams Parents would be able to leave any pushchairs or car seats on site at any time.</p>	<p>We are unable to store any of these items at nursery for the foreseeable future.</p>
<p>Food and Drink At all meal times children were encouraged to be as independent as possible serving meals and helping to prepare snacks. Drink bottles were stored in a place that could be freely accessed by all children.</p> <p>There were no supply or delivery issues with our food supplier</p>	<p>All food will be prepared and plated up by our chefs only. Children will not be choosing fruit or crudités from a sharing plate, snacks will be served into individual bowls in the kitchens. Staff will wear gloves when serving or helping children with food and these will be disposed of afterwards.</p> <p>Drinks will be stored in children's boxes. Staff will be encouraging them frequently to drink throughout the day.</p> <p>Children will be spaced out far more at meal times. Where possible snacks and tea will be consumed outside.</p> <p>We are currently adapting our lunch and tea menu. Due to issues in getting delivery's etc. Parents will have a copy of this before we reopen.</p>
<p>Our Provision Children had access to a huge variety of resources carefully arranged to meet their interests and support their learning. 80% of your child's day was initiated and led by them. Soft furnishings were present to give the setting a homely feel.</p>	<p>We will still continue to meet your children's interests as well as their educational and developmental needs. The provision will be scaled back to allow for easier cleaning.</p> <p>Sand water messy and malleable play will not be freely accessed. Activities will be more adult led and we will be spending as much time outside as possible.</p> <p>Soft furnishings will be removed and all small toys will be left in sterilizing solution overnight, each night.</p>

	<p>Our nursery will still be bright, warm and welcoming despite these changes. We are all working very hard behind the scenes to arrange this before we reopen.</p>
<p>Nursery Gardens All children could access all of our different outside spaces.</p>	<p>The gardens will be allocated as follows: At Toftwood: Tawny Owls: Grassed area and Nature garden Snowy Owls: Safety Surfaced/Patioed area with sun sail. Barn Owls: Safety Surfaced garden with Canopy.</p> <p>At Scarning: Tawny Owls: Grassed Decking Area Snowy Owls: Nature Garden with sun sail Barn Owls: Safety Surfaced Playground</p>
<p>Group Times Children would be encouraged to join in with group times with the whole Nursery group and join in with meaningful activities.</p>	<p>These will be held in small groups with one adult. We will be focusing on childrens personal social and emotional development and particularly their upcoming transitions whether that be to school or to the next room in nursery. Group times will be limited to only what is necessary and we will use spots on the ground as markers to ensure children are spaced apart.</p>
<p>Staff Room Our Staff rooms provided our team the opportunity to have a hot meal in a comfortable homely environment.</p>	<p>Both staff rooms will be closed. These areas will be used if a child or becomes unwell while at our setting. This will provide an isolated environment away from all other children until their parents arrive to collect them. A staff member will be with them at all times.</p>
<p>Children's Belongings including Toys and Comforters Children could bring in items from home in accordance with our 'Toys and Comforter from home policy'. Most families packed for a week and would bring in a huge changing bag full of items their child might need that day.</p>	<p>It is important that your child only brings in essential items for their day. This would include but is not limited to: Nappies, wipes, changes of clothes, essential medicines, sun cream, a hat and a drinks bottle. Comforters should only be bought in if they are clean and will be used for sleep time or if your child is upset.</p> <p>All children's items from home should be brought in a carrier bag if possible. Full changing bags will not be accepted as the risk of cross contamination with such items means they can not come into the nursery.</p>
<p>Sleep Time Children could sleep on beds or cots, cots and sheets were allocated to an individual and</p>	<p>Beds and cots will be spaced 2m apart for sleep times all sheets will be laundered following NHS Laundry guidelines after each use.</p>

labelled to be used throughout the week of attendance.	Cots and beds are cleaned with disinfectant after each use.
<p>Social Groups ‘Bubbles’</p> <p>Children have always been encouraged to mix often in the nursery. This includes different ages groups. Large groups sizes meant children had lots of different opportunities to play with different children throughout the day.</p>	<p>When we return, we already know that we are going to have fewer children than we used to. This in itself as reduced the group sizes greatly. In addition, these children will be allocated in groups with their key worker where possible and stay in those groups for the day. The adults assigned to these groups will always be a qualified experienced member of staff who knows your children in the rare circumstance that their key worker is unavailable.</p>
<p>Attending more than one setting</p> <p>Children could attend a different preschool nursery or childminder alongside their Little Owls sessions</p>	<p>It is advised that children should only attend one setting. If there are exceptional circumstances why this is not possible for your family (for example you use a childminder at weekends as you do shift work) then please speak to your manager.</p>
<p>Communication with parents</p> <p>This was done verbally at the beginning and end of the sessions. Tapestry was used a way to communicate your children’s achievements within the EYFS</p>	<p>Each day your key worker or the practitioner who has spent the day with your child will upload an overview of their day to Tapestry. This will include meals, sleeps, nappy changings and a general overview of their play and interactions.</p> <p>We will be doing this as well as depicting all the lovely activities achievements and experiences they will enjoy during their day at nursery on Tapestry too.</p>
<p>Closed Facebook Group</p> <p>This was a new initiative, launched during our closure of the setting.</p>	<p>We will continue to contribute to this to share with our families what the children at nursery are enjoying. If you are not ready to return yet then this could provide lots of ideas of how you can emulate some of the nursery activities at home.</p>
Enhanced Hygiene Practises	
<p>Cleaning Schedules</p>	<p>Enhanced Cleaning schedules will be used by staff to ensure any surfaces and touch points are cleaned and disinfected after every use/every hour. The cleaning schedule for our Nursery cleaner has been revised and ensures deep cleaning more often.</p> <p>Cleaners Hours and our operational hours have been adjusted to ensure that domestic staff are not on site at the same time as the children.</p>

Sterilizing Toys	Any toys that have been used will be disinfected after use. All small toys will be sterilised over night before the next Nursery day.
Hand Hygiene	As prior to our closure we will be supporting frequent handwashing throughout the day. Sanitation stations will be set up in each room also.
PPE	<p>We will continue to use the correct PPE for nappy changing, cleaning and administering first aid. New guidelines state that if a child becomes unwell with any symptoms of COVID 19 they must be isolated in a separate room. The member of staff caring for them will be required to wear enhanced PPE which will include a mask.</p> <p>Government guidelines do not require early years workers to wear a mask for any other aspects of their work, however they can if they choose to.</p>
Unwell Children/Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children or staff members with a temperature over 37.8 degrees to isolate for 14 days. • Any child or staff member with a new cough, respiratory illness or loss of taste and smell to isolate for 14 days. • Any Families who are self-isolating or being tested for COVID 19 must inform the office. • COVID 19 is now classed as a notifiable disease and we are required to report these to OFSTED and Public Health England. • If a child of staff member tests positive for COVID 19 that child's/staff members room would be closed and the team and children would need to isolate for 14 days. • If a child becomes unwell with symptoms they must be collected from setting as soon as possible and always within 1 hour of the phone call.
Testing for COVID 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and children who have symptoms of COVID 19 are eligible for a test. If you receive negative test result prior to the end of a 14 day isolation you can return to setting. A manager would need to see the test results to confirm this.
Ventilation	All windows and where possible doors will be open to ensure our buildings are as well ventilated as can be.
Staff Uniforms	Staff will be laundering their uniform daily in accordance with NHS laundry guidelines. Staff are advised not to travel to work on public transport. If in exceptional

	circumstances they do travel on public transport they must change their clothes on arrival in the setting.
--	--

Consultation with Parents

We plan to send out feedback forms to parents once we have been operating in the new way for two weeks. These are unprecedented times and while we have adhered to the DfE's guidance we are always striving for best practise. Please email your setting manager if you have any ideas or suggestions for us in the meantime. It is really important that we are all working together to meet the needs of our children and families in the safest way possible. We are open to emulating any ways of working that may have been successfully implemented in your workplaces so if you feel you have something of value to share please get in touch.

Now parents have all of the relevant information about our reopening, hopefully this can aid your decision on when you are ready for your children to return to nursery. It is important to recognise this will look different for every family for every child. I strongly urge all families only to return to nursery if this is right for you and you are confident and happy with our practises.

We encourage parents to look at the actions we have put into place already, and make the right decision for your family. We recognise that parents need to work and children need quality care while their parents are working. We want everyone to feel that they are able to access the childcare places they are entitled to without chastisement from others.

Transitions, Settling-in sessions & Moving on to School.

Mrs Rudd from Toftwood Infant school and our Operations Manager Holly have already been in contact to put things into place to support transitions to school. Once we are open, we will look into what could be put into place for our families transitioning within the nursery.

Initially we intend for care plans to take place via videocall and that parents will not be able to be in the room for settling sessions although we will provide more detail on this in the coming weeks. This is not something that can be rushed as we know successful transitions are fundamental in promoting children's wellbeing.

While we were away.

Parents will be receiving a revised contact details form and succinct version of our care plan document. Please return these via email or post before your child returns for their first session. 8 weeks is a long time in your little people's life, so its important that we are aware of any changes to their routine, likes dislikes etc. please fill in the care plan to keep your key worker informed.

We are also in the process of making little packs up for your children as a little gift for those returning to setting or who have paid the retainer to delay their start.

Many parents have contacted us personally to express worries about how their child will settle back in after such a long away. The truth is there has been very little study into what happens when we socially withdraw babies and toddlers for two months then reintroduce back into social environments.

In my many years' experience as both a practitioner and a parent it is evident that how we as parents feel about a situation is often reflected in our children. If returning to nursery is something that is discussed positively at home and parents feel good about returning back to our settings your children will too. If they are tearful, they will be cuddled and we will take the same steps and use the same tried and tested methods that helped your child settle when they first started with us.

Finally,

Thank you to all of those who have already got in contact with us, if you haven't made contact yet you have the following options:

- Contact your setting manager to confirm that you will be attending when we reopen
- Delay your start and return to nursery when you feel more comfortable. This includes contacting your setting manager and paying the relevant retainer to secure your space.
- Contact you setting manager to give 4 weeks' notice that your child will not be returning to Little Owls.

We look forward to hearing from you all soon, if you have not made contact with us by the 28th May we will assume you will be attending your normal sessions and will be invoiced accordingly.

We are ready to welcome you all back with open arms!

Thank you all for your continued support,

Kind regards,

Justine Johnny & Holly