Stratton Playgroup

**6 Pandemic Information & procedure for Parents / Carers**

**Policy statement**

At Stratton Playgroup, we provide care for healthy children and promote health through preventing cross infection of viruses.

**Statement of intent**

Pandemic virus is different from an ordinary virus because it’s a new virus that appears in humans and spreads very quickly from person to person worldwide. Because it’s a new virus, no one will have immunity to it and everyone could be at risk of catching it.

Government experts advise that a pandemic is inevitable but cannot say when it will happen. In the event of a pandemic, the government or Local Authorities are charged with putting in place Emergency Planning measures and ensuring that local services such as ourselves are prepared and can continue to function.

The Emergency Planning Officer and the Health Protection Unit will set up the ‘Strategic Co-ordinating Group’ which will aim to keep essential services running in what is likely to be a time of severe disruption. It will also give detailed local advice to the public and services providers.

The government itself may well issue advice that schools and early years and childcare settings in the area should close for a period. Sometimes, the Local Authority is charged with transmitting this advice. In the light of government advice, the decision whether we actually close may have to be made by our management committee. In due course, the government or Local Authority will advise settings, on the basis of a review of the government advice, whether to remain closed or whether they may re-open.

**Aim**

Our playgroup believes that the health of the children, their parents/carers, and staff members is of paramount importance.

We will aim to prevent the spread of a pandemic; and to ensure that all parents and carers are aware of health issues and the consequences of such health issues, along with the continued smooth running of playgroup, if a flu pandemic were to spread across our local community.

**Procedures for children who are sick or infectious**

To ensure that all those using, and working in our playgroup can do so with confidence, we would follow the following procedure:

* If you think that you or your child have the virus-like symptoms (such as the sudden onset of fever, cough, shortness of breath, headache, sore throat, tiredness, aching muscles, chills, sneezing, runny nose or loss of appetite – to follow the current government symptoms list) please do not bring your child to playgroup.
* Call your GP or NHS Direct – they will give you advice on your symptoms. Do not go to your GP surgery or local accident and emergency department unless you are advised to do so or you / your child are seriously ill, because you might spread the illness to others. Ask a friend to go out for you.
* If a child comes to playgroup suffering with the virus-like symptoms, playgroup staff will ensure that the sick child is kept separate from other children (and minimise their contact with staff) until the child can be collected by their parents or an emergency contact.
  + On the instance of a 1st case being notified within playgroup, and on being diagnosed by a doctor / or test – we would have to consider closing the playgroup to stop the spread of the virus. The committee would be informed immediately by the playgroup staff. They would then reach a decision along with the manager whether or not to close playgroup. The manager would then inform all parents and staff via telephone (contact details must be kept up to date at all times).
* Dependant on PHE advise - if we are able to remain open – our plans should include hygiene measures to minimise the spread of infection (e.g. hand-washing, disposal of tissues). If any staff are showing any signs of infection, they must be sent home. Dependant on PHE advise - if our playgroup were to close to children, staff would still come into work, to ensure that all furniture, equipment and toys are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected; unless ill or caring for dependants.
* All children’s families and staff members must follow the government / PHE advise at the time of the occurrence.