

# WALTHAMSTOW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

## Illness and Infections Policy

Walthamstow Montessori School (WMS) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, parents/ carers and staff. We make children, staff and parents/carers aware of health and safety issues; and have procedures for identifying hazards, reporting and dealing with accidents, incidents, illness and infections and this policy can be read in conjunction with the school's Medicine Policy and Health & Safety Policy.

WMS is committed to ensuring staff have up to date paediatric first aid certification at all times and receive refresher training annually. First Aid boxes contain appropriate equipment that will meet the needs of the children and this is checked each school term to ensure they are full and everything is in date.

### **Aim and objectives:**

This policy has been written following guidance from Public Health England on infection control and winter readiness and the Local Authority.

This policy aims to provide the WMS community with guidance when preparing for, and in the event of an outbreak of an infection such as pandemic influenza or any other contagious illness.

### **Principles:**

WMS recognises that infections such as influenza pandemics are not new. No-one knows exactly when the school will be faced with having to deal with a potentially contagious illness amongst its community. We recognise the need to be prepared. Infections are likely to spread particularly rapidly in schools and as children may have no residual immunity, they could be amongst the groups worst affected. We recognise that closing the school may be necessary in exceptional circumstances in order to control an infection. However, we will strive to remain open unless advised otherwise. Good pastoral care includes promoting healthy living and good hand hygiene. Our staff will give pupils positive messages about health and well-being through lessons and through conversations with pupils.

If we have reason to believe that any child is suffering from a notifiable disease, identified as such in the public health (infectious diseases) regulations 1988, we will notify Ofsted. We will act on any advice given by the Health Protection Agency and

inform Ofsted of any action taken. To find a list of notifiable diseases, [follow this link](#). We will also inform the Waltham Forest Public Health Team.

### **Planning and preparing:**

In the event of WMS becoming aware that a pupil or member of staff has an infectious illness, we will direct their parents to report to their GP and inform the local PHE centre. During an outbreak of an infectious illness such as pandemic influenza, the school will seek to operate as normally as possible but will plan for higher levels of staff absence. The decision on whether school should remain open or close will be based on medical evidence and guidance from the Department for Education and the Local Authority. This will be discussed with the Health Protection Agency. It is likely that WMS will remain open, but we recognise the fact that both the illness itself and the caring responsibilities of staff will impact staff absence levels. The school will close if we cannot provide adequate supervision for the children.

### **Infection control**

Infections are usually spread from person to person by close contact, for example:

Infected people can pass a virus to others through large droplets when coughing, sneezing or even talking within a close distance.

Through direct contact with an infected person for example if you shake or hold their hand and then touch your own mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands.

By touching objects i.e. door handles, light switches that have previously been touched by an infected person, then touching your own mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands.

Viruses can live longer on hard surfaces than on soft or absorbent surfaces.

### **Control the Spread of Infection:**

- In order to prevent the spread of infection amongst staff members, it is necessary to follow a high standard of hygiene procedures; these include regular hand washing and the use of disposable gloves and disposable aprons for nappy changing (where applicable). Children must be encouraged to wash their hands regularly as part of the daily routine.
- WMS follows the guidance provided by the Health Protection Unit on exclusion periods for infectious illness (Ref to our: Health & Safety Policy).

- In line with this guidance, and in order to prevent the spread of infection, children and staff with diarrhoea and/or vomiting must not return to WMS until they have been symptom free for a minimum of forty-eight hours.
- Additional precautions are taken when there is a known infection in the school. Parents are informed about any infectious illness in the school and given as much information as possible about signs and symptoms etc (this will also be promoted in weekly newsletters and signage on main school doors of entry). Additional hygiene procedures are put in place and additional cleaning is undertaken. This could also lead to the closure of the school whilst a deep clean is carried out.

Messages are always promoted through posters around the school, in assemblies and through Personal and Social Education lessons. **HAND WASHING IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF INFECTION CONTROL IN SCHOOLS.**

#### **Illness procedures:**

- WMS follows the Health Protection Agency guidelines on infection control in schools and other childcare settings and seek advice from them if necessary.
- WMS reports any notifiable illness to the Health Protection Agency and Ofsted within 14 days.
- When a child is unwell and unable to cope with the day, the parents will be contacted and asked to collect the child as soon as possible.
- If staff are concerned the child may be infectious, the child will be cared for in a separate area away from the other children until the parents arrive.
- If a child has a slight temperature but is otherwise well, a staff member will try to reduce the temperature by removing the top layer of clothing and sponging the child with tepid water. If the temperature persists but the child is still otherwise well, the staff member will inform the principal of the situation and will then ring the parent or emergency contact person. They will inform the parent of the child's condition, signs and symptoms and ask them whether they are able to collect the child.
- If the temperature does not go down the Principal or Head of School will assess the situation and seek medical advice if necessary.

• In line with our Medication Policy' the school will support with the administering of any medicines required.

### **Procedure for major accident and illness:**

**WMS staff are not permitted to take children to hospital in their own vehicles.**

Staff will wear protective clothing (disposable aprons and gloves) at all times  
The Principal or Head of School will assess the situation and decide whether a child needs to go to hospital by ambulance or whether the child can wait for the parent to come.

If a child needs to go straight to hospital then the Principal or Head of School will call or give a clear direction to a member of staff to call for an ambulance. Staff are aware that the full postal address of the setting is located on the notice board in the school office.

The Principal or Head of School will call the parent or instruct a member of staff to do so to make arrangements to meet at the hospital. The Principal or Head of School or nominated member of staff (perhaps the person the child feels very comfortable with such as class teacher) will travel with the child to the hospital ensuring any relevant paperwork, permission forms, care plans, known allergies, medication forms are taken too.

All accidents are recorded, and all employed staff are trained in the area of reporting.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Disposable vinyl or latex-free CE-marked gloves and disposable plastic aprons are worn when there is a risk of splashing or contamination with blood/body fluids, such as nappy changing.

### **Cleaning of the environment**

Cleaning throughout the school is frequent and thorough, including the cleaning of all materials, toys and equipment in class. Cleaning of the environment, cleaning equipment such as buckets are colour coded and cleaned and replaced as needed.

### **Cleaning of bloody and body fluid spillages**

All spillages of flood, faeces, saliva vomit. Nasal and eye discharges are cleaned up immediately (with staff wearing PPE). When spillages occur, they are cleaned using a product that combines both a detergent and a disinfectant to be effective against bacteria and viruses and suitable for the surfaces used on. Mops are never used for cleaning up blood and body fluid spillages - disposable paper towels are used, and

waste is disposed in bins along with nappies (suitable nappy bins).

### **Vulnerable Children**

Some medical conditions make children vulnerable to infections that would rarely be serious in most children, these include those being treated for leukaemia or other cancers, on high doses of steroids and with conditions that seriously reduce immunity. The school will have been made aware of such children.

These children are particularly vulnerable to chickenpox or measles. If exposed to either of these, the school will contact the parent/carer and inform them promptly and further medical advice sought. It may be advisable for these children to have additional immunisations.

### **Female staff - pregnancy**

If a pregnant woman develops a rash or is in direct contact with someone with a potentially infectious rash, this should be investigated according to PHE guidelines by a doctor. The greatest risk to pregnant women from such infections comes from their own child/children, rather than the workplace. Some specific risks are:

**Chickenpox:** can affect the pregnancy if a woman has not already had the infection. Report exposure to midwife and GP at any stage of exposure. The GP and antenatal carer will arrange a blood test to check for immunity. Shingles is caused by the same virus as chickenpox, so anyone who has not had chickenpox is potentially vulnerable to the infection if they have close contact with a case of shingles.

**German Measles (Rubella).** If a pregnant woman comes into contact with German Measles, she should inform her GP and antenatal carer immediately to ensure investigation. Measles during pregnancy can result in early delivery or even loss of the baby. If a pregnant woman is exposed she should immediately inform whoever is giving antenatal care to ensure investigation. This advice applies to pregnant students.

**Slapped Cheek disease (parvovirus B19)** can occasionally affect an unborn child. If exposed early in pregnancy (before 20 weeks), inform whoever is giving antenatal care as this must be investigated promptly. Measles during pregnancy can result in early delivery or even loss of the baby. If a pregnant woman is exposed she should immediately inform whoever is giving antenatal care to ensure investigation. This advice applies to pregnant students.

Date last reviewed: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025

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