



NESSie IN ED
CIC

**COVID-19
Working Policy**

Version Control:

Date approved by Board	Comments
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1. Rationale

The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic is developing rapidly. This document sets out the Company Policy on actions to be taken in response to the pandemic. It should be noted that any compelling guidance issued by the central Government or the Local Authority will take precedence over the actions set out in this policy.

COVID-19 is a viral infection similar to flu, spread from person to person by close contact. It typically causes fever and a dry cough, and in some cases may progress to viral pneumonia which cannot be treated by antibiotics. Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

Cough	Sore throat
Fever	Tiredness
Difficulty breathing	Loss of Taste

We recognise that some of the Children, Young People and Families in our care are among the most vulnerable members of society and so may need additional precautions.

We also recognise that for many of the Children, Young People and Families, the routine and structure is extremely important for their wellbeing, so we aim to maintain a normal routine as much as possible.

2. Objectives

- To minimise the risk to Children/Young People and Staff during the COVID-19 pandemic
- To carefully consider and implement ongoing Government guidance
- To maintain full awareness of the vulnerability of Children/Young People and to always act accordingly
- To maintain full awareness of the fact that for many of the Children/Young People, the therapeutic relationship and the structure of the sessions is extremely important for their wellbeing and aim to maintain as normal a session as much as possible.

3. Actions

Like the common cold and other flu viruses, COVID-19 is spread by:

- Infected people passing the virus to others through large droplets when coughing, sneezing, or even talking within a close distance
- 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
- Touching objects (e.g., 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 survive longer on hard surfaces than on soft or absorbent surfaces

Some of these are additional measures and some are a continuation of our already existing Health and Safety Policy.



We intend to limit the risk to Children, Young People and Staff by:

- The continuation of additional personal hygiene requirements for Staff, Children and Young People
- Regular handwashing
- Minimising contact between our hands and mouth/nose
- Covering nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing; using a tissue when possible, and disposing of the tissue promptly and carefully (bag it and bin it)
- Sanitising the room between sessions including cleaning hard surfaces (e.g. door handles, light-switches, tables, etc.) with sanitiser frequently
- Let in fresh air where possible when meeting indoors
- Instructing staff to remain at home if they have a temperature and to take a PCR test
- Phone or video conferencing where the Setting, Parents/Carers and Therapist feel it is appropriate, the safest option and will not compromise the quality of support
- If it is unsafe to offer face-to-face support or the Setting/ Parent/Carer decide that it is not appropriate the Therapist may delay the start of the therapy if they feel that the Child / Young Person will struggle to access the support through phone sessions or with video conferencing. Equally, if the Child/Young Person does not engage, the Therapist, Parent/Carer and Setting may opt to delay the work and try again at a future time
- When face-to-face sessions are to take place to support the Child/Young Person's/Families well-being, these will be organised only if it is in the best interests of all parties and following a risk assessment.

4. Illness of Member of Staff or Child / Young Person / Family

If a member of Staff or Child / Young Person / Family member becomes ill with a temperature the member of Staff or Child / Young Person / Family member will be sent home and encouraged to take a PCR test.

Nessie recognises that it is appropriate to limit the risk to all members of settings and their families.

4.1 Staff Illness

If a member of Staff shows symptoms and has a temperature, the member of Staff will be sent home and asked to take a PCR test. The company will inform parents and settings of staff who have a positive Lateral Flow or PCR result. The Staff member will report their test result to the Government website.

If a member of staff tests positive they should stay home for at least 5 days, or longer if still feeling unwell.

4.2 Child / Young Person / Family illness

Should a Child/Young Person / Family member in the setting have a temperature, the Therapist who has been in contact with that person will be contacted immediately by the setting.

5. Face-to-face sessions at an education setting or the home

General information exchange visits to school and home settings should be cancelled to minimise the exposure of the Children/Young People and rearranged to take place remotely via phone or video conferencing.

Visits to school or a home setting can take place provided:

- The visit is essential for the education, health or wellbeing of the Child/Young Person and the Therapist has considered remote therapy and ascertained that the Child / Young Person /



Family is unable to engage with the therapy using phone or video conferencing;

- The Therapist or Child/Young Person/Family does not have a temperature;
- The Therapist and setting follow the hand washing / sanitation requirements.
- Where the visit is to a vulnerable Child / Young Person / Family the Therapist will take a Lateral Flow Test on the day of the visit and report their results to the Government website.

5.1 Visiting Education Settings

Current Government advice is that blanket school/college closure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic is not appropriate at this time, unless re-advised by the relevant health authorities. The CEO in conjunction with the Board of Directors has the discretion to prevent a Therapist attending a Child/Young Person's session in person if in her judgement it is not safe to do so.

If the CEO has consented to a Therapist attending a setting to support a Child/Young Person in person, it is on the basis that:

- The Therapist, Setting and Parent/Carer have chosen to do so
- The Therapist has explained that it is necessary for the benefit of the wellbeing of the Child/Young Person and that it is not possible to engage the Child/Young Person with online or remote support
- The Therapist has discussed their decision with the setting and the setting has agreed to host the Therapist and is confident that it can be done safely
- The Therapist has discussed their decision with the Parent/Carer and the Parent/Carer has agreed with their decisions and is happy for the work to go ahead
- The Therapist is monitoring their own wellbeing and taking precautions to ensure the safety of themselves and the Child/Young Person that they are supporting

5.1.1 Responsibilities

The Head Teacher is to maintain and update all information relating to the development of the pandemic and the current advice from the Government, Local Authority and NHS and ensure the Therapist has access to:

- Hand washing facilities
- An appropriate space to work with the Child/Young Person where they can adhere to the advice from the Government, Local Authority and NHS
- Ensure they have up to date contact details for the Therapist and have read and are aware of this policy
- If working remotely, ensure that the Child/Young Person has a suitable quiet place with a phone line or laptop to enable them to access the support.

The Therapist will:

- Follow Government guidance on hygiene and social distancing
- Report a temperature immediately (to their Area Lead /the Settings that they have visited that week / CEO) and cancel the session to go home and take a PCR test
- Report a positive Lateral Flow or PCR test to their Manager and stay at home for at least 5 days, or longer if still feeling unwell
- Report any concerns regarding a child displaying relevant symptoms
- If working in a home or community setting, keep an up-to-date risk assessment. Contact the parent prior to the visit to check they and their family are well with no COVID symptoms
- The Therapist will ensure that all settings are aware of this policy and have their current contact details including their next of kin

Additional precautions are to be considered and/or implemented:



- The request that all settings provide the Therapist and the Child/Young Person with any art materials
- Avoid busy times for visits to reduce exposure
- Provide a suitable space for the therapy where the Therapist can maintain an appropriate distance from the Child / Young Person

5.2 Visiting Home Settings

If the CEO has consented to a Therapist to support a Child/Young Person/Family in person at the home it is on the basis that:

- The Therapist and Parent/Carer have chosen to do so
- The Therapist has explained that it is necessary for the benefit of the wellbeing of the Child / Young Person / Family and that it is not possible to engage the Child / Young Person / Family with online or remote support or will hinder the level of support provided
- The Therapist has discussed their decision with the Family and the Family has agreed to host the Therapist and is confident that it can be done safely, and the Parent/Carer has agreed with their decisions and is happy for the work to go ahead
- The Therapist is monitoring their own wellbeing and taking precautions to ensure the safety of themselves and the Child / Young Person that they are supporting
- The Therapist conducts a thorough risk assessment with regard to lone working and home visits
- Both the Therapist and Parent/Carer have read and agree to adhering to this COVID working policy

2.1 Responsibilities

The Parent/Carer will ensure the Therapist:

- Has access to cleaning products to wipe any surfaces the Therapist may come into contact with
- Has access to hand washing facilities
- Has an appropriate space to work with/observe the Child/Young Person where they can adhere to the advice from the Government, Local Authority and NHS
- Has given them up to date contact details for the Therapist and will contact them should any family member display any signs of illness
- Is aware that they have read and are aware of this policy by signing and returning a copy to the therapist.

The Therapist will:

- Report any concerns regarding a Family member displaying relevant symptoms
- Keep an up-to-date risk assessment. Contact the parent prior to the visit to check they and their family are well with no COVID symptoms and have them sign the risk assessment

6. Hygiene Precautions

Children / Young People / Families and Staff will be required to follow the Government guidance on regular hand washing as being the best method of avoiding transmission of the virus. Hand sanitiser and tissues will be available in the setting.

Face masks will not be worn within sessions unless explicitly guided by Government / Local Authority or NHS officials, as this may cause unnecessary distress to some of our more vulnerable children. However, face masks will be worn at the discretion of the therapist within the setting when walking to and from the session within the corridors of the setting and when working in a home setting.

7. Sick Pay



Sick pay will be allowed to Staff who have symptoms of COVID in line with the Government advice and this policy.

8. Exemptions

If a member of Staff is exempt from any actions outlined in this policy, they should discuss with their supervisor and a full risk assessment must be completed.

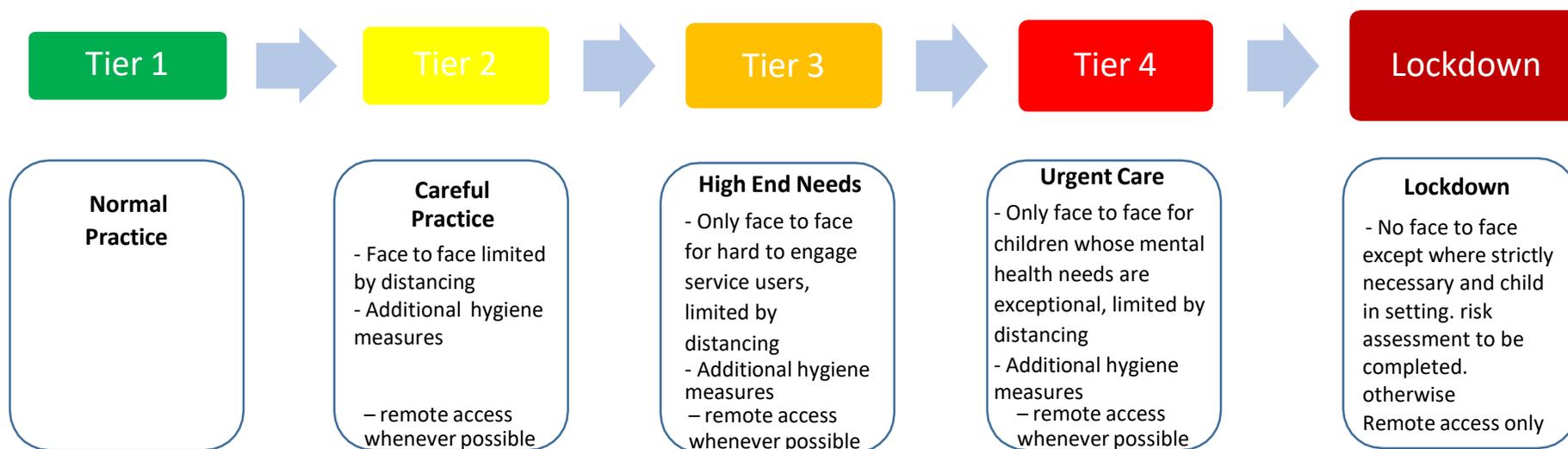
9. Policy Adherence

This policy must be adhered to. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Please note, we are still working with children and young people during this time and are planning carefully with settings to keep our visits safe and sensible. Please be assured that we will always follow official guidance from both Government and the NHS to minimise the spread of Covid-19 and protect the welfare of our staff and the children and young people that we support. For specific information please see our revised Covid Working Policy and we continue to keep a keen eye on the relevant documents such as those for implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings and working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19).

- Our therapists and outreach workers monitor their personal health for symptoms of Covid-19
- When delivering physical visits we will practice enhanced hygiene and maintain appropriate distancing from staff, families and pupils.

We will always follow official guidance from both Government and the NHS to minimise the spread of Covid-19 and protect the welfare of our staff and our clients.



NESSie therapists and outreach workers must discuss all CYP with their supervisors before deciding if it is appropriate to provide face-to-face. This is provided if the family and the setting are in agreement.



Helping children and young people thrive
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