



MANAGEMENT OF CORONA VIRUS POLICY (COVID 19)

This policy and procedure has been adopted by Grove Cottage through its Trustees Committee which remains responsible for its review.

Original signed version is kept at the Grove Cottage office.

Signed: Date: 24th August 2020

Name: Richard Smith

Treasurer and Health and Safety Trustee

Record of review of this policy and procedure: -

Reviewed: August 2020

Reviewed: February 2021

Reviewed August 2021

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

1.0 Scope

This policy is intended to introduce consistent measures in at Grove Cottage in line with the Government's Guidance. These are exceptional circumstances and we will always comply with the latest Government advice on Coronavirus.

This policy has been written following guidance from the Department for Education guidance; **Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school COVID-19: supporting adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults**

It covers the operational procedures necessary for Grove Cottage to protect its members, visitors and staff from the risks presented by coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

It includes:

- Information provision
- Travel requirements
- Infection control and prevention procedures
- Business continuity procedures

Grove Cottage has in the first instance carefully looked at the Charity and enabled all those who can and who should work from home to do so. Where this has not been possible, the business has undertaken a risk assessment to make the working environment as safe as it possible can to follow the Government's guidance on Corona Virus. A risk assessment has been undertaken prior to any activities resuming and has been shared with all staff.

The health and safety requirements of any Grove Cottage activity must also not be compromised at this time. If an activity cannot be undertaken safely it should not take place.

We are aware that emergency services are also under great pressure and may not be able to respond as quickly as usual.

Managers should remind the workforce at every opportunity of the Operating Procedures which are aimed at protecting them, their colleagues, their families, and the UK population.

This policy will be reviewed *annually* and revised as necessary in response to changes in legislation or guidance on methods of working. Employee's, parents and carers and members, suppliers, and other healthcare professionals are all required to cooperate with us in making this policy work.

2.0 What is Coronavirus?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines coronaviruses as a family of viruses that cause infectious illness ranging from very mild to very severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). COVID-19 is a new strain which originated in China at the end of 2019. It has since spread to other countries initiating a global public health emergency.

WHO is working hard with counties worldwide to control the outbreak and has labelled it a pandemic. This means that the disease has become established in countries around the world, including the UK, and is spreading from person-to-person.

2.1 How is Coronavirus Spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus.

It is understood that the virus is highly infectious and moves from person to person in droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. In addition, the virus can survive for up to 72 hours out of the body on surfaces. The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow). People can catch COVID-19 if they breathe in the droplets or touch infected surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

2.2 What Are the Symptoms?

The most common symptoms are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some people may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhoea, loss of taste and smell. Symptoms begin gradually and are usually mild. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. A small percentage can become seriously ill and develop difficulty breathing. This is particularly dangerous for people with weakened immune systems, for older people, and for those with long-term conditions such as diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

3.0 Information

Grove Cottage will keep up to date with the latest public health and government guidance about the risk of coronavirus in the UK. We will follow guidance from the Department of Education and UK Government. The Board of Trustees and Management will closely follow government guidelines and maintain links with Ofsted, Hertfordshire County Council and The Royal Mencap Society and will be responsible for circulating essential information to staff, members and parents/carers.

Grove Cottage will do its best to ensure that parents/carers are kept informed about its measures to keep members and employees safe. Grove Cottage will encourage all staff to have a Covid -19 vaccination and regular lateral flow testing.

4.0 Closure

In response to the pandemic and to help suppress the transmission of the virus on 17th March 2020, Grove Cottage announced that we would be closing our services. (The government announced that schools across the UK should close on Friday 20th March). We then reopened services between September 2020 to December 2020. Decisions to reopen individual clubs will be made by the Board of Trustees based on government guidance and looking at the individual risk factors of each club. Our Staff and members safety will remain our upmost priority and clubs will only remain open if the Board of Trustees are satisfied that services can be delivered safely.

5.0 Suspected Cases of Infection

Staff and members should stay at home if they are unwell. This is essential to avoid spreading infection to others.

Any suspected cases of COVID-19 infection which occur in Grove Cottage will be managed according to Department for Education guidance.

Employees or members who become unwell while on site with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature will be sent home. An unwell member /employee should be isolated while waiting to be picked up. They should be advised not to visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If clinical advice is required, they (or the Manager, parent or guardian) should go online to NHS 111 (or call 111 if they do not have internet access). In an emergency, 999 should be called if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk.

6.0 Infection Control and Prevention Procedures

Grove Cottage believes that general adherence to high standards of infection prevention and control is the best way to prevent the person-to-person spread of pathogens such as coronavirus and maximise the safety of staff, members and visitors. To achieve this Grove Cottage has introduced several new processes and procedures and conducted thorough risk assessments. Staff should be especially compliant with these, especially those relating to effective hand hygiene, sanitisation and environmental cleaning.

Public health messages state that people should:

- cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their sleeve (not their hands) when they cough or sneeze
 - put used tissues in the bin immediately
- wash their hands with soap and water regularly for 20 seconds and use hand sanitiser gel (at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water are not available

- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

Staff should comply fully with hand sanitisation policies and procedures. Managers will ensure that policies are supported by the provision of appropriate resources such as hand sanitiser gels.

Staff should take all reasonable measures to ensure that members comply, and young children will be supervised to ensure that they are handwashing appropriately. Environmental cleaning will be increased while the pandemic continues, and risk of transmission persists. Regular cleaning of frequently touched hard surfaces with a suitable disinfectant and cleanser will be carried out. A daily deep clean will take place six times a week.

Staff working in Grove Cottage during should comply fully with government recommendations for social distancing. This involves keeping at least 1 meter apart wherever possible and reducing the need for face-to-face contact wherever possible, e.g. meetings.

Parents/carers will be required to complete a parent agreement form which will outline our Systems of Control that we have put in place for each club. Members will not be able to attend without this form.

Grove Cottage will endeavour to put in as many safety measures as is reasonably practical, however, parents and carers will be advised that due to the vulnerability of our members attendance at all sessions will be at their own risk.

7.0 Travel Advice

COVID-19 originated in China and initially spread through infected people travelling to other countries.

Travelling is now much reduced due to countries around the world closing their borders.

Latest travel advice can be found on the GOV.UK web platform at www.gov.uk

Grove Cottage requires staff to comply with any advice given and to inform their line manager wherever the guidance may apply to them. People are being advised to stay indoors and avoid contact with other people (self-quarantine) for 14 days if they have travelled recently to the UK from specified countries.

8.0 Meetings

Virtual meetings if possible, in the first instance. Attendees should be two metres apart from each other and will be required to sign a risk assessment. Rooms should be well ventilated / windows opened to allow fresh air circulation.

9.0 Business Continuity Procedures and Pandemic Recovery Planning

Grove Cottage recognises the need to have a separate pandemic contingency plan and procedure. The effects of the coronavirus pandemic are likely to last many months.

The following procedure sets out key contingency measures to be introduced:

- the situation will be kept under review by the Board of Trustees and Managers who will ensure the safety of staff and members as their primary concern
- information will be provided to staff via e-mail, unnecessary meetings will be cancelled, and greater use made of digital/virtual communication in order to reduce people contacts
- staff whose role enables them to work from home will be supported to do so
- staff who are required to self-isolate themselves at home if they or a member of their family has the virus will be fully supported by Grove Cottage – they should inform their Line Manager at the earliest opportunity
- staffing will be reviewed daily and contingency plans put in place to ensure that Grove Cottage can remain open wherever possible
- if it becomes impossible for Grove Cottage to maintain even a reduced service due to staffing constraints, we will inform parents and carers at the earliest opportunity
- Staff and parents will be asked to understand that there is a level of risk working with young children and adults with SEN. If all infection control, social distancing, PPE are implemented as outlined in departmental risk assessments, the risk of infection of COVID-19 is extremely low. In our Early Years and Saturday club settings our children will not be encouraged to socially distance. Their care and developmental needs are our priority. Staff

will be encouraged to respond to the physical and emotional needs of our children as appropriate.

- Managers will be responsible for ensuring that staff understand Grove Cottages pandemic plans. Staff should familiarise themselves with the plans and should speak to their line manager if they have any questions or concerns.
- To report a case of Covid-19 or any concerns about Grove Cottage processes during the pandemic speak to the Manger as soon as possible, alternatively please contact our Health and Safety Trustee, Richard Smith by emailing richard@mencapgrovecottage.org or telephoning 07786 171161.
- Grove Cottage will respond to any reported case of infection and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process. We will contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice and notify the relevant bodies. eg Ofsted.
- The Trustees will be responsible for making decisions about reopening or closing services in response to any change in circumstances with government guidance.

