

# Greenwich House Independent School, Kindergarten and Creche

## Infectious Disease Control Policy

Greenwich House Independent School including the Kindergarten and Creche (“Greenwich House”) follows the UK Health Security Agency’s Health protection in education and childcare settings) (“the Guidance”). It has informed and is referred to throughout this policy. A copy of this guidance is attached and the internet link for the same is as follows:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>

The Guidance contains the full list of notifiable diseases and includes the following:-

- E.coli 0157 or E coli STEC infection
- food poisoning
- hepatitis
- measles, mumps, rubella (rubella is also called German measles)
- meningococcal meningitis or septicemia
- scarlet fever (if an outbreak or co-circulating chicken pox)
- tuberculosis (TB)
- typhoid
- whooping cough (also called pertussis)

Greenwich House also follows HSE recommended guidelines for infectious disease control and any exclusion periods. It is acknowledged that these apply to staff and visitors as well as pupils. The UK Health Security Agency ’s Exclusion table can be accessed on the link below:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/exclusion-table>

The Guidance has been referred to and quoted extensively below in this policy.

This policy should be read with Greenwich House’s Health and Safety Policy and Illness and Exclusion Policy.

So far as the preparation of food, Greenwich House follows the Food Standards Agency’s “Safer food, better business for caterers guidance”, the link for which is:-  
<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-for-caterers>

Greenwich House acknowledges the Guidance and that “Childhood infections are common and for most children and young people the risk of severe disease is low. Infections can be acquired at home or in the community and brought into education or childcare settings or acquired and spread within the setting.”

Greenwich House also recognises that (as per the Guidance):-

“There are 10 elements of Standard Infection Prevention and Control Precautions which when carried out effectively help reduce the risk of transmission of infections:

1. Environment or placement of someone who develops an infection
2. Hand hygiene
3. Respiratory and cough hygiene
4. Personal protective equipment
5. Safe management of the environment
6. Safe management of equipment
7. Safe management of linen or soft furnishings
8. Safe management of blood and body fluids
9. Safe disposal of waste (including sharps)
10. Occupational safety or managing prevention of exposure to infection (including needlestick or sharps injuries, and bites)”

Greenwich House recognises the most important ways in which infection can spread as set out in the Guidance ie:

- Airbornespread eg. By coughing, sneezing, singing and talking
- Direct contact spread including Gastrointestinal spread (eg. From contact with contaminated food or water or by not washing hands after going to the toilet) and Blood borne virus spread (eg. By contact with infected blood or body fluids)

The parents/carers/emergency contacts of unwell children should be telephoned and the child taken home. This is in everybody’s best interests and certainly the kindest type of action for the child.

Once a child is better, they should return unless they pose a risk of infection to others. They should, in such cases, not return until the risk of infection has passed.

Any advice regarding the correct course of action in individual cases should be referred to a child's parents or carers or their own GP.

If cases of infection are suspected the Head Teacher should be informed who will follow the guidance and if required contact the UKHSA local health protection team. The relevant section of the guidance is as follows:

“Education and childcare settings may consider seeking specialist advice from the relevant UKHSA HPT if they are concerned and have seen:

a higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or student absences due to acute respiratory infection or diarrhoea and vomiting

evidence of severe disease due to an infection, for example if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital

more than one infection circulating in the same group of students and staff for example chicken pox and scarlet fever

Education and childcare settings are also asked to contact their UKHSA HPT as soon as possible to report any outbreak or serious or unusual illness for example:

E.coli 0157 or E coli STEC infection

food poisoning

hepatitis

measles, mumps, rubella (rubella is also called German measles)

meningococcal meningitis or septicemia

scarlet fever (if an outbreak or co-circulating chicken pox)

tuberculosis (TB)

typhoid

whooping cough (also called pertussis)”

East Midlands Health Protection Team

Seaton House City Link

Nottingham

NG2 4LA

Phone: 0344 2254 524 option 1

The Guidance says that:-

“An outbreak or incident may be defined in epidemiological terms as:

- an incident in which 2 or more people experiencing a similar illness are linked in time or place
- a greater than expected rate of infection compared with the usual background rate for the place and time where the outbreak has occurred

For example:

- 2 or more cases of diarrhoea or vomiting which are in the same classroom, shared communal areas or taking part in the same activities
- higher than usual number of people diagnosed with scabies
- higher than usual number of people with respiratory symptoms

These definitions should not be taken as a threshold for reporting or action. The guidance should be followed as above for when to seek help or report infections in your setting.”

The items mentioned in Chapter 3 of the Guidance and how they apply to Greenwich House’s setting are set out below:-

### **Environment or placement of someone who develops an infection**

The Guidance states that : “Prompt exclusion of children, young people and staff who are unwell with an infectious disease is essential to preventing the spread of infection in education and childhood settings.”

Greenwich House acknowledges the Guidance in that “Children with mild, respiratory symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education or childcare setting.” However, the Illness and Exclusion Policy should be referred to in all cases and procedures are in place for contacting parents and/or carers when children become unwell at Greenwich House.

As per the Illness and Exclusion Policy, “Children who are unwell and showing the symptoms of an infectious disease or a diagnostic result should be advised to stay away from their education or childcare setting for the minimum period recommended.”

“Staff or students who are close contacts of people who are unwell with an infectious disease or an infection do not usually need to be excluded from the setting.” However, the health protection team (HPT) will advise if there are specific precautions to be taken in response to managing a case or outbreak. The school will

take advice from the HPT in this regard and additional measures will be communicated to parents and carers, staff and other parties as required. For some infections, individuals may be advised to remain away from a setting for a longer period of time. This will be advised by the HPT.

## **Hand hygiene**

Greenwich House recognizes that “Hand washing is one of the most important ways of controlling the spread of infections, especially those that cause diarrhoea and/or vomiting and respiratory infections.”

Greenwich House ensures that staff and students have access to liquid soap, warm water and paper towels.

When washing hands staff and pupils should:

- Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least 15 seconds ensuring that all surfaces of the hands including wrists, palms, back of hands and thumbs and under fingernails are washed thoroughly.
- Rinse the hands under warm running water and dry the hands with a clean paper towel. This towel should then be discarded in the foot pedal waste bins provided for this purpose.

All staff and pupils should be advised and are actively encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating or handling food, after playtime and after touching animals.

All cuts and abrasions are required to be covered with a waterproof dressing.

Alcohol hand gel can be used if appropriate hand washing facilities are not available but should not replace washing hands particularly if hands are visibly soiled or where there are cases of gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and vomiting) in the setting. Alcohol hand gel is not effective against norovirus.

If a food handler has diarrhoea or vomiting, the Health Protection Team’s advice or that of a statutory health organisation should be sought urgently and the food handler must absent themselves from the premises.

## **Respiratory and cough hygiene**

“Coughs and sneezes spread diseases. Covering the nose and mouth during sneezing and coughing can reduce the spread of infections.

Spitting should be discouraged.

Anyone with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection, regardless of the cause, should follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, specifically:

- cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing, and dispose of used tissue in non-healthcare risk waste bin and perform hand hygiene
- cough or sneeze into the inner elbow (upper sleeve) if no tissues are available, rather than into the hand
- keep contaminated hands away from the mucous membranes of the eyes and nose
- carry out hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects and materials”

### **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**

Disposable gloves and plastic aprons are available and must be used when treating injuries, changing nappies etc. Goggles should be worn if there is a risk of splashing to the face.

Ensure that the gloves are removed correctly and disposed of appropriately.

Anti-bacterial soap is to be used to wash hands after treating injuries, contact with any body fluids or after changing nappies.

Kitchen staff are to wear protective clothing including headgear in compliance with current food hygiene regulations.

### **Aerosol generating procedures (AGP)**

“It is vital that all children, young people and students, including those with complex or additional health needs, are supported to continue their education and care in their education or children’s social care setting, where it is safe to do so.

An AGP is a medical procedure that can result in the release of airborne particles (aerosols) from the respiratory tract.

The full list is available on GOV.UK.

Standard PPE recommendations for AGPs would include eye and face protection, apron and gloves to protect against the splashing or spraying of blood and bodily fluids.

If someone is performing an AGP on an individual who is suspected of being infectious with a respiratory agent (for example RSV or COVID-19) additional airborne personal protective equipment (PPE) should be used, including an FFP3 respirator or equivalent.”

### **Safe management of the environment and cleaning**

Greenwich House recognizes that the cleaning of its environment, including toys and equipment, “reduces the risk of infection” and that it “is especially important to clean surfaces that people touch a lot.”

Greenwich House has cleaning schedules in place which are monitored and follows best practice as set out in the Guidance including the use of colour coded equipment for use in different areas.

The Head Teacher and Kindergarten and Creche Manager (using in some cases feedback from other members of staff) will monitor cleaning standards and discuss any issues with cleaning staff, or contractors employed by Greenwich House

All areas or surfaces in contact with food, dirt or bodily fluids must be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

In the event of an outbreak of infection at Greenwich House, it will follow guidance from the HPT team which may recommend enhanced or more frequent cleaning, to help reduce transmission.

### **Sanitary facilities**

Facilities including wash basins with warm running water along with mild liquid soap available on wall mounted dispensers with disposable cartridges are available together with wall mounted disposable paper towel dispenses next to basins and nearby foot-operated wastepaper bin.

Toilet paper is available in each cubicle.

Suitable sanitary disposal facilities are provided.

### **Keep occupied spaces well ventilated**

Greenwich House recognizes that: “Letting fresh air into indoor spaces can help remove air that contains virus particles and prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections.”

Spaces at Greenwich House are well ventilated to help reduce the amount of respiratory germs and the following steps in the Guidance are followed to provide good ventilation:

- partially opening windows and doors to let fresh air in
- opening higher level windows to reduce draughts
- opening windows for 10 minutes an hour or longer can help increase ventilation – where possible this can happen when the room is empty in between lessons, for example
- You should always balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature.

### **Safe management of linen and soft furnishings**

- Laundry

There is a designated area for laundry facilities separate from food preparation areas. It has appropriate hand washing facilities and has a washing machine with a sluice or pre-wash cycle

Staff involved with laundry services should ensure that:

- manual sluicing of clothing is not carried out as there is a risk of inhaling fine contaminated aerosol droplets; soiled articles of clothing should be rinsed through in the washing machine pre-wash cycle, prior to washing
  - gloves and aprons should be worn when handling soiled linen or clothing
  - hands should be thoroughly washed after removing the gloves and aprons
  - that the laundry machines are operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, that faults to the laundry machines are promptly reported as per Greenwich House's Health and Safety Policy, and, that the lint is removed from the dryer after each use and such removal logged in the log provided.
- Dealing with contaminated clothing

Clothing may become contaminated with blood or bodily fluids. If this occurs, clothing should be removed as soon as possible and placed in a plastic bag. It should be sent home with the child with advice for the parent on how to launder the contaminated clothing.

Any contaminated clothing should be washed separately in a washing machine, using a pre-wash cycle, on the hottest temperature that the clothes will tolerate.

- Managing nappies

There is a designated changing area for children in nappies which is away from play facilities and areas where food and/or drink is prepared or consumed. It has appropriate hand washing facilities available. Staff must wash and dry their hands after every nappy change, before handling another child or leaving the nappy changing room.

Soiled nappies should be securely sealed and deposited of in the yellow hazardous waste bags and bin provided outside the school.

Clean children's skin with a disposable wipe. Flannels should not be used.. Label nappy creams and lotions with the child's name and do not share with others.

Wipe changing mats with soapy water or a mild detergent wipe after each use. Mats should be cleaned thoroughly with hot soapy water if visibly soiled and at the end of each day. Check weekly for tears and discard if the cover is damaged.

Potties should be cleaned separately away using the spray and wipes supplied – sinks on the setting should not be used for cleaning potties. Staff must wear disposable gloves to flush contents down the toilet. Hands should be washed using soap and warm water and dried after removing disposable gloves.

- Children with continence aids

Pupils who use continence aids (like continence pads, catheters) should be encouraged to be as independent as possible. The principles of basic hygiene should be applied by both pupils and staff involved in the management of these aids. Continence pads should be changed in a designated area. Disposable powder-free non-sterile latex gloves and a disposable plastic apron should also be worn. Gloves and aprons should be changed after every pupil. Hands should be washed as appropriate.

### **Safe management of blood and bodily fluids**

- Cleaning up of blood and body fluid spills

Spills of body fluids i.e. blood, faeces, nasal and eye discharges, saliva and vomit must be cleaned up immediately wearing PPE.

Staff should wear disposable gloves and aprons (provided). Avoid getting any of the fluid that you are cleaning up in your eyes, nose, mouth or in any open sores you may have.

Clean and disinfect any surface on which bodily fluids have been spilled. Use as per the manufacturer's instructions. Never use mops for cleaning up blood and body fluid spillages – disposable paper towels should be used and disposed of immediately after use.

Discard fluid contaminated material in a plastic bag along with the disposable gloves. The bag must be securely sealed and disposed of in the yellow hazardous waste bags and bin provided outside the school. A spillage kit is available.

- Managing cuts, bites, nose bleeds and bodily fluid spills

There are a number of trained first aiders in the setting aware of the requirements to manage cuts and nose bleeds.

Standard precautions should be taken when dealing with any cuts/abrasions that involve a break in the skin or body fluid spills. This is because it will not always be known if an individual has an infection or not.

Standard Infection Prevention and Control (SIPC) precautions should be used for everyone to reduce the risk of unknown (and known) disease transmission. These include:

- wearing gloves when in contact with any accident or injury (washing grazes, dressing wounds, cleaning up blood after an incident) and wearing a disposable plastic apron if possible
- carefully cleaning the wound under running water if possible or using a disposable container with water and wipes; carefully dab dry
- covering all exposed cuts and grazes with waterproof plasters
- keep the dressing clean by changing it as often as is necessary
- managing all spillages of blood or body fluids
- If someone suffers a bite, scratch or puncture injury that may have introduced someone else's blood or experiences a splash of blood to the eye, area of broken skin or mouth, rinse well with water and seek medical advice.

### **Safe management of waste (including sharps)**

In accordance with its waste management duty of care, Greenwich House ensures that all waste produced is dealt with by a licensed waste management company.

Any used PPE should be placed in a refuse bag and disposed of as normal domestic waste. PPE should not be put in a recycling bin or dropped as litter.

Clinical waste and nappy waste is disposed of in accordance with requirements and collected by a licensed waste management company.

Occupational safety and managing prevention of exposure to infection (including needlestick or sharps injuries, and bites)

Whilst unlikely on the settings, children, young people or staff may injure themselves with discarded used hypodermic needles which they have found. If this happens then dispose of the needle safely to avoid the same thing happening to someone else.

This can be done by either contacting your local authority or school nurse.

If someone pricks or scratches themselves with a used hypodermic needle or has a bite which breaks the skin:

- wash the wound thoroughly with soap and warm running water
- cover the wound with a waterproof dressing
- record it in the accident book and complete the accident form
- seek immediate medical attention or advice from your local accident and emergency department or occupational health provider

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In the case of bites:-

If a bite does not break the skin:

1. Clean with soap and water.
2. No further action is needed [save to make a record of the matter in accordance with Greenwich House's policies].

### **Groups at higher risk from infection**

- Vulnerable Children

For most children and young people, the risk from common infections is low and few will become seriously unwell.

Some children and young people have impaired immune defence mechanisms in their bodies either as a result of a medical condition or due to treatment they are receiving (known as immunosuppressed). People who are immunosuppressed may have a reduced ability to fight infections and other diseases.

Most children and young people in this group will be under the care of a hospital specialist and will have received advice on the risks to them and when to seek medical advice.

If a child who may be at higher risk due to their immune system is thought to have been exposed to an infection such as chickenpox or measles in their setting, the parents and carers should be informed immediately so that they can seek further medical advice from their GP or specialist, as appropriate.

The 'Essential Information On Pupils' document which is filled in upon every child prior to entry into the school, kindergarten or crèche should enable parents and carers to inform us of such special needs with regard to their child/children. Parents and carers are encouraged to update Greenwich House on any changes to the information including medical information in these documents.

- Pregnant staff in school

Women who are pregnant should ensure they are up to date with the recommended vaccinations, including COVID-19 immunisation. Pregnant women should consult their midwife or GP immediately if they come into contact with positive cases of measles, mumps, rubella, slapped cheek syndrome and chickenpox as contact with these illnesses can affect the pregnancy and/or development of the unborn baby.

They should also avoid contact with animal litter trays due to the risk of toxoplasmosis.

## **Toilets**

Keep toilets clean at all times. The school cleaners have a responsibility of ensuring that the toilets are clean at the beginning of the day. Staff may have to supplement this cleaning procedure on occasions and check the state of cleanliness regularly.

One to one carers have responsibility of ensuring basic hygiene procedures are adhered to for children in their care.

## **Food handling staff**

Food handlers and catering staff may present a particular risk to the health of their pupils and staff if they become infected (or have close contact) with diseases that can be transmitted to others via the medium of food or drink.

Greenwich House will follow the exclusion guidelines contained in the guidance in relation to food handling staff but will also seek advice from the local Environmental Health Officer before confirming that a food handler is clear of infection to return to work. As per the Guidance, "...Staff and students can return 48 hours after diarrhoea and vomiting have stopped."

Greenwich House will notify the local Environment Health Department immediately if they are informed that a food handler is suffering from or is carrying an infection likely to cause food poisoning. As they are legally obliged to do, food handlers should notify the Head Teacher or her nominated representative immediately if they are suffering from an illness that is likely to be passed on through food or if they have certain medical conditions that could lead to this. They should immediately seek to exclude themselves from food handling duties and areas if they develop such symptoms at work. Such illnesses will include

- typhoid fever
- paratyphoid fever
- other salmonella infections
- dysentery
- shigellosis
- diarrhoea (cause of which has not been established)
- infective jaundice
- staphylococcal infections likely to cause food poisoning like impetigo, septic skin lesions, exposed infected wounds, boils
- E. coli VTEC infection

As set out above, for the preparation of food, Greenwich House follows the Food Standards Agency's "Safer food, better business for caterers guidance", the link for which is:-

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-for-caterers>

### **Animals in School**

It is the policy of Greenwich House School not to have any resident animal/ pets in school.

Animals may carry infectious diseases, especially gastroenteritis.

Stray animals found on site should immediately be reported to a supervising member of staff.

For the safety / wellbeing of the children, pets belonging to parents should always be kept on a lead and must not enter the premises.

Young children should never play with animals unsupervised and children must wash their hands after contact with animals.

In the event a visit by a visitor with a pet or animal being proposed, Greenwich House will follow the Guidance and undertake the appropriate risk assessment before agreeing the visit.

### **Bees, Wasps and Insects**

Should a wasp or bee's nest be suspected do not approach it. Report it to your supervisor who will arrange for it to be dealt with.

On occasions, wasp or bees nests' found in the garden or school grounds may necessitate the evacuation of the gardens/ grounds for a period of time.

The school has access to pest control personnel who will deal with the problem and advise on any safety issues.

Wasp stings can trigger allergic reactions and reference should be made to Greenwich Houses' Food Allergy and Acute Allergic Reaction Policy

## **The Sun**

Although not in any way an infectious disease, the rays of the sun can soon damage not only the skin of young children and babies, but also the skin of carers - its dangers therefore must not be ignored.

The school provides various kinds of shade including trees. New staff should ask more experienced staff to advise where these are at various times of day.

Sun hats and cream: Parents/carers are asked to provide a suitable sun hat for their children during periods of warmer weather. In Kindergarten and Creche we provide sunscreen onsite which we use with parental consent, alternatively parents/carers provide their own sunscreen. We request that cream is applied prior to every child arriving at school in warm weather and we ensure it is reapplied as necessary throughout the day. In school, parents/carers are requested to provide sunscreen for their child and all children are reminded about staying safe in the sun.

## **Trips**

The Head Teacher or her designated representative should be consulted before arranging any trip.

For visits to **farms and zoos** the Guidance says:-

There are a number of diseases that can be passed on to pupils and staff from infected farm animals such as Shiga Toxin-producing Escherichia Coli (STEC) (including E. coli 0157), campylobacter, salmonella and cryptosporidium. These can cause serious illness, particularly in young children.

In order to protect their own health and that of their unborn child, those who are, or may be, pregnant should be advised to avoid close contact with livestock animals that are giving birth.

People can become infected through direct contact with animals, contact with an environment containing animal faeces or consuming contaminated food or drink.

Even a small number of bacteria can cause infection, so it is essential to follow hygiene recommendations such as:

washing hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after contact with animals. Younger children should be supervised for hand washing reminding children not to eat, drink or put fingers in their mouths except when in designated eating areas and after they have washed and dried their hands

thoroughly not using hand sanitiser as a substitute for handwashing with soap and water

Further information relating to visiting farms is available on the Access to Farms website.

- Before you go

Emphasise the importance of hand hygiene during and after the visit and check that the farm has easily accessible hand washing facilities. Educate pupils not to eat, drink or put fingers in their mouths except when in designated eating areas and after they have washed their hands.

Check that the farm is well managed. Drinking taps should be clearly marked and sited in a clean area away from the animals.

- During the visit

If children are allowed to handle or feed the animals, ask them not to put their faces against the animals or put their hands in their own mouths afterwards. Check that children wash and dry their hands thoroughly after contact with animals and particularly before eating and drinking. Younger children should be supervised. Food should only be taken in the designated picnic areas. Children should be reminded not to eat anything which may have fallen on the ground. They should not eat or drink unpasteurised products like milk, cheese or ice-cream, or taste animal feed stuff such as silage and concentrates.

Manure or slurry presents a particular risk of infection and children should be warned against touching it. If they do, ensure hands are promptly washed and dried.

- At the end of the visit

Ask all the children to wash and dry their hands before leaving. Ensure that they are as free as possible from faecal material<sup>2</sup>

For **water based activities** the Guidance says:-

“There is a risk of infection associated with any water-based activity on rivers, canals and freshwater docks, and also with the collection of specimens from ditches, streams and ponds.”

Water-based activities should only be undertaken at education authority residential centres.

Exercises such as ‘capsize drill’ and ‘rolling’ should ideally be practised in swimming pools and never in stagnant or slow-moving natural bodies of water.

Children and staff should cover all cuts, scratches and abrasions with a waterproof dressing prior to the activity.

Do not eat or drink immediately after water-based activities until after hands have been washed.

The use of appropriate footwear is recommended to reduce the risk of cuts to the feet.

Pupils and staff should always wash or shower after canoeing or rowing.

Anyone taking part in water based activities who becomes ill within 3 to 4 weeks of the activity is advised to seek medical advice.

It should be made clear to parents and carers that if their child becomes ill following participation in outdoor or water-based activities, the treating doctor should be made aware of the child's participation in these activities.

Babies or children shouldn't swim in public swimming pools for 2 weeks after diarrhoea and vomiting has stopped-

Greenwich House acknowledges that school trips may involve low risk activities and this is borne in mind when undertaking pre-trip risk assessments.

### **Managing specific infectious diseases**

The Guidance contains additional information on managing specific infectious diseases and should be referred to when appropriate.

### **Immunisations**

Greenwich House will seek to be supportive of parents to immunise their children and when appropriate its staff. Parents should refer to the NHS Choices NHS Vaccination Schedule at the following link:-

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/>

### **Additional Support**

Greenwich House will provide its staff and when appropriate its pupil and parents with guidance and advice relating to the control of infectious diseases.

Various speakers will be invited into the School, Kindergarten and Crèche to pass on any new procedures or advice as may, from time to time, become available e.g. medical practitioners, school nurses, or health inspector etc.

*Signed on behalf of the setting by:*

.....Mrs. A. Brindle..... Head Teacher

Date: September 2022