Minimising Contact Between Groups of Children

What is a bubble?

A way of grouping children at our nurseries, keeping children and staff safe during the time of coronavirus by organising them in to 'Bubbles'. During lockdown children and adults were in a bubble in their home, within their home bubble they didn't need to socially distance from the other members of their household. The concept of a nursery bubble is an extension of the home bubble. In a nursery bubble a group of children and staff are grouped together every time they are in the nursery and their interaction and contact with other bubbles is minimised as much as possible.

The recommendation to have a bubbles within a nursery ceases to be effective from the 20th July however the recommendation is still to minimise contact between groups of children

Why split children into groups/have a bubble?

- A nursery with for example, 45 children, could be split into 3 bubbles reducing the number of children and staff members each child and staff member comes into contact with

- Effectively manage instances of COVID-19 in the nursery

- Reassure parents as to the control measures you are using

- Reassure staff that their health & wellbeing is being planned for

A group of children/bubble MUST:

- Adhere to the guidance on child to adult ratio as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework and the subsequent disapplication guidance for the period of coronavirus

Ways of minimising contact between groups:

- Consider
    - o How any supernumerary, ancillary or support staff are deployed
    - o How shifts are planned. Longer and fewer shifts, where practical, reduces commutes and changing over of staff during the day

- Keep children in their groups for as long as possible before new groups are formed, consider when children might have been due to transition between age phased rooms and consider timing of transitions. This could in-

clude children transitioning earlier or later than usual, vertical grouping of children to groups moving onto new rooms together

- Ensure groups are documented so if there is a case of Covid-19 you are able to readily identify which children and staff have potentially been exposed

- When planning your groups consider the following:

  - Sized according to your own internal risk assessment

  - Attendance patterns

  - Room/environment size (floor space requirements as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework)

  - Staff competency and/or qualifications

  - The child's learning and development requirements and their well-being including mobility and SEND

Group Tips for Environment and Routine:

- Ensure resources are appropriately cleaned before being passed from one group to the next

- Split resources between groups where possible

- Do not share resources between groups which can not be easily cleaned e.g. malleable materials

- Where groups are not able to be separated by physical separation in separate rooms consider furniture placements to support separation considering:

  - Reducing pinch-points where bubbles could mix

  - Influencing the flow and/or focused activity stations for children

  - Deployment of staff to subtly direct 'traffic' and non-bubble clusters

- Utilise the outside space as much as possible, coordinating its use to avoid unexpected mixing of groups

- Consider staggered mealtimes to allow for greater spacing between children eating