



Footsteps

COVID-19 Policy

This policy applies to all employees, parents, children, volunteers, students, and anyone else working on behalf of Footsteps. Footsteps intends to use this policy to provide precautionary measures to minimise the transition risks of COVID-19 in the setting during the pandemic.

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SECTION A –Policy Details

1. Aim of policy

This policy defines and assists the operating arrangements in place within the nursery, that assures compliance to the Government, and leading body requirements concerning the outbreak of a pandemic such as COVID-19.

We have appointed a COVID-19 Liaison Officer who will be responsible along with management to ensure that this policy is being adhered to. They will track and monitor compliance daily through our risk assessment.

2. Policy Agreement/Code of Conduct

A policy agreement will have to be signed and returned to the school by parents who opt for on-site learning. The essence of this form is to reiterate the importance of abiding by all safety measures as stated by the Lagos State Government and to let parents know that by sending their child(ren) to school they have a part to play along with the school in keeping the children safe.

3. Method

Footsteps School will always consider the health and safety of our children, and our staff our priority. We are committed to providing a safe environment for our children and staff during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We are continuously monitoring the latest developments in and around our community. As more information becomes available, we are adapting and making changes to our safety measures and protocols. We are also following guidelines from the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC), Lagos State Government (LSG), and other Governmental Organizations.

In line with safety measures, we are implementing the following protocols and policies to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

The main areas we will be considering are:

- Minimizing contact with unwell individuals
- Maintaining personal and respiratory hygiene
- Ensuring cleanliness of the environment (especially frequently touched surfaces)
- Minimizing general contact and mixing (creating bubbles and limiting numbers)
- The use of Protective and Personal Equipment (PPE)

SECTION B –COVID-19

1. General information

A corona virus is a type of virus. As a group, corona viruses are common across the world. COVID-19 is a new strain of corona virus first identified in Wuhan City, China in December 2019.

The incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 and 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed corona virus, it is unlikely that they have been infected.

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- Cough
- Difficulty in breathing
- Fever (37.8 degrees and above)
- Loss of sense of smell/taste

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer, and chronic lung disease. There is no evidence that children are more affected than other age groups – very few cases have been reported in children.

2. How COVID-19 is spread

From what we know about other corona viruses, the spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 meters) with an infected person. The risk likely increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes (termed respiratory secretions) containing the virus are most likely to be the most important means of transmission.

These are 2 routes by which people could become infected:

- Secretions can be directly transferred into the mouths or noses of people who are nearby (within 2 meters) or could be inhaled into the lungs
- It is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface or object that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching a doorknob or shaking hands then touching their face).

3. Preventing the spread of infection

While vaccines are still being rolled out, the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus.

There are general principles to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Washing your hands often (20 seconds or longer) – with soap and water or use alcohol sanitizer if hand washing facilities are not available. This is particularly important after taking public transport.
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in the bin.
- People who feel unwell should stay at home and should not attend work or any education or childcare setting (see below on dealing with suspected or confirmed cases at FOOTSTEPS)
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with unwell people
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Pupils, students, staff and visitors should wash their hands
 - Before leaving home
 - On arrival at nursery
 - After using the toilet
 - After every nappy change
 - Before and after entering any classroom
 - After outdoor play/walks
 - Whenever entering the building from any access point
 - Before food preparation
 - Before eating any food including snacks

- Before leaving nursery
- Wearing appropriate PPE if supporting a child or colleague who has suspected COVID-19

4. Wellness Check for Staff and Children

School has implemented screening procedures for our staff and children. This includes asking all individuals about any symptoms (primarily fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or other signs of illness within the last 72 hours) – that they, or someone in their homes, might have. All individuals will be asked if they have had any exposure to another individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases. We will document and inform everyone of all known incidents of possible exposure to COVID-19.

5. Dealing with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 at FOOTSTEPS

What to do if a child or adult becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19

- Should a child or staff member fall ill with any COVID related symptoms, they will be transferred to the isolation room.
 - The child's parent must then be called and requested to pick up his/her child immediately
 - The staff member should leave the nursery immediately and return home
- Whilst we wait for collection, the member of staff attending to the child should dress in PPE, gloves, mask, and apron, they should stay with the child but ensure they are 2 meters away
- Windows should be opened for ventilation
- The child should then use their mask or face shield and ensure that tissues are on hand should they require to cough or sneeze. These should be disposed of in a nappy sack, sealed then placed in the bin by the sickbed.
- The bed sheets will then be removed and the area sanitized after they have left
- Any person who comes down with COVID related symptoms that persist should contact NCDC
- Whilst they wait for advice they should self isolate in their home

Suspected Cases

If anyone has been in contact with a suspected case in the nursery, no restrictions or special control measures are required while laboratory test results for COVID-19 are awaited. There is no need to close the setting or send other learners or staff home.

Once the results arrive, those who test negative for COVID-19 will be advised individually about the return to the nursery.

Confirmed Cases

The nursery will need to contact NCDC to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them, and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.

NCDC will also be in contact with the patient directly to advise on isolation and identify other contacts and will be in touch with any contacts of the patient to provide them with appropriate advice.

Extensive cleaning and sanitization will then be underway throughout the whole school.

The room or group that has been affected will be required to close. The staff and children within this group will be required to self isolate for 14 days along with the other members of their household. In most cases, closure of the setting will be unnecessary unless advised by NCDC.

As a school, we must safeguard all children and must inform all parents should any person in the class test positive for COVID-19.

If a parent or a member of the same household tests positive for COVID-19 they will be required to provide proof of clearance from a doctor (hospital approved by the government) before bringing the child to school, the same protocols apply to school staff.

What to do if children or staff comes into contact with a confirmed case that was symptomatic

The definition of contact includes:

- Any child or staff member in close face to face or touching contact including those undertaking small group work (within 2 meters of the case for more than 15 minutes)
- Talking with or being coughed on for any length of time while the individual is symptomatic
- Anyone who has cleaned up any bodily fluids of the individual
- Close friendship groups
- Any child or staff member living in the same household as a confirmed case

Contacts are not considered cases and if they are well, they are very unlikely to have spread the infection to others, however:

- They will be asked to self isolate at home for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the home isolation guidance
- They will be actively followed up by NCDC
- If they develop any symptoms within their 14 day observation period they should call NCDC for assessment
- If they become unwell with cough, fever, or shortness of breath they will be tested for COVID-19
- If they are unwell at any time within their 14 day observation period and they test positive for COVID-19 they will become a confirmed case and will be treated for the infection

Family and friends who have not had close contact (as listed above) with the original confirmed case do not need to take precautions or make any changes to their own activities such as attending childcare or educational settings or work unless they become unwell. If they become unwell, they should call NCDC and explain their symptoms and discuss any known contact with the case to consider if they need further assessment.

If a confirmed case occurs in the nursery, NCDC will provide advice and will work with the management team. Outside those that are defined as close contacts, the rest of the nursery does not need to take any precautions or make any changes to their activities unless they become unwell.

If they become unwell, they will be assessed as a suspected case depending on their symptoms. This advice applies to staff and children in the rest of the group. The decision as to whether children or staff fall into this contact group or the close contact group will be made between NCDC and the nursery management. Advice should be given as follows:

- If they become unwell with a cough, fever, or shortness of breath they will be asked to self-isolate and should seek medical advice
- If they are unwell at any time within the 14 days of contact and they are tested and are positive for COVID-19 they will become a confirmed case and will be treated as such

What to do if children or staff travel

Any child or staff member traveling out of the country is required to self-isolate for 7 days upon return and cannot attend nursery during this time. They will then be required to have a COVID-19 test and only on results of a negative test are they allowed to resume school after day 8 of their return.

6. Getting tested

Lagos State government has registered private laboratories to supplement existing testing facilities. Those who need to be tested and display symptoms, or have come into contact with a confirmed case, or have been exposed to a location where confirmed cases have been reported can receive free testing through the public laboratories.

If any person in the household shows symptoms for COVID-19 then all the family and their house staff should be tested immediately. They then cannot attend nursery whilst they await the results and the entire household must isolate.

The nursery must be informed of the results as soon as possible to enable appropriate action to be put in place if required.

7. Illness

- Any child who is sick must stay off school to recover
- Parents must inform the school if any member of the household has fallen ill with COVID-19 symptoms, if so then the child should be kept at home
- Any child who has taken any form of paracetamol or ibuprofen will not be allowed into preschool for 72 hours after symptoms have ended.
- Any child who displays signs of a cold will not be allowed in preschool until 48 hours after symptoms have ended.
- Footsteps will not be able to accommodate children with underlying medical conditions for On site learning. This applies to children who are asthmatic, have allergies and other breathing conditions or are on prescriptions such as EpiPen, Inhalers and Nebulizers. These children should be enrolled for VIRTUAL classes only.
- Footsteps will not be liable should children with underlying medical conditions be sent to school for ON SITE Learning.
- **Parents compliance with our sickness policy must be strictly adhered to.**

SECTION C – Cleaning Policy

1. Cleaning routines

Daily cleaning routines will largely remain the same, as high standards of good hygiene are currently in place, all of which included any improvements are listed below;

- handles (inside and out)
- Light switches
- Hand railings
- Children tables and chairs
- Disposable cleaning cloths will be used throughout the nursery, for cleaning hard surfaces
- Each room and bathroom will have its own assigned mop, each mop will be disinfected at the end of every day
- Toys and resources will remain in their classes and will be disinfected at the end of each day
- Should a child put any item in their mouth, this will be removed from the classroom and disinfected at the end of each day before it is returned to the classroom
- Rugs and foam mats will be cleaned at the end of each day

- Soft furnishings including pillows are temporarily removed
- Any toys that are difficult to clean will be temporarily removed
- The learning area will be assigned to a class per day, at the end of each day the full area including all the resources will be disinfected ready for the next class the following day
- The children will have separate play times, the play area will be sanitized after use by all classes
- Each child should bring a bed sheet to school which will be kept in his/her locker, and washed and replenished after use.
- The sheets for the sickbed will be replenished after every child and washed

2. Hand washing routines / Arrival routine

All Children and Staff will engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Arrival at the facility and after breaks
- Before and after preparing food or drinks
- Before and after eating or handling food or feeding children
- Before and after diapering
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After playing outdoors
- After handling garbage
- After every learning activity

To ensure the staff, children, parents, and visitors are washing their hands in line with the current guidelines the following will be put in place:

- On arrival to nursery all adults and children to wash their hands with the newly installed sinks by the gatehouse before entering the building
- Once the children are inside, they will put on their indoor shoes using the seats provided, then a member of staff will take them to wash their hands once again before entering the classrooms
- The employees are required to wash their own hands BEFORE assisting a child in washing their hands
- During the day the children and staff will wash their hands after going to the toilet or having their nappy changed, before meals or snacks, and when arriving from the playground
- Employees should wash their hands before putting on any PPE
- Staff should ensure the FOOTSTEPS hand washing song is sung twice when washing their hands and assisting the children to ensure their hands are washed for 20 seconds
- Disposable hand drying facilities will be available in all the bathrooms
- Staff must wash their hands or wear gloves when assisting children with food

3. Cleaning of bodily fluids

Cleaning of bodily fluids including vomit and urine remains the same. All bodily fluids must be cleaned using disposable cleaning supplies. The member of staff must secure the area, the teacher should ensure the children are removed while the cleaner wears gloves and cleans the area using disposable kitchen roll and antibacterial spray, all items must then be double-bagged in a disposable nappy sack which should then be double tied and placed in the bin directly outside.

4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- All staff are required to change their clothes before entering the classroom after commuting to work

- All staff are required to either wear a face mask or a face shield and their sleeves should be rolled to their elbow to allow for good hand washing practices
- When nappy changing, staff are required to use 1 set of disposable gloves per nappy change
- The Lagos State Office of Education Quality Assurance (OEQA) requires that children come to school with face masks and face shields. However, the World Health Organization and UNICEF advise that children aged 5 years and under should not be required to wear a mask. This is based on the safety and overall interest of the child and the capacity to appropriately use a mask with minimal assistance.
- At Footsteps all children are required to come to school with Face masks and Face shields and are required to have their face shields on. The face mask or face shield must be labelled.

5. Guidance on cleaning after a case of COVID-19

Corona virus symptoms are similar to a flu-like illness and include cough, fever, or shortness of breath. Once symptomatic, all surfaces that the suspected case has come into contact with must be cleaned using disposable cloths and household detergents. All areas will be sanitized and cleaned immediately after a suspected case.

6. Disposing of waste if an adult or child falls ill

All waste that has been in contact with the individual including used tissues and PPE should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied. The plastic bag should then be disposed of directly into the bin outside.

SECTION D – Social Distancing & Further Measures

1. Termly Enrolment Decision

We recognise that some of our parents may prefer to continue with virtual learning even after on-site school commences. Where this choice is made, such families will need to continue with that format of learning for the entire school term. This is because families will not be able to move back and forth between the two programs, as this will make effective staffing and scheduling of work impossible to manage.

2. School Hours:

School Hours shall be from 8 am to 1 pm.

3. After School Activities:

There will be no Afterschool Activities

4. Working with parents

There will be various lines of communication from the nursery to parents; this will be through text messages, phone calls, emails, and possible WhatsApp groups. Parents should check their messages from the school and attend to them accordingly. They must also ensure that the school has up-to-date telephone numbers and emails of both parents/guardians at all times.

Parents are advised that they will not be allowed in the school building during this time. Any request to enter the school building will need to be approved by Management and hygiene practices set out by the management adhered to.

Parents are required to sign a new parent contact agreeing to the terms set out in this policy, a copy of the contract is provided along with this policy as a supporting document.

5. Managing drop off and pick up

Each age group will be given a drop off and pick-up time; Parents should ensure that the child is picked up during this time to ensure there is no overcrowding. Should you be running late then please ensure you always call to inform the school.

Drop off and Pick up times will be communicated to you in due course.

Guidance for pick up and drop off

- All parents and caregivers must ensure they are wearing a mask at all times while on the school property
- Any adult or child entering the school will have their temperature checked using a non-contact thermometer, should their temperature be higher than 37.5 degrees Celsius then they won't be allowed entry
- Only one adult per child is permitted to drop off or pick up the child at any time. This person must also be living in the same household as the child. **Any siblings must stay in the car.**
- The person picking up or dropping off the child are not permitted inside the building until further notice unless approval has been granted by the management and strict hygiene practices are in place
- Parents and staff will meet at front of the school by the entryway
- Parents should wash their own hands and assist in washing the hands of their children before drop-off, before coming for pick up, and when they get home
- Hand sanitizers will be out of the reach of children, but near all entry doors, classrooms, and other high traffic areas.
- There will be an assigned member of staff at the registration point, the member of staff will sign the child in and out in the presence of the parent/guardian and another member of staff will be assigned to collect and return the child. **Please note that at no time will the parent be required to come into physical contact with the registration book.**
- The assigned team member will ensure any messages will be passed onto the class teacher or management
- Staff will go over a brief discussion with each child's parents regarding the health of the child as well as the child's immediate family.
- School Nurse will make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), or fatigue
- Parent's visits should be as brief as possible, and parents are discouraged to enter the facility.
- Parents are required to ensure any caregiver who is picking up their child abides by the policy and procedures of the school

6. Other measures

- Children are not allowed to bring in any toys or belongings from home
- Children's personal belongings i.e. change of clothes, nappies, wipes, etc will remain in school and replenished as required.
- If a child requires a comforter of any sort, then an extra must be provided to the school and kept in the child's locker
- Parents are to ensure all children's belongings are labelled before coming to the school

7. Management of classes and groups

Children will be organised into small groups and given designated rooms within the setting, this will also involve the outdoor area. Wherever possible these small groups or 'bubbles' will not mix during the day as best as possible. This is to minimise contact with others. Staff may exercise their judgment during the day for the high standards of safety for all children.

Children in small groups will have the same staff team caring for them, wherever possible, to limit the number of people coming into contact with each other.

Stories to help with understanding their new environment will be held daily, to begin with. An opportunity for the children to discuss their feelings and emotions and answer any questions will be given to the children throughout the day.

8. Outdoor playtime/learning

The children will be spending more time participating in outdoor learning. This will be held in areas shaded from the sun. However, to reduce contact between the teacher and the child, we do ask parents to put sunscreen and insect repellent (if the child is sensitive) on their children before they come into school. Parents should also provide a sun hat which will be kept inside the child's locker.

- Outdoor play activity will be staggered to reduce the number of children in the same area.
- More playtime will be given to children, weather permitting.
- More opportunities will be offered for individual play and solo activities.
- Frequently used surfaces will be cleaned as frequently as possible.

9. Napping

Napping beds will be spaced and arranged with the head of each bed alternately, in opposite directions, to lessen the possible spread of illness between children from coughing or sneezing. All pads will be wiped down and disinfected after each use.

10. Lunch routine

- Each child will remain in their class during snack and lunchtime
- **Staff will also not be required to mix with other teachers and will remain in their classroom also to eat their lunch**
- Each child will be required to bring their lunch in a lunch bag with their name on it
- Parents should kindly ensure that items sent to school require little or no assistance from teachers to open
- We will not be warming children's food until further notice, therefore, children are expected to have their meals packed in a thermal flask
- The fridge will not be used to store children's food until further notice, parents are required to ensure that the children's food can stay fresh in their lunch bags
- **Communication books will not be sent home until further notice.** Parents will be informed electronically of their eating habits for the day through **SeeSaw**.
- Children are required to provide their plastic cutlery and eating utensils till further notice
- All items must be labelled before coming to the school

11. Personal care

Children should be supported in age-appropriate ways to understand the steps they need to take to keep themselves safe including regular hand washing, coughing into an elbow, using a tissue.

Parents are also asked to ensure children are dressed in clothes that they can easily remove themselves to limit the assistance from teachers during toilet breaks. The initial toilet training

should be done at home during the school break to reduce the contact staff has with children.

12. Settling in NEW children

The parents will be invited to a scheduled zoom meeting with the management to discuss their child's care and needs and answer any questions ahead of them starting.

The parents will then be invited to attend with their child for one hour for a settling in period a week before school resumes. The purpose of this day is for the child to become acquainted with the school and meet their new teacher in the security of the presence of their parents. This will be a time where the teacher will interact and play with your child to start creating a bond. The parent and teacher are required to socially distance themselves during this session.

On the first proper day of school, the parents and child will be allocated a time to arrive and have a proper handover. This will be when all the other children have arrived and no other parents are around the building.

Parents are welcome to reduce the child's hours to 9:30 am to 12:30 pm in the first week of school.

Please remember that children will cry, but parents should not worry as the staff are trained on how to settle children. On average it takes a child approximately 2 weeks to settle (sometimes more) into a new environment.

Please see below some tips on how to help your child settle quickly.

*** Talk about nursery positively:**

Chat about nursery as much as you can at home; tell your toddler that they will be safe, that the children and staff all like them, and that they will have great fun while they are there.

*** Stay calm:**

Even if you're tense on the inside at morning drop-off, try your best to appear relaxed, your toddler can pick up on how you're feeling, if you stay calm, they should follow suit.

*** Independence:**

Have your child walk into school on their own, carrying his/her bag, as this will give your child a sense of independence.

*** Tell your toddler that you'll be back:**

You know you'll pick them up at home time, but that may not be obvious to them, explain this in a way that they can understand, such as "I'll be back after lunchtime".

*** Keep goodbyes brief:**

When you arrive at nursery, make the drop-off loving but quick. Give your toddler a kiss and a hug, then make your exit.

13. Visitors

- Attendance to the setting is restricted to only children and staff as far as it is practically possible.
- Where essential visits are required these should be made outside of the usual preschool operational hours, where possible.
- As much as possible parents and carers should not enter the building.

- Any site visits for potential admissions will be organised by appointment only after the children have closed
- All visitors to the school will be required to supply their contact details including, name, address, telephone number, and email for contact tracing purposes

SECTION E – Staff Requirements

1. General information

- Staff should only attend work if they are symptom-free
- Staff will have their temperatures also checked on entry to the nursery, should their temperature be above 37.5 degrees then they will not be permitted into the building
- Staffing will be reduced to the bare minimum on what the ratios require
- Cleaners should stick to their allocated space and should not enter the classrooms they have not been assigned to
- Staff hours, days they work and length of day may change to meet childcare demands and considerations within this policy
- Staff will be informed of measures in place and sign an agreement to state they have read and understood the nursery policies and procedures
- Staff are required to follow the same safety and hygiene measures set out for the children and parents
- The staff member who supported the unwell child does not need to go home unless they are developing symptoms themselves.
- Social distancing must be maintained during breaks.
- Staff members should avoid physical contact with each other including handshakes, hugs, etc.
- Staff are advised to remove their work clothes before they enter their home and take a shower immediately to remove any germs they may have picked up.
- Any member of staff traveling outside of the country will be required to self isolate for 7 days on their return
- Staff are requested NOT to attend any gatherings of more than 20 people. Should they have to attend gatherings then this must be done by following safety protocol of wearing a mask, consistently washing/sanitizing their hands, and maintaining social distancing

2. Training

- Where possible, meetings and training sessions will be conducted through virtual conferencing.
- All staff members must receive appropriate instructions and training in infection control and the standard operating procedure and risk assessments within which they will be operating.

SECTION F – Guidance

As COVID-19 has only been recently identified, guidelines to support professionals is regularly being updated or published. Parents will be kept informed on any changes or amendments to this policy.

DO NOT COPY