



November Update!

Welcome to our November Newsletter. We hope you have all managed to get out and enjoy some of the amazing Autumn colours.

Once again, we thank our families for ensuring that we are maintaining social distancing expectations. This is an important part of our nursery routine and procedures to ensure that we are keeping our children, staff, and families safe.

Thank you for the many supportive comments and messages we have received from our families acknowledging the hard work and dedication from the whole nursery team during what has been and is continuing to be a very difficult and trying time for all. We are trying to keep nursery life on track and hope you enjoyed the Halloween activities and pumpkin competition. Thank you to everyone who took part and congratulations to the winners!

Christmas

This year Christmas will be a little different however we will still make it fabulous and have the best time. On the week of 14th December, we will be holding mini Christmas parties, having virtual Santa and lots of Christmas activities. We please ask that all Christmas gift money is returned to the nursery by Monday 16th November.

Staffing Update

Huge congratulations to Melissa and Sophie in gaining their Level 3 qualification in Early Learning and Childcare. Their hard work, perseverance and dedication has finally paid off.

Daisy room were delighted to welcome Shannon from the Bluebell room and look forward to her support with the Curriculum for Excellence. The Bluebell room were happy that Katherine has joined the team following her successful student placement earlier this year and attaining her Level 3 qualification.

Absence

A little reminder.....If your child is going to be absent, please inform the nursery either through the Family app or by telephone (0131 665 4136) before 9am. If possible, please indicate when you expect him/her to return.

Sickness/Illness

NHS Lothian advises anyone experiencing one or more COVID-19 symptoms to stay at home, self-isolate with their households, and arrange testing for COVID-19 via the NHS Inform website or by phoning 0800 028 2816.

These symptoms are:

- A new, continuous cough and/or
- A fever and/or
- A loss or change in smell/taste

If a child develops other types of symptoms but DOES NOT have any of the above COVID-19 symptoms, the standard nursery illness policy should be followed. This would also apply to anyone who has one of the symptoms of COVID-19 but tested negative.

What this means is:

- Children who have mild symptoms, such as a blocked/runny nose or a mild sore throat, but not presenting with any of the above COVID-19 symptoms, can still go to nursery if they are well enough to do so. However, they should stay at home if they are too ill to be at nursery or if they are taking Calpol or Ibuprofen for any health reason. The Health Protection Team's document 'Recommended Periods of Absence for Communicable Diseases' provides detailed information for nurseries and will be followed. This is important as other infections, with different symptoms to COVID-19, can be passed around the nursery.
- If a child tests negative for COVID-19 they can return to nursery if they are well enough (as per standard nursery illness policy) and have not had a fever for 48 hours.

If your child has been prescribed anti-biotics for any medical reason, they are required to remain absent for **48** hours.

Weather Appropriate Clothing

All clothing provided for weather appropriate play MUST be clearly labelled. Please ensure your child has the following items to allow them to access all play experiences, scarfs, gloves, hats, wellies, and waterproof suits.

These items must remain in the nursery where possible.

Items from Home

We would like to remind parents to only bring to nursery your child's appropriate outdoor clothing and water bottles and that all items brought in are clearly labelled.

Except for the baby room we cannot allow toys or comforters from home. Any items that are brought to nursery from home must be taken home by parents and parents will be asked to do so if necessary. Most comforters for our children are already kept within the nursery and are not transferred between home and nursery. This is important as it minimises the risk to our children, staff, and families. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

Term 2 Funding Paperwork

The paperwork for Term 2 is currently being reviewed by East Lothian Council to make the process a little easier for everyone, the council, nursery and families. As soon as we receive the updated paperwork, we will issue this along with some guidance notes for our term 2 funded children to complete.

Changes to the Guidance:

The publication of the COVID-19 Scotland's Strategic Framework came into effect on Monday 2 November. This describes the levels of interventions that may be applied across all sectors in response to local data on COVID-19. The document is clear that keeping schools and regulated childcare open is a key priority. As part of the Strategic Framework the First Minister announced a review of all sector guidance. On the 29 October and again updated on 10 November, in a statement to the Scottish Parliament the First Minister announced which level of protection would apply to each local authority area as set out in the Strategic Framework. You can find out which level each local authority has been placed in and the relevant public health restrictions which apply for each specific level here –

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/>

At the daily media briefing on the 30 October the Deputy First Minister announced that the updated suite of childcare guidance had been published, alongside the expert advice used to inform that guidance.

What does all of this mean for the childcare sector?

As set out in the Strategic Framework and as stated by the Deputy First Minister, keeping childcare and schools open is a priority across all levels. The guidance has been updated to reflect the Strategic Framework. The updated guidance came into effect Monday 2 November.

What's changed?

The Childcare guidance updates have been aligned with the strategic framework levels. Key updates to the childcare guidance include:

- o The guidance aligns with the strategic framework and the approach that should be taken by the sector at each level
- o Face coverings should now be worn by all adults when physical distancing is not possible, (but not when interacting with children in ELC). This includes for parents at pick up and drop off times.
- o Specific guidance on singing in ELC settings; children sing in the course of activities and play, and should not be discouraged from doing so.
- o Advice on the number of children in a group setting has been brought in line with primary class size numbers increasing to a maximum of 33 children. This does not change staffing requirements or ratios.
- o The approaches to shielding, support for specific groups, test and protect and outbreak management have been updated to align with the most up to date public health advice and approaches across education.
- o Guidance on ventilation and temperature control.
- o Peripatetic staffing and movement of staff between settings should be reviewed and risk assessed and used only where absolutely necessary.

It is important that providers (nurseries) continue to follow the public health measures as set out in the guidance which place child and staff safety and wellbeing at their heart.

These are:

- o enhanced hygiene and cleaning practice
- o limiting children's contacts
- o maximising the use of outdoor spaces
- o physical distancing between adults in the setting including parents at dropoff and pick-up times
- o face coverings worn by adults when not interacting with children and physical distancing cannot be maintained
- o active engagement with Test and Protect Schools guidance

Room Moves

We are required to follow the COVID 19: Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in ELC settings issued by the Scottish Government. The guidance provides all early learning and childcare settings with the core measures that we must follow in order to operate the service.

One of these measures is operating with a reduced capacity.

Up until the 30th October when the guidance was revised, we were unable to plan any room movements due to the reduction in our places and with being at our room capacities (based on restricted numbers).

The guidance has been updated allowing a slight increase in our restricted numbers. This change has allowed us to look at the eligible children and identify a small group whose move from Buttercup to Daisy and from Daisy to Bluebell can now be accommodated in line with capacity restrictions, age & stage of development and attendance patterns.

We recognise that whilst this news will be happily received by the families of those children who have been accessing funded hours since August but were unable to move to Bluebell, there will be some families disappointed that their child will not be moving yet.

To minimise any risk to the children, staff, and playrooms, we have scheduled the room moves to take place immediately on return from the Christmas break in January (this falls into term 2).

Just as we did prior to COVID-19 we will be having discussions with the children about room moves, the new staff they will meet and what sort of things to expect. We will also be talking to the children who are not moving as this can be upsetting and unsettling for them. We are having little chats about what sort of changes they will experience while remaining in the playroom by now becoming the child leaders of the room. We have found in the past the children not moving respond very well to this. Staff will continue with both of these discussions alongside showing the children videos of the playrooms and staff to help them familiarise themselves before moving.

We will do everything we can to make this as positive as we can for all children involved.

It is unfortunate that we are unable to move all children as we would normally however, under the current circumstances, restrictions and guidance that we must adhere to, we are doing everything we can to make these changes whilst continuing to keep everyone safe. Those children continuing in Daisy and who will start to access their funded hours in January will move onto the Curriculum for Excellence and follow the same level of learning activities as those in Bluebell. Shannon has moved from the Bluebell room to the Daisy room to support her colleagues and the children with this.

The next natural break we have is the Easter holidays. At the moment we don't have any further plans to move children unless there is a further change to the guidance or if children leave or change booking patterns which will open up room capacity. We will keep this under review and if we are in a position to plan another room move, this will be done in line with the guidance to ensure all risks from COVID-19 are reduced and we will keep those children and families informed.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

23rd December - Christmas Break (term ends)

We hope you find this interesting and please do speak with a member of staff if you would like further details or if you would like to comment or make suggestions for future topics.