



# Play in Ltd

## In Depth Cleaning Policy

This policy has been updated to include guidance from Public Health England on the cleaning measures required to control the risks of infection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Summary

All workplaces require some degree of cleaning, to maintain hygiene levels as well as for aesthetic reasons. Clean, safe and hygienic premises and equipment are essential for preventing disease and should be seen by all staff as the minimum required standards.

This topic covers the main requirements and good practice of a cleaning operation. It includes guidance from Public Health England on the cleaning measures required to control the risks of infection during the coronavirus pandemic.

### Employers' Duties

- Employers have a general duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees under the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 (HSWA).
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require employers to make certain provisions to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees with regard to the cleanliness of the workplace environment:
  - employers are required to keep furniture, furnishings and all surfaces in the workplace in a clean condition
  - cleaning intervals depend on the use of the area but spillages must be cleared up immediately, especially where they pose a slipping hazard
  - waste must be removed regularly and be stored in suitable containers outside the building, protected from vermin and arson attacks.
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) (as amended), require employers to prevent employees being exposed to substances hazardous to health, or if prevention is not reasonably practicable, to adequately control exposure.

### Employees' Duties

- Employees have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by their work under the HSWA.
- Employees have a duty to co-operate with the employer's arrangements for health and safety.
- Employees engaged in cleaning or maintenance of the workplace and of building services tasks have a duty to ensure that such tasks are carried out safely and to the required standards.

- Employees working in dirty environments, or who may be exposed to microbial, biological or chemical contamination, have a duty to protect their own health and safety.

## In Practice

### Early Years Requirements

The EYFS framework states that providers:

- must keep premises and equipment clean, and be aware of and comply with requirements of health and safety legislation (including hygiene requirements)
- must ensure there are suitable hygienic changing facilities for changing any children who are in nappies
- should ensure that an adequate supply of clean bedding, towels, spare clothes and any other necessary items is always available.

Standard 2 states that children and young people must be cared for in a safe, hygienic, smoke-free, pleasant and stimulating environment with surroundings in a good state of decoration and repair. Play equipment must be clean and well maintained and staff should take appropriate measures to control the spread of infection.

### Ofsted inspections

Any Ofsted inspection in England will include a tour of the provision premises and this will include a judgment about the cleanliness of the environment and hygiene standards.

Inspectors will expect a provision to meet the standards specified in the *EYFS Statutory Framework*. Poor cleaning standards or inappropriate cleaning techniques are likely to be noted in Ofsted inspection reports, as well as general comments on the appearance of the provision.

Clean, safe, appropriately decorated and well maintained buildings and equipment will not only make a good impression on inspectors but should also be seen by managers and staff as the minimum required standards for their service users.

### Reasons for Cleaning

Cleaning is necessary for the following reasons.

- Poor standards of cleanliness and hygiene are likely to be reflected in poor work performance and will prompt complaints.
- The maintenance of a good appearance creates a favourable impression for staff and visitors.
- Controlling dirt and clearing up spillages helps prevent the growth of harmful bacteria the spread of infection – especially important in clinical areas, toilets, kitchens and food service areas.
- Rubbish and liquids spilled on floors can result in safety hazards, such as slippery floor surfaces.

- Failure to clean fabrics, fixtures and fittings properly leads to a build up of grease and dirt and will progressively lead to their deterioration.
- Cleaning of certain items in particular ways or at specified intervals may be required if manufacturers' or suppliers' warranties are not to be invalidated.
- Keeping a building well maintained and clean will discourage pests.

Cleaning is closely related to buildings maintenance and to the behaviour of users of a building. Keeping a building clean and well maintained is likely to encourage occupants and users to take greater care of their surroundings.

The overall standard of cleanliness, and the general presentation of the buildings and site, will be factors in parents choosing one early years service in preference to another.

## COVID-19 Cleaning

The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic that spread around the world in the early months of 2020 has caused major illness and mortality as well considerable disruption and social upheaval. Schools and early years services were closed in March to reduce spread of the virus with a limited number remaining open to support vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. Schools and early years facilities that remain open must comply with all relevant health and safety guidance. As closed services reopen they will also need to follow the guidance.

## Infection risk from surfaces

The COVID-19 virus moves from person-to-person via droplets from the nose or mouth of an infected person. These are spread when they cough or exhale and the droplets are inhaled by others. However, the virus can also survive out of the body for up to 72 hours on surfaces contaminated by body fluids, such as the droplets from a cough or sputum. A healthy person can then become infected by touching the contaminated surfaces and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

The risk of infection depends on many factors, including the:

- type of surface contaminated
- amount of virus shed from the infected individual
- time the individual spent in a place, and the time since they were last there.

The infection risk from the COVID-19 virus following contamination of the environment is known to decrease over time. Evidence suggests that impermeable hard surfaces remain contaminated longer but that, in most circumstances, the risk is likely to be reduced significantly after 72 hours.

## Action required

Levels of environmental cleaning in a school or early years premises should be increased during the pandemic in order to prevent the potential transmission of the virus by touch.

Since the early stages of the pandemic schools and nurseries have been required to comply with [COVID-19: Guidance for Educational Settings](#). The guidance is published by the Department for Education and has been regularly updated. It states that schools and early years services should pay

special attention to what are described as regularly touched objects and surfaces. The guidance recommends that these should be cleaned and disinfected more often than usual using standard cleaning products.

Detailed guidance in cases where someone with suspected COVID-19 infection has been present is contained in [COVID-19: Cleaning in Non-healthcare Settings](#). The guidance is published by Public Health England (PHE) and applies to all non-healthcare premises. It describes the cleaning measures required to minimise the risk of COVID-19 infection, including the appropriate disposal of materials, the cleaning of equipment and hard surfaces, and the personal protective equipment (PPE) that should be worn.

Recommendations for PPE include the following:

- the minimum PPE to be worn for cleaning an area which may be contaminated by a person with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection is disposable gloves and an apron
- additional protection for the face and eyes may be necessary where a risk assessment suggests that higher levels of contamination are present or where there is a danger of splashing
- a surgical face mask should be used to protect cleaners against other people's potentially infectious respiratory droplets when within 2 metres of them
- a supply of masks should be provided along with suitable training in how to use them safely
- hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 seconds after all PPE has been removed – alcohol based hand rub can be used on visually clean hands where soap and water are not immediately available.

PHE states that public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time, such as corridors, but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids can be cleaned thoroughly as normal.

All surfaces that the symptomatic person has come into contact with must be cleaned and disinfected, including:

- objects visibly contaminated with body fluids
- all potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as bathrooms, door handles, etc.

Staff should take care to avoid creating splashes and spray when cleaning. Disposable cloths or paper roll and disposable mop heads should be used. PHE recommends that cleaners use either of the following options:

- a combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1000 parts per million available chlorine
- a household detergent followed by disinfection (1000 ppm av.cl.).

If an alternative disinfectant is used PHE state that it should be checked that it is effective against enveloped viruses. When items cannot be cleaned using detergents or laundered, for example, upholstered furniture and mattresses, steam cleaning should be used. Items that are heavily contaminated with body fluids and cannot be cleaned by washing should be disposed of.

## COVID-19 waste

The PHE guidance states that waste from possible COVID-19 cases and cleaning of areas where possible cases have been (including disposable cloths and tissues) should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. It should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied again.

Double bagged waste should be put aside from communal waste in a suitable and secure place for at least 72 hours. It can then safely be placed in normal waste streams. Waste can be placed in normal waste streams earlier if the person involved has been tested for COVID-19 and found to be negative. If they are tested and found to be positive the waste must be kept aside for 72 hours.

If storage for at least 72 hours is not appropriate, PHE advise that those responsible for the waste should arrange for collection as a Category B infectious waste, either by a local waste collection authority or by a specialist clinical waste contractor.

## Information for staff and parents

Staff and parents should be kept updated about the COVID-19 pandemic and about any measures taken to minimise the risk of infection. This should include the need to keep any school or early years premises clean.

PHE publishes a poster which can be printed and displayed. It can be obtained [here](#).

Further information on COVID-19 can be found in the [Ill or Injured Children](#) topic.

## Internal versus External Provision

Early years managers and providers must ensure that there is sufficient resource to clean the premises effectively throughout the year. This should take into account possible sickness absence and holidays.

Cleaning staff can be employed directly or a contracted provider can be used.

Maintained nurseries and early years services in maintained schools may have access to cleaning services provided under contract by their local authority. Such contracts should be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they represent good value for money.

## Direct employment

In the case of direct employment, the employing organisation is responsible for the administration, management and overseeing of the service. This can be a considerable commitment.

## Specification of Requirement

Cleaning regimes and standards should be defined in a document commonly referred to as a “specification of requirement”.

This will set out:

- the quality of cleanliness required
- the requirements of other bodies, such as a landlord where there are shared premises

- legally required standards for compliance with health and safety regulations.

Different areas of the premises will require various types of cleaning, which may include:

- non-complex but possibly labour-intensive, eg vacuuming reception areas or mopping lobbies
- specialised cleaning of surfaces in clinical areas
- sterilisation of surfaces and equipment to protect against the spread of infection.

### Work Schedules

The development and monitoring of work schedules enables schools to ensure that cleaning tasks are completed in accordance with any specified requirements. The schedule should detail daily and weekly tasks as well as those tasks that need to be carried out occasionally.

Good cleaning schedules enable the effective utilisation of staff resources.

- Daily requirements, eg the daily emptying of rubbish bins, cleaning of toilets, clinical areas and reception/main corridors.
- Weekly requirements, eg the vacuum cleaning of carpets in offices.
- Monthly requirements, eg the “deep cleaning” of sanitary ware (toilets and urinals) and external window cleaning.
- Quarterly requirements, eg high-level dusting, cleaning of blinds, “deep cleaning” of kitchens and equipment.

### Work Method Statements

Work method statements are an effective way of providing specific instructions to cleaning staff or those responsible for cleaning as part of their duties. The instructions can be general or cover specific environments or tasks that require specialist knowledge and training.

The work method statements should provide easy-to-follow instructions for staff, specifying:

- what is to be cleaned
- the frequency of cleaning and restrictions on hours imposed by the specification
- the equipment to be used
- materials or chemicals to be applied
- the method of cleaning
- the expected time taken to clean
- the quality outcomes expected from cleaning
- who is responsible for monitoring the quality
- details of risks associated with performing the cleaning task

- safety precautions to be adopted including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and emergency procedures.

Work method statements should be copied to all cleaning staff and their line manager who should check that they understand the instructions and know who to ask if they have any questions or need assistance.

Statements should be:

- clearly published
- written to cover all tasks undertaken
- used in training and made widely available for reference
- consistent with best practice.

If cleaning work has been contracted out, the responsible person may need to provide a work method statement to the contractor and should check that the instructions are passed on to the staff.

## Productivity Levels

Managers should be familiar with levels of productivity to be expected from staff engaged in cleaning tasks. This knowledge is essential for all work scheduling, as the length of time taken to perform cleaning operations determines the overall staff requirement needed to complete a task.

It must be noted that cleaning times will be affected by various factors, such as the:

- standard of cleanliness required
- composition of floor surfaces, ie how much is carpeted, covered with linoleum, or consists of concrete or other surfaces
- density of work stations, ie in office environments, high density or levels of occupation will increase the time taken to perform cleaning tasks
- clean desk policies, ie the absence of such work practices inhibits cleaning staff from performing tasks such as damp dusting and polishing
- quality of surfaces, fabrics, fixtures and fittings, as poorly maintained premises ultimately require more effort to bring them into a reasonable state of cleanliness.

Equipment productivity levels are generally available from equipment manufacturers and suppliers. A sample table of cleaning productivity rates is provided in the Resources section.

## Carpet Cleaning

The clubs specification of requirement for carpet cleaning will depend on traffic levels and occupancy in each area. The basic requirement will be for thorough daily vacuuming to remove loose soiling and debris and reduce pile crushing. More detailed points will be:

- immediate spot cleaning of spillages before they spread or penetrate the carpet fibres and attract other soils
- vacuuming with a turbo-head type mechanical agitator cleaner which beats the carpet as it sucks
- if wet cleaning is appropriate, the use of water filtration or water soluble machines
- incorporation into machines of high-efficiency particulate arrestance (HEPA) filters, to ensure dust is retained
- dust bags changed when they are two-thirds full
- special attention paid to walkways and other high traffic areas
- the application of the vacuum cleaner wand across carpeting with repeated strokes to achieve thorough cleaning
- a robust, low-moisture cleaning operation every 1-3 months, using dry compound or bonnet mopping
- if appropriate, wet extraction cleaning every 6-12 months
- to avoid external dirt being walked into the premises, soil matting laid over carpets for 6-9 steps inside entrances.

If cleaning staff are not continuously on the premises, occupants should understand how to minimise soiling when spillages occur, since if allowed to dry, they will be more difficult to remove.

### Window and External Façade Cleaning

Window and façade cleaning are often contracted out. However, a risk assessment should still be carried out to ensure that legal duties are met and necessary information on risks and control measures are passed on to the contractor.

Any work at height must comply with the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

Where high-level window or facade cleaning is carried out in-house, managers should ensure that:

- employees carrying out the activity are competent
- plant and equipment conform to relevant standards
- the most appropriate equipment is used (eg mobile towers rather than ladders, where possible)
- equipment is checked before use, is adequately maintained and is inspected at regular intervals
- the environment in which the activity is to take place is controlled – this may involve using a permit-to-work system, controlling entry into the area in which the activity is taking place and using warning signs



- safe systems of work are provided – including provision of appropriate personal protective equipment.

## Performance Measurement

Cleaning standards and the performance of cleaners should be continuously monitored.

Occasional random inspections should be carried out to see whether the work schedule is being followed. Most cleaning tasks can be checked visually, eg inspecting Venetian blinds will determine whether or not they have been cleaned.

Common complaints in office environments may include the failure to empty waste bins or clean washrooms. The latter is more difficult to regulate, as their state of cleanliness is ultimately dependent on the users. Schools should undertake routine, but random, audits of all workplace environments to ensure that expected standards are being achieved. Of particular importance are high-profile places and areas subject to high levels of traffic or usage.

Schools can be aided by the use of a form to assess the performance of cleaning staff and the general cleanliness of work locations, and to ensure that identified defects are recorded and corrected.

## Monitoring and audit

Cleaning standards should be made subject to regular monitoring and audit. The aim should be to achieve continuous improvement through the identification of any problem areas.

Routine quality checks can include a regular walk around of the premises to note the general level of cleanliness. Early years managers should note whether cleaning levels are visually sufficient and whether the specification of requirement is being met.

Any deviations in quality should be discussed with the appropriate cleaning manager, supervisor or cleaning contractor and addressed immediately.

## Records

Full records of all cleaning activities should be kept and produced for inspectors as required.

Records can include:

- work schedules and method statements
- contracts
- risk assessments
- audits and quality checks
- signed records of work completed
- performance reports.

A common record is a daily cleaning completion timesheet, signed by the cleaner concerned.

## Health and Safety

Many cleaning operations involve the use of chemicals and equipment. Early years managers must ensure that cleaning staff are appropriately trained and that they are familiar with the risks associated with the performance of cleaning tasks in their specific work locations. Risks should be controlled so that cleaners, and any other users of buildings, are kept safe and free from danger of injury.

### Cleaning risk assessments

Health and safety risk assessments are a legal requirement. They should be completed at the planning stage of any cleaning project or job, along with suitable work statements. The risk assessment should aim to identify any risks or hazards that might be involved in the job. Control measures or safe systems of work should then be put in place to reduce or remove unacceptable risks.

The level of detail in a risk assessment should be proportionate to the risk. Many minor hazards identified in a risk assessment will be relatively easily addressed but an assessment of significant hazards, such as those posed by heavy cleaning machinery, will need to be much more detailed.

### Contractors

Contractors must be provided with comprehensive information on the risks that they may be exposed to while working on the premises, and the measures they need to take to ensure their health and safety and the safety of all others using the building.

### Protection from hazardous substances

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 are intended to protect individuals from potentially hazardous substances that they may use or come into contact with at work.

Managers of early years services should ensure that suitable and sufficient COSHH risk assessments are completed to cover cleaning operations within the premises. These should identify any substances used by cleaners that might present a hazard. Suitable measures should be implemented to control any risks.

Cleaning staff should understand that cleaning chemicals may be harmful and can enter the body through:

- ingestion, ie drinking and eating
- inhalation of gases, sprays, vapours and dust
- absorption through the skin.

Staff must be trained to:

- read container labels, noting any hazards, as it is essential that they understand the mixing of certain chemicals is a potentially dangerous practice
- use chemicals for their intended purpose only, following safe application procedures

- use personal protective equipment (PPE) when handling chemicals, eg gloves, masks, goggles and overalls
- store chemicals in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.

All cleaning chemicals must be labelled in accordance with EC Regulation 1272/2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures (CLP Regulation) came into force on 20 January 2009 in all EU Member States, including the UK. Referred to as the CLP Regulation, it adopts the Globally Harmonised System (GHS) on the classification and labelling of chemicals across all EU countries, displaying appropriate GHS hazard pictograms. It replaced the CHIP Regulations from 2015.

Information on the harmful effects of chemicals and the precautions that need to be observed when they are used, stored or transported are detailed in safety data sheets, which suppliers must provide. Safety data sheets should be available to provide details on:

- the proper use of a substance
- health risks and fire hazards
- how to use, transport and store the substance
- emergency action and first-aid advice
- other information, such as waste disposal.

Wherever cleaning chemicals are being used, other users of the building should be excluded from the area while cleaning is in progress. Cleaning chemicals, cleaning products and potentially dangerous equipment should only be used by appropriately trained individuals under supervision. Cleaning materials, equipment and chemicals should never be left unattended and should be locked away securely after use in dedicated, locked storage areas.

Chemical products most commonly used within the cleaning industry include the following.

- Irritants, such as many multi-purpose cleaners. Although non-corrosive, prolonged contact with the skin should be avoided.
- Harmful substances, such as seal strippers, may involve limited health risks if inhaled or ingested. Contact with the skin should be avoided and PPE, eg gloves, goggles and facemasks, should be worn.
- Corrosive substances, such as acid descalers can destroy living tissue on contact. Contact with the skin must be avoided and PPE worn.
- Toxic substances, such as white disinfectant, may result in acute health risks or death if inhaled, ingested or if it penetrates the skin. Contact with the skin must be avoided, PPE worn, and exhaust ventilation or breathing apparatus used to prevent exposure to dust or vapours.

Further information can be found in the COSHH topic.

## Personal protective equipment

PPE may include uniforms, safety shoes and equipment, such as gloves and goggles. Managers must ensure that adequate PPE is issued to staff, that those staff are trained in its use and are reminded of their responsibilities, including:

- that PPE should only be used at work
- the responsibility to use PPE properly
- the regular inspection of PPE.

## Safe working practices

Schools must ensure that staff are trained in the use of equipment, eg stepladders and powered equipment, such as buffers and floor scrubbers. Staff must be encouraged to adopt safe working practices, eg:

- to use equipment only if they have been trained or instructed in its use
- to lift supplies and equipment properly
- to follow manufacturers' or suppliers' usage guidelines
- not to tamper with equipment if it is defective
- not to block fire exits or staircases with equipment or waste
- not to leave trailing electrical leads on floors
- to use safety warning signs, eg to warn individuals about slippery surfaces.

## Slips, trips and falls

Floor cleaning can create a significant risk of slip and trip accidents, both to cleaning staff and to other users of buildings. For example, smooth floors left damp by a mop are likely to be very slippery until they dry out and trailing wires from a vacuum or buffing machine can present a trip hazard. In addition, cleaning substances themselves, such as soaps and detergents, can be slippery.

Cleaning arrangements must specify how, when and how often floors should be cleaned and how spillages can be quickly and effectively dealt with. Even small spillages can cause a pupil or a member of staff to slip and injure themselves. All must be cleaned up quickly and effectively.

Access to areas being cleaned or which are drying after being mopped should be restricted until floors are dry. "Wet floor" warning signs should be used. Where more substantial access controls are needed, areas should be cordoned off or doors closed.

Staff must remember that warning signs or access prevention should be used even in all cases, including during spot cleaning after spillages. Cleaning staff should be urged to only wear appropriate footwear to work. All footwear should have an effective grip and should be in good condition, especially when worn in areas such as kitchens and in dining areas where there may be an additional risk of spillages.

All cleaning staff should be trained in preventing slips and trips.

Guidance is provided in HSE information sheet, *Slips and trips: The Importance of Floor Cleaning*.

To avoid slips, the HSE recommends that:

- cleaners ensure that the correct cleaning regime is chosen for the type of floor, taking into account how the floor is used and by whom
- work is organised through consulting with staff to ensure that plans are implemented
- controls are in place to ensure that working practices and processes are carried out properly, eg access is prevented to wet smooth floors

Regarding floor cleaning methods, the HSE notes the following:

- detergent is essential if there is any greasy or oily contamination on a floor as water on its own, whether it is cold or warm, is not effective in removing this kind of contamination – the concentration of detergent must comply with manufacturers guidance
- even a well-wrung mop will leave a thin film of water which is enough to create a slip risk on a smooth floor – where smooth floors are mopped staff should ensure the floor is left to dry completely before pedestrians are allowed access
- on a smooth floor a sweeping brush may be adequate to remove dry contaminants
- a squeegee may be effective in removing excess water after cleaning and reducing drying time
- a wet vacuum cleaner may be effective in cleaning up liquid spills.

The HSE states that effective training and supervision is essential to make sure standards of cleaning are correct. Cleaners should be encouraged to report any difficulties in carrying out their work.

### Use of containers

Managers may be responsible for the purchase of cleaning materials. Such materials are often supplied in large containers and thereafter decanted into smaller containers for ease-of-use and so dilution systems can be used. If cleaning agents are decanted, managers must ensure that:

- it is safe to do so
- containers are labelled appropriately
- chemicals are not placed in unlabelled containers
- nothing from an unlabelled container is used.

### Use of powered equipment

Staff must be trained to check and carefully maintain electrical equipment including:

- a visual check to identify obvious damage to the equipment prior to use

- checking plugs and cables are in good condition, and removing any defective equipment from use
- ensuring power cables are long enough to reach the workplace
- ensuring power cables are not strained
- ensuring adherence to manufacturers' instructions, eg when replacing vacuum cleaner bags, scrubbing rings and buffer pads
- ensuring power leads are replaced in equipment storage facilities
- ensuring equipment is cleaned after use.

## Cleaning Equipment

Cleaning staff should be provided with appropriate equipment to be able to do their jobs effectively. It is not possible to achieve a high standard of cleaning using dirty or defective equipment.

All cleaning equipment and materials should be kept clean and regularly replaced when worn or unfit for use. This applies especially to mop heads, which should be cleaned and dried out after use.

All equipment should be properly maintained according to the manufacturers' instructions. Any dirty or defective equipment should be replaced. All portable electrical cleaning equipment should be checked for safety before it is used. Electrically powered cleaning equipment (eg vacuum cleaners, floor polishers, etc) must be properly maintained.

Storage areas should be kept in a clean tidy condition and locked when unattended.

## Housekeeping

The cleaning of the premises should not just be left to cleaners. All staff using the premises should be made aware that they have responsibilities for effective housekeeping and for keeping the premises clean and tidy and for helping to support cleaning staff.

Cleaning services are at their most effective when all staff groups work in a co-ordinated way and where individual roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

Low standards of housekeeping are a common cause of injury and damage at work. Low standards often result from poor working practices and/or organisational deficiencies within the workplace. The workplace must be kept clean and tidy to avoid the creation of hazards.

Effective building maintenance will also contribute to higher building standards. Cleaning staff should be encouraged to report any maintenance issues.

## Assisting cleaners

Staff should liaise with cleaners to ensure chairs are stacked at the end of the day. They should also be encouraged to stack furniture when periodic floor cleaning is programmed.

Staff can also assist cleaners by ensuring that litter is picked up and that spillages are cleared up as they occur.

## Supporting Infection Control

Cleaning staff play a vital role in preventing the spread of infection within early years premises.

According to Public Health England's *Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other Childcare Settings*:

- cleaning, including of toys and equipment, should be frequent, thorough and should follow national guidance (such as the use of colour-coding to identify equipment for use in toilet areas only)
- cleaning contracts should be monitored
- cleaners should be trained and have access to appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), especially disposable non-powdered vinyl or latex-free CE-marked gloves.

Environmental cleaning should be increased wherever there is an infection outbreak or at times when infectious diseases are known to be circulating in the community. Special attention at such times should be paid to toilets and frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) and the correct decontamination of cleaning equipment should also be followed.

In Scotland early years providers should refer to *Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings)* published by Health Protection Scotland and supported by the Scottish Health Protection Network. The guidance was updated in September 2015.

The guidance states that all childcare settings should have a cleaning schedule or procedure which:

- lists each room in the building used to provide the care service
- has a signed and dated record of cleaning
- records who is responsible for the cleaning
- states how and when the environment, fixtures and fittings should be cleaned
- includes areas that are cleaned less often than each day and states when they are to be cleaned.

In addition:

- a cleanliness check should be performed every day before children arrive
- areas that are touched often (for example, toilets, hand-wash basins, taps, door handles) should be checked and cleaned often
- staff and parents should be encouraged to raise any concerns about cleanliness
- a procedure should be in place for what to do if fixtures/fittings break or can no longer be cleaned.

The guidance states that the use of a general-purpose detergent and hand-hot water is usually enough to make sure the environment is clean and safe. It states that disinfectants should not be used as part of routine cleaning, with the exception of toilets and food preparation areas, but that disinfection may be required during an outbreak of infection.

## Supporting effective hand washing

An important element in the role of cleaning services in any setting is to support the provision of effective sanitary and hand-washing facilities.

It is known that regular, effective hand washing and drying, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infection. The majority of cross-infection is caused by unwashed or poorly washed hands, which provide a transfer route for micro-organisms.

Cleaners have an important role in supporting effective hand washing by:

- ensuring high standards of regular cleaning in toilets, bathrooms and around hand washing sinks and facilities
- ensuring that liquid soap and disposable hand towel dispensers are kept clean and do not run out
- removing full bags of discarded towels.

Alcohol-based hand rubs and desanitisers can be used as an alternative wherever hand washing facilities are not available or where additional protection is required, for instance, during any infection outbreak. Hand rubs should only be used on hands that are visually clean.

[Effective hygiene standards](#) are a legal requirement of the *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework* in England.

## Blood and body fluid spillages

All spillages of blood, faeces, saliva, vomit and nasal and eye discharges should be cleaned up immediately using a product that:

- contains a detergent and a disinfectant
- is effective against bacteria and viruses
- is suitable for use on the affected surface.

The product should be used as per the manufacturer's instructions and staff should always wear PPE.

Children and adults should be kept away from the spill. Staff should put on disposable gloves and make up the disinfectant if using a granule based product. Disposable towels should be used to soak up the spill and remove solid particles. The disinfectant solution should be used to clean the remainder of the spillage and then the area cleaned with detergent and dried. All waste, including used disposable gloves, should be placed in an appropriate waste bag and disposed of as offensive/hygiene waste. Finally, hands should be washed.



The only exception is that chlorine-based disinfectants should never be used directly on urine spills as this can release irritant chlorine gas. Urine should be cleaned up using detergent before applying disinfectant.

Mops and buckets should never be used for cleaning up body fluid spills.

It is useful to have a “spillage kit”, containing essential cleaning equipment, for spills.

## Waste

Cleaners will be required to empty waste bins. General/office waste can be disposed of in ordinary black bags as domestic waste. Waste from body fluid spills, used nappies/pads, gloves, aprons and soiled dressings should be disposed of in correctly coloured and labelled offensive/hygiene waste bags and collected by an appropriate waste collector.

Domestic and hygiene waste should always be segregated, in accordance with local waste collection and disposal policies.

See above for the disposal of waste that is potentially contaminated with the COVID-19 virus.

## Cleaning Toys

Toys can easily become unsanitary unless regularly cleaned. Some tasks may be included in cleaning schedules for cleaning staff while others will be tasked to early years staff.

General-purpose detergent and hand-hot water is sufficient for most toys and plastic play mats. They should be dried thoroughly with paper towels or a clean towel.

Toys such as play dough and plasticine should be replaced regularly and disposed of when soiled. Soft toys and fabric play mats should be machine washable and should be washed according to manufacturers’ instructions.

Slides, swings, climbing frames and other outdoor equipment should be cleaned with disinfectant if contaminated by birds or garden pests.

## Pest Control

Pest control is an important element of any cleaning operation. Pests typically include rodents such as rats and mice, birds such as pigeons and insects such as ants and cockroaches.

Pests must be controlled, as they can spread disease and cause damage to building structures and stores by eating or contaminating them, as well as being a general nuisance, eg bird droppings at building entrances.

The dedicated topic Pest Control should be referred to for more detail.

## Graffiti and Chewing Gum

The following measures can be used if there is a persistent problem with graffiti:

- application of paint removers
- bleaching

- use of anti-graffiti paint on concrete or brick surfaces
- strategic planting of shrubs to make access difficult to areas that attract graffiti.

Chewing gum is difficult to remove and does not break down over time. A dry steam machine can be hired to disintegrate the gum.

## Environmentally Friendly Cleaning

There are a number of ways to ensure that cleaning services are eco-friendly. They include:

- avoiding the use of toxic or environmentally damaging chemicals in cleaning products
- using biodegradable products where possible
- ensuring that cleaning products are procured from sustainable sources and eco-friendly companies
- supporting waste recycling schemes and minimal waste schemes.

Utilising green cleaning techniques, or contracting with an eco-friendly company, also means that the organisation can reduce exposure to hazardous substances such as skin irritants.

## Buildings Maintenance

Well-maintained buildings are far easier to keep clean than buildings that have defects.

Every premises should have a programme of routine maintenance and renewal for the fabric and decoration of the premises. Records should be kept of all maintenance activity and an effective system should be in place for reporting and tracking faults.

Cleaning should be considered in all building or renovation projects. Relevant considerations include:

- design
- materials
- surfaces
- paints
- floor coverings.

Easy-to-clean surfaces, floors and paints should be used wherever possible.

## Training

Cleaners should be fully trained to perform their role effectively and safely.

Training should cover:

- health and safety, including the use of chemicals and the application of COSHH regulations, manual handling and preventing slips and trips

- equipment use, including the safe use of electrical equipment, such as hoovers and floor buffers
- using personal protective equipment
- the use of suitable cleaning techniques and methods, including the application of work method statements
- infection control
- how to report equipment faults, accidents, incidents, etc.

Training can be carried out in-house or via e-learning or external courses. Some equipment and consumable suppliers may supply specialist training related to specific products.

A range of vocational qualifications are available. These include a Certificate in Cleaning Science and a Certificate in Cleaning Science Supervision certificated by the British Institute of Cleaning Science.

Training programmes should be backed up by appropriate systems of supervision and management to ensure cleaning is undertaken to the correct standard.

All staff training should be recorded, particularly training relating to health and safety issues such as COSHH, manual handling and working at height.

Where a contracted-in cleaning service is utilised, the manager will want to ensure that the company concerned has acceptable levels of staff training supervision.

This policy was adopted by: Play in Ltd	Date: August 2020
To be reviewed: Jan 2021	Signed:

Written in accordance with the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017): Section 3: The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements*. <https://app.croneri.co.uk/topics/cleaning-early-years-provisions/indepth>