

Operation of Nurseries and Childcare Centers

during the Pandemic:

Protocols & Procedures

First Release 1.0



The Purpose of the Document

This document outlines the protocols, requirements, and precautionary measures that all Nurseries and Childcare Centers in the UAE should follow in order to achieve a safe, healthy, and learning-stimulating learning environment when educational establishments are opened during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This Document may be changed or amended without notice, as directed by the authorities concerned or the relevant authorities of the Government or the Emirate, at any time, depending on developments.







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Document Scope

The scope of this document covers all Nurseries and Childcare Centers.

How to Use the Document

Each Nurseries and Childcare Centers shall consider the General Framework for the Operation of Educational Establishments in the UAE during the Pandemic.



Activities of Nurseries and Child Care Centers in Different Risk Situations

Ensure a maximum capacity of up to 50% while maintaining precautionary and preventive measures.



1

Educational Establishment Entry Procedures

- ⌘ Ensure that the temperature of any person entering the establishment is checked and that the temperature is below 37.5 degrees.
- ⌘ The nurse must examine all staff and children upon arrival at the establishment, during the day and on departure, and ensure that they do not have any symptoms of Covid-19.
- ⌘ Employees are prevented from leaving the establishment during the day, except in emergency cases, and they should be told not to return to the building until their clothes have been completely sterilized.
- ⌘ Only one parent or first-degree authorized member of the family is allowed to deliver the child to school and pick up the child from school.
- ⌘ Allocate parents or authorized family members the time of entry and departure to deliver the child to school and to pick up the child in a given area within the establishment. Parents are allowed to stay a maximum of 10 minutes inside the establishment.
- ⌘ Encourage online meetings, unless the urgent need is for a previously agreed personal meeting.
- ⌘ Commitment to complete support services such as repair work and distribution of shipments after the nursery operating hours, while enforcing all precautionary measures including checking the workers temperature.
- ⌘ Ensure children's bags are disinfected by their parents before they enter the facility
- ⌘ Ensure that children have their own meals brought and provided by their parents
- ⌘ Ensure the arrival and leaving timings of administrative and educational staff differ from the parents and children to prevent contact when coming and leaving.





2 Examination & Emergency Plan

- ✎ It is compulsory for all employees of the facility to conduct a COVID-19 test before returning to work and to conduct the test once every two weeks especially if symptoms are detected.
- ✎ In the event that COVID-19 symptoms are detected in the facility, it is the responsibility of the person in charge to report any symptoms such as fever (37.5 degrees Celsius or higher), constant dry coughing, shortness of breath, sore throat, diarrhea, nausea, headache, or loss of the sense of smell or taste. The person in charge must develop a plan to notify parents and inform them of any further developments related to the suspected cases.
- ✎ The employee shall be excluded from entering the educational establishment if the result of the Covid-19 examination is reported to be positive and he/she should be subject to quarantine before he/she obtains a negative result of the examination, before being able to resume work at the establishment.
- ✎ Facility management must allocate an isolation room that meets the requirements set by the Ministry of Health and Prevention, an established procedure for dealing with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 must be developed.
- ✎ The educational establishment must keep all of the following details (name, telephone number, identity number, and visit date) in employee/visitor/child records.
- ✎ Parents must inform the establishment of any recent visits to hospitals or medical care centers for themselves, their children, or for any family member residing with them.
- ✎ Encourage parents to check the temperature of the children, and identify any signs before leaving home.
- ✎ If only one case (a child or an employee) is detected, the nursery shall be closed immediately for 14 days and everyone adheres to the guidelines of isolation and conducting tests. The nursery shall not be allowed to reopen unless everyone is tested and proven free of the disease and sanitise the building by a specialised company.
- ✎ If more than one Covid-19 case is detected, the nursery shall be closed permanently.
- ✎ Parents are required to check their children's temperature before leaving the house, and not to bring children to the facility if a child has any symptoms.
- ✎ Establish procedures for dealing with suspected cases of COVID-19, which take into account the age of the child and any possible panic situation that could occur.
- ✎ Create and maintain a record of data for all children and nursery staff during attendance to the facility.
- ✎ Develop a plan to notify parents of all health developments of the children.
- ✎ Continuous follow up on the testing of children and workers and identify all contacts in case of infection.
- ✎ Any confirmed or suspected individuals of COVID-19 are prohibited from entering the facility, except after the incubation period has been completed and they have been tested to ensure they are free from the virus.



3 Personal Protection & Hygiene Equipment

- ✧ Cleaning and sterilization of all surfaces in the establishment on a daily basis, effective sterilization after the end of each day, and performing the cleaning process in compliance with the guidelines of the concerned authorities.
- ✧ Use the cleaning and sterilization instructions for both everyday routine hygiene and final sterilization. Centers are not permitted to use cleaning/sterilization products that may harm the health of children and individuals suffering from respiratory diseases.
- ✧ Both staff/visitors will at all times comply with the wearing of face masks within the establishment.
- ✧ Encourage staff to sterilize/wash their hands regularly.
- ✧ Children are excluded from wearing face masks or shields.
- ✧ Encourage staff in direct contact with children to wear transparent face masks, if available, to facilitate lip reading and facial expression.
- ✧ Teachers and staff must have a hand sanitizer, and its use must be monitored to prevent the child from unintentionally drinking it and to ensure that sanitizers are not accessible to children.
- ✧ Encourage hand washing and avoid using sterilizers for children who tend to lick their hands or suck their fingers.
- ✧ Help children wash their hands, and wash the hand of babies who cannot wash their hands by themselves.
- ✧ Sterilization should take place after dealing with a child and before moving to another child.
- ✧ Clean and sterilize the bags and shoes of staff and children upon arrival at the establishment.
- ✧ Shoe racks shall be placed in the entrances of the premises that require students to take off their shoes
- ✧ Nappy changing areas and the routine of bathroom use for young children should follow specific guidelines for cleaning and sterilization in line with the guidance of the relevant authorities.
- ✧ Clear guidelines for security personnel and facility cleaners should be put in place to ensure that proper procedures, such as the wearing of gloves, are followed when cleaning.
- ✧ Childcare workers are required to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds before and after handling children's bottles prepared at home or at the educational establishment.
- ✧ Use sterile wipes to clean frequently-touched electronic devices such as phones and computers.
- ✧ Place educational/awareness posters, explaining the steps of hand washing, near the basins.





4 Physical Distancing

- ✎ A distance of 1.5 meters shall be maintained in all classes, play areas, common areas, service offices, and other services.
- ✎ Develop a staff entry/exit schedule at rest times, to define the number of employees for each room.
- ✎ Cancellation or postponement of special celebrations, such as festivals and special exhibitions.
- ✎ Change or stop routine practices that may increase the transmission of infection.
- ✎ Due to the difficulty of applying physical distancing in nursery environments, which is particular for children between the age of 45 days to 4 years, children at this sensitive stage need direct interaction with the caregiver to ensure that all care and education needs are met. A model of (grouping) or (clustering) has been developed which includes the following:
 1. Dividing the children into separate groups, so that one group remains in the same learning environment and does not mix with other groups in the nursery facility.
 2. A number of caregivers are assigned to each group, the caregivers must remain with the same number of children that have been assigned, so that the children in the group are not rotated and remain with the same caregiver throughout the day.
 3. During the use of the nursery facility, no group should use the same facility with another group to avoid mixing of groups.
 4. Any mixing of groups of children and sharing the same classrooms environments is strictly prohibited.
 5. This model will contribute to reducing the physical between children from one group to another in order to avoid transmission of infection.



5 Toys, Equipment, and Tools

- ✎ Toys and dolls with complex or hard-to-clean parts should not be used.
- ✎ All equipment in the classroom should be sterilized (toys, books, scissors, pens, crayons, arts and crafts materials) after each use.
- ✎ Toys should be sterilized after use and immediately removed from the play area if the child puts them in his/her mouth.
- ✎ Maintain a box designed to isolate toys that have been put in children's mouths.



Continued: Toys, Equipment, and Tools

- Wherever possible, it is recommended that children be provided with their own exclusive tools.
- Certain types of play areas, that it is difficult to sterilize fully, must be closed/removed after each use.
- Prevent the use of "mouth" toys (musical instruments, whistles).
- Learning equipment and learning resources should not be shared between children of one group with children of another group.
- Reduce children's gathering around toys/tools (maximum 4 children at a time).



6

Staff to Children Ratios

- At least one member of staff with a valid child first aid certificate shall be present.
- Children must be cared for in separate and fixed groups (not more than 10 in one group) and should not be mixed with other groups.
- A safe distance of 1.5 meters between adults should be maintained.
- Childcare classes must have the same group members every day.
- Children must be cared for by the caregivers of each group, and such caregivers should not be changed.

The following ratios should be applied:

Age Categories	Number of Children per Group	Number of Female Workers per Group
From 45 days to 2 years	8	2:8
From 2 years to 4 years	10	2:10





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Communication & Readiness Plans

- ⇒ Use training and communication channels to inform all staff, parents, and children about new requirements, practices, hygiene, and sterilization methods.
- ⇒ Nursery evaluation process will continue for the administrative and educational facilities.
- ⇒ Develop a "Nursery Readiness Plan" to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for the continuity of operations and the safety of everyone in the educational establishment.



8

Priority of Admission

- ⇒ Priority of admission should be granted to working parents' children who need to secure the care of their child during their working day and for parents who have critical cases.



9

Food & Drinks

- ⇒ Parents must provide their children with healthy food, and with drinks in safe plastic containers.
- ⇒ Create a meal break schedule.
- ⇒ Ensure children have their own food containers and do not share food with each other.

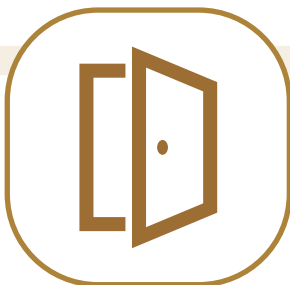




10

Protocols before Opening

- ⇒ The nursery is required to follow the sterilization and disinfection procedures, at least 5 days before opening.
- ⇒ Employees coming from outside the country must not start work until the end of quarantine period. And to ensure that they perform the Covid 19 test after the end of the quarantine period.
- ⇒ The nursery is required to conduct full checks for all workers before resuming work within a plan developed by the nursery, with the condition that the COVID-19 test is negative for everyone.
- ⇒ Nurseries should submit a completed Reopening Plan to the concern educational authority for approval before operating



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Protocols after Opening

- ⇒ Nurseries have the responsibility to implement all that is mentioned in the protocols regarding the procedures for re-opening the facility.
- ⇒ Ensure all daily precautions are met, including continuous cleaning and disinfecting of equipment and resources used by the children.
- ⇒ Ensure clustering is in place for children and take into consideration that clustering is mandatory for the continuity of nursery operations and activities.
- ⇒ Ensure that a positive relationship and constant communication is kept with parents as well as transparency regarding all latest developments





12 Training and Awareness

- ☞ All nursery workers must be trained by the relevant competent authorities.
- ☞ Ensure that all workers in the facility understand and adhere to the preventive and precautionary measures.
- ☞ All training sessions will be delivered according to the size of the entity and how the re-opening plan is implemented. The submission, reviewing, and approving process of the nursery reopening plans will be explained.
- ☞ Training will be carried out before the reopening of the facility according to the approved training plan.



13 Compliance

- ☞ All authorities concerned with licensing (Ministry of Education, local educational authorities and departments) will monitor and occasionally inspect the nurseries and early childhood facilities in line with the protocols and procedures.
- ☞ Authorities concerned with licensing (Ministry of Education, local educational authorities and departments) will impose fines and penalties in case of any violations and if the protocols and procedures are not strictly adhered to (closure of facility or imposing a fine).



14

Transportation

- ⌘ Ensure that parents assume responsibility for the transportation of their own children to and from nursery.
- ⌘ Ensure that only children from the same family or same cluster are transported together to nursery.
- ⌘ Ensure that buses are not used to transport children.