

POLICY NO.59 SUPPLEMENTRY / STAFF ABSENCES PANDEMIC POLICY

REV: 02 DATE: 10.08.2022

Policy Statement

<p>Scamps & Scholars understands that from time to time staff will be absent from work and specific arrangements need to be put in place in line with current guidelines for Covid-19. The health, safety and welfare of children and staff is of paramount importance in our setting. The following policy is supplemental to our main policy on Staff Absences and in place so both the employer and the staff are aware of arrangements regarding the sickness absence procedures in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19). It is our priority to have arrangements in place to ensure that the service is adequately staffed at all times and that adult: child ratios are maintained. Staff members will be required to cooperate to facilitate contact tracing in such circumstances.</p>

<p>This policy has been drafted in line with current guidance the HSPC Infection Prevention and Control guidance for services providing childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the DCYA's Return to Work Safely Protocol and Tusla's Children Services Regulations Guidance Document for Early Years Services: COVID-19</p>
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Principle

<p>This policy is underwritten by the he Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Child Care Regulations (The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services)(Amendments) Regulations 2016. and the Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework together with the Workplace Relations Act 2015 and Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.</p>

Rationale:

It is important to have arrangements in place in the service to ensure that the required adult: child ratios specified in Regulation 11 can be met when an employee working directly with children attending the service is absent.

Staff with exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19 should not attend for work. Arrangements must be put in place to provide relief cover while staff are on sick leave due to Covid-19 or where they start to exhibit symptoms whilst in the setting and the procedures in place for when they are returning to work.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the main policy on staff absences, [the HSPC Infection Prevention and Control guidance for settings providing childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) and the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#)

Procedure

Staff Rostering -Maintaining adult:child ratios

- All staff working in Scamps & Scholars are aware of the required adult: child ratios that operate in each room/paly pod of the service. Adult: child ratios will be maintained at all times whilst adhering to adult social distancing guidelines.
- Daily and weekly staff rosters will be documented and recorded and include the area and time each member of staff is required to work. Such information must be kept accurate and up to date to aid contact tracing should that be required.

- The staff roster is implemented at all times. The staff roster is displayed in the “staff roster folder” adjacent to the office down stairs and it is updated if staff are absent. The staff roster outlines if staff were absent and who filled in for them on a given day.
- If a staff member is absent or starts to display symptoms of Covid-19 and need to isolate, the following options are considered so that the adult: child ratio can be maintained at all times:
 - A staff member is moved from a room/pod that has an additional staff member that is not required to meet the adult: child ratio to the room that is missing a staff member
 - A floating staff member is moved in to the room/pod where the staff member is absent
 - A relief staff member (fully qualified and garda vetted by the service) is called in to the service
 - It is possible in extreme circumstances that Parents/Guardians are informed that children cannot attend the service because the adult: child ratio cannot be maintained.
- When moving staff to maintain the ratio, management are mindful of what is in children’s best interests. Staff moving within the setting will adhere strictly to infection control, cleaning protocols, physical distancing, and hygiene measures. Where possible, there is at least one staff member working in each room/pod that is familiar to the children in that room. Consistency of care for children should form a part of all decisions relating to staffing.
- Records are kept in the passover book of each room, for Relief staff who are available to cover unplanned staff absences and emergencies.
- If the named Person in Charge, the Manager is absent then the Deputy Manager in charge will make the necessary adjustments. If both of these people are absent, then the next senior supervisor will be the person to make the required adjustments.
- The Lead worker representative is Elaine O Sullivan.
- Staff rostering records will be used to facilitate contact tracing.

Unplanned Leave related to Covid-19

If any staff member develops symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever or shortness of breath while at home they should not attend for work and they must notify the centre in the normal manner as soon as possible no later than 7am on the first day of absence.

- All staff must notify the deputy manager (unless directed otherwise) by phone call of their absence and advise the deputy manager that they are exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19.
- The staff member should contact their GP or the HSE and follow their guidance if this is the required. They should notify the manager accordingly and all guidance will be followed. The sick leave policy will then apply in the normal manner.
- All medical reports will be kept confidential.

Staff Member Exhibits symptoms of Covid-19 while in setting

- If a staff member develops symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever or shortness of breath while in the setting they will be requested to go home without delay and contact their GP by telephone.
- They must advise their manager immediately who will allow them to move to the isolation area and will provide staff cover.
- They should remain 2 m away from others if possible.
- They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and should cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the bin. If no tissues are available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.

- Surgical masks will be made available and they will be requested to wear one, if they can tolerate doing so,
- If they must wait to be collected from the setting, then they should do so in the isolation area which is the manager's office. Their emergency contact person will be contacted. The room will need to be cleaned and contact surfaces disinfected once they leave.
- If they need to use toilet facilities, they should wipe contact surfaces clean and clean their hands after attending the toilet.

Return to Work

- Staff must notify Scamps & Scholars of their return to work date. Scamps & Scholars will request a fitness to return to work certificate from the staff member.
- Three days before they return to work, the employee must complete the return to work form.
- Upon return, the employee will complete the return to work checklist if required.
- On return to work after an absence, the Line Manager will meet with the employee to update the employee on their job priorities to review the return to work protocol documents.

Approval Date: _____

Implementation Date: _____

Signed: _____
(On behalf of the Board of Directors)