

Guidance for managing bubbles (groups of children & adults)



Also see: <https://gov.wales/protective-measures-childcare-settings-keep-childcare-safe>

Social contact

Limiting social contacts is an important part of reducing the likelihood of seeing large outbreaks of the virus. It is important that we continue to reduce mixing between people and groups of people. Keeping people in small, consistent groups of adults and children which remain the same throughout the week, and separate from other groups, helps to do this and avoids creating chains of transmission. Guidance from Welsh Government says that children in childcare settings, should be cared for in consistent groups of no more than 8, while adhering to NMS ratios.

Returning

In returning to childcare, children should attend just one setting wherever possible, and should remain in the same small, consistent group within that setting, as far as possible. This will help reduce the likelihood of the virus moving between groups within that one setting or moving between groups in different settings. Guidance from Welsh Government says sessional nurseries that have different cohorts of children at different times of the day may wish to consider having smaller group sizes to limit the number of children staff are in contact with.

More than one setting

If a child attends more than one setting, for example school and wrap-around or out of school childcare, the child should remain in the same, small group across both settings wherever possible. Mixing children from different groups, or different schools, is not consistent with the need to minimise overall levels of contact. Parents and settings will need to discuss these risks and consider how to manage them to reduce the spread of the virus. This will mean parents, schools and settings working together and in line with the guidance provided.

Risk assess

Having considered the points above, you should risk assess your setting's layout both indoors and outdoors to see if you can safely accommodate only one or more than one bubble of up to 8 children. Consider how bubbles can be kept apart perhaps by using furniture or screens to divide larger spaces or maybe you have separate rooms or outdoor spaces that can be used. Think about how children and adults can move from one space to another without coming into contact with those in another bubble. What about use of toilets and handwashing facilities? Can areas be sufficiently cleaned and sanitised between use by different bubbles?

How many bubbles?

Once you have ascertained how many bubbles can be safely accommodated, you can wherever possible, organise friendship groups of children also based on the days or sessions they will be attending. Consistent members of staff should also be assigned to each bubble wherever possible.

Consider also...

Settings are also asked to consider how they can minimise the risks of wider contacts, restricting chains of transmission. For example, childminding settings should consider how they can work with parents to agree ways to manage any necessary journeys, including pick-ups and drop-offs at schools, to reduce the need for a provider to travel with groups of children.

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July 2020