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9th September 2020

Dear parents,

Welcome back to a new academic year. We hope that you all had a wonderful summer and that your child/ren are excited to return to our settings. We would also like to share a warm welcome to our new families who are joining South Hills for the first time.

Due to the most recent Government document updated on the 1st September 2020 ‘What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges in the autumn term’ we would like to highlight certain points that ensure we, as a company are keeping all of our families safe during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Our staff are working extremely hard to ensure that the children in our care are provided with the best possible care during these times to eliminate as much disruption to their daily activities as possible. We ask you to read and adhere to the following bullet points;

* From 20 July, nurseries were able to return to their normal group sizes.
* The scientific evidence shows that coronavirus (COVID-19) presents a much lower risk to children than adults of becoming severely ill. There is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults. However, there will still be risks while coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community.
* A small number of children and young people may be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they:

•are self-isolating

•have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves

•are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

Shielding advice for all adults and children was paused from 1 August. This means that children and young people can return to school or college if they:

•are on the shielded patient list

•have family members who are shielding

Children and young people under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning.

* If you are planning a holiday, please keep in mind that you and your children may need to self-isolate when you return from a trip overseas.
* Each nursery will do their own health and safety risk assessment as part of their planning for the autumn term. As part of this, there are certain approaches that we need to implement that are essential to reduce health risks.
* The government have asked nurseries to:

•manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in line with current public health guidance - this means your child may be asked to self-isolate for 14 days by their nursery (based on advice from their local health protection teams) if they have been in close, face to face contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus.

•ensure that everyone cleans their hands more often than usual, including when they arrive, when they return from breaks, and before and after eating - this should be done for 20 seconds with soap and running water.

•promote the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach, to ensure good respiratory hygiene.

•enhance cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces more often.

* We will minimise contact between individuals where we can which means using different rooms for different age groups and keeping those groups apart.
* Do not send your child to their nursery if:

•they are showing coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms

•someone in their household is showing symptoms

* Arrange a test if you or your child develops symptoms. Inform your nursery of the results. Please note that we will not except tests carried out on your child in another person’s name.
* If the test is positive, follow guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process. It is really important that you help nursery to implement these actions by following the advice set out here and wider public health advice and guidance.
* Nationwide, the government are not recommending face coverings are necessary in nurseries. This is because the approaches put in place already reduce the health risks.
* Some of our nurseries may need to stagger or adjust start and finish times. This helps keep groups apart as they arrive and leave the premises.
* Our staff understand that some children may be experiencing feelings such as anxiety, stress or low mood as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. There are online resources available to help you and your child with mental health, including:

• MindEd, a free educational resource from Health Education England on children and young people’s mental health

• Rise Above, which aims to build resilience and support good mental health in young people aged 10 to 16

• Every Mind Matters, which includes an online tool and email journey to support everyone to feel more confident in taking action to look after their mental health and wellbeing

• Bereavement UK and the Childhood Bereavement Network, provide information and resources to support bereaved pupils, schools and staff

* Barnardo’s See, Hear, Respond service, provides support to children, young people and their families who aren’t currently seeing a social worker or other agency, and who are struggling to cope with the emotional impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19). You can access via the ‘See, Hear, Respond’ service self-referral webpage or Freephone 0800 151 7015.
* To minimise risks, consider:

•sending your child to the same setting consistently

•limiting the number of different settings you access

* The nursery will contact our local health protection team if they:

•have 2 or more confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) among pupils or staff within 14 days

•see an increase in children or staff absence rates due to suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)

* The local health protection team will advise what action is required. Usually, closure will not be necessary, but some groups may need to self-isolate.

We ask that you respect our guidelines on all of the above. Following government guidance ensures that we are not putting our staff and families at risk to the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Yours sincerely

HJCampbell-Smith

Hilary Campbell-Smith

Operations Manager